

Palladium Books® Presents:

Nightbane™ World Book One

Between the Shadows™

By C.J. Carella



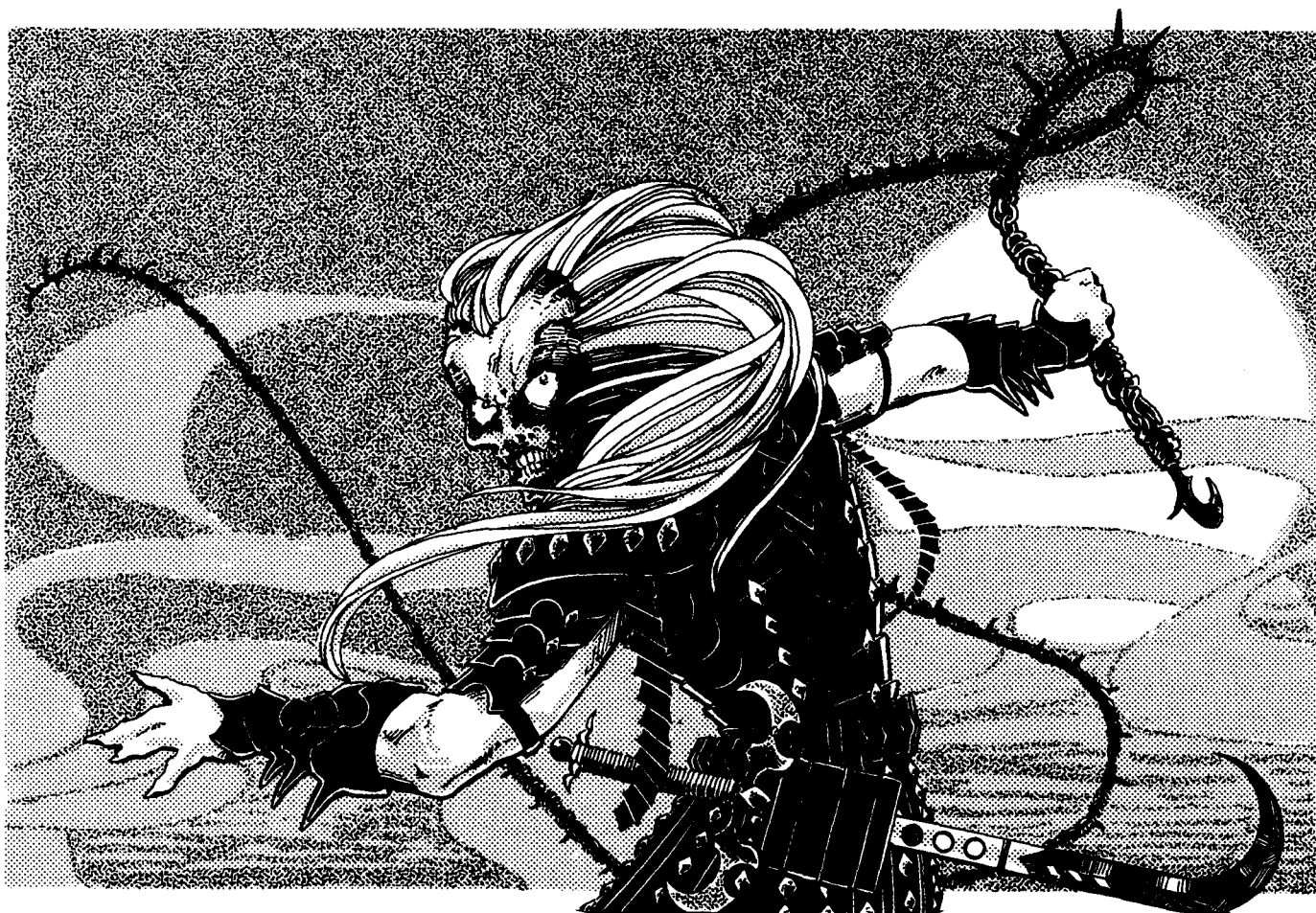
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Violence and the Supernatural

The fictional **World of Nightbane™** is one of horror, violence, and brutality, as well as heroics and triumph. It is filled with supernatural monsters and other dimensional beings, often referred to as "demons," many of whom torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, angels, gods and demigods, as well as magic, the paranormal, insanity, and war are all elements in this book.

Some parents may find the violence and supernatural aspects of the game inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

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Between the Shadows™

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Kevin Siembieda

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Night What?!

Nightbane! What's with the name change?

To make a long and aggravating story short, Palladium Books has changed the name of **Nightspawn** to **Nightbane™** in order to avoid a long and costly legal battle. The bottom-line was that we thought we'd rather change the name and spend our time and money on producing more great products for **Nightbane™** rather than spend it on litigation.

Heck, we only had to change the title of one book, and C.J. and I really like **Nightbane™**. The archaic, 15th Century meaning of *bane* is, "slayer, destroyer, or cause of death" — in this case, the *Nightbane* are the "slayers of the insidious Nightlords" and the "destroyers of evil." The modern meaning is "Someone

or something that is a nuisance or cause of distress," or "Fatal injury or ruin," both are applicable to the Nightbane and their struggle against the Nightlords and other dark forces!

Only the name has been changed. Everything else you've come to know and enjoy about this role-playing game is the same.

Between the Shadows is the *first* world book for **Nightbane** with lots of additional sourcebooks and supplements in the works (the next will be **Nightlands**). Read on and enjoy.

Kevin Siembieda, Publisher

Between the Shadows™

Shadows, deceit, concealment and mystery are the major elements in this book. The "shadows" exist on many different levels. One of them is the veil of shadows covering some government organizations. In the world of *Nightbane*, these agencies kept many disturbing truths from the people, and even the rest of the government. Now the secret-keepers have been bested by beings even more ruthless and mysterious than themselves.

"Spook Squad" is a seemingly harmless, even comical term, a childish wordplay on an old 1970's nickname for spies, but it is the name of a group of people who will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. Their current goal is the defeat of dark forces subverting the world governments and enslaving and killing innocent people. Even those who fear and hate the secret-keepers must agree with their motives, if not condone their methods and extreme view of the world. Characters involved with Spook Squad must make many agonizing choices.

Then there are the realms hidden *between the shadows* of reality. **The Astral Plane** is a psychic universe and a gateway to infinite astral domains. **The Dreamstream** is the realm of the subconscious mind, the place where all our fears, hopes and desires come to life while we sleep. Both realms are threatened by the same secret war being fought on Earth. Realms where humans and Nightbane may venture if they know how. Realms where the Nightlords have taken their own dreams of conquest and where they have unleashed new horrors. These two alien dimensions open new possibilities for adventuring and role-playing. Quests of discovery and exploration can be mixed with the themes of war, discovery and horror, and even with cloak-and-dagger espionage.

Psychic abilities are also developed further in this book. Human psychics can be as important in the struggle as the Nightbane, and these masters of the mind have access to the alternate realities of the Astral Plane and the Dreamstream. There, such characters as the Astral Lord and the Dream Maker can build their own perfect worlds, but even they cannot escape the harsh realities of the Ba'al.

Finally, the Nightbanes remain the major players between the shadows. A new faction, additional talents and *morphus* shapes give more choices to players who wish to explore the lives and struggles of these beings.

Welcome to the shadow worlds. May your stay be a pleasant one.

— C.J. Carella

The Spook Squad™

Also known as the American Defense Agency

Rijeka City, Croatia

Gordon crouched behind an overturned wagon. The wooden wheels and the horse-drawn cart *wouldn't* have been out of place two centuries before, but since the war, the Republic of Croatia was poor enough to make a horse a useful modern convenience, and a wagon a *prized* possession.

A mortar shell had overturned the wagon and shredded both the team of horses and the driver. Their remains were pungent even in the cool autumn night. Gordon almost gagged, but remained in hiding. Until his contact made the first move to reveal himself, he *didn't* want to show himself. When his contact did appear — Gordon's fist tightened on the handle of the Tokarev pistol he had taken from the body of a dead Bosnian officer. There was an even chance that he would have to try to kill his contact. Or that his contact would kill him instead.

Gordon had been chosen both for his linguistic skills — he could speak every language used by Bosnians, Croats and Serbs with native fluency — and his looks. He had no problems passing himself off as a local. All well and good, even for a routine survey mission. The CIA wanted some HUMINT, and he was it. Just trying to make sure the Croats *weren't* getting ready to start a new round of ethnic cleansing.

Of course, nobody had counted on Dark Day happening while he was in the field. The Croats, Bosnians and Serbs, never the most stable of peoples, had flipped out completely. Each nation now had its civil war and its own war against both its neighbors — nine separate wars total, everyone against everyone. Since Dark Day, rumors of monsters, kidnappings, ritual murders, and worse abounded. It was "Apocalypse Now" meets "Friday the 13th". Gordon managed a weak smile. He'd even included the movie references in his last report. At that point, he'd been too worried about staying alive to care whether or not the comment annoyed the bookworms at Intelligence.

He dreamily climbed out of his musings to again survey his surroundings. One of the problems about looking like the locals is that you could get killed like the locals. The civil war broke out some two hours after the sun failed to show up. Three days after Dark Day, Gordon's regular contact failed to show up. He came back to the boarding house where he had been staying, only to find that somebody had decided to fire a dozen anti-tank rockets or so into the neighborhood for no good reason he could think of. Gordon had been on the run for five days since. He had used his small cellular phone six times, trying to make contact with his CIA employees. Five of the six numbers had been disconnected. The voice at the sixth number had given him instructions, quick, to the point and with no time for questions, before hanging up.

In the distance, thunder (or was it artillery?) roared dully. Gordon rubbed his eyes. Catnaps in burned-out buildings did

not provide much in the way of rest. When he looked up, he saw a man standing where his contact should be. Gordon raised his gun. "Don't move or I'll shoot!" he yelled in Serbo-Croatian.

"At ease, Gordon," the man replied in English. "I'm here to get you out."

"Who the hell are you?" Even in the dim light Gordon was sure he *didn't* know the newcomer.

"Name's Morris, but it won't mean anything to you. Are we going to get moving, or do you want to chat all night?"

Gordon rose from his hiding place and started walking towards the stranger. "All right, let's go." As they walked through the war-torn streets, he asked, "Can you at least tell me *what's* going on?"

Morris snorted. "I wish I knew. I can tell you this much; I *can't* get you back to the World through normal channels. Somebody, or something, has taken over the U.S. government. We are going underground."

Gordon blinked but said *nothing*. What was this insanity? Morris was apparently military, only soldiers referred to the U.S. as "the World," and he knew about a secret CIA mission. "What do you mean?"

Whatever Morris was going to say was lost in a loud crash. Up ahead, a brick wall was shattered. The destruction was not an explosion, however. An armored figure, shining black in the moonlight, pushed through the bricks as if they were paper. Three others followed it through the hole, stepping into the streets and blocking the way.

"Hounds!" Morris shouted. He pushed Gordon down as he tossed a cylindrical object towards the four figures. A real explosion shook the earth, and dirt and pebbles showered the two men. Before Gordon even fully realized what was going on, Morris was pulling him to his feet and rushing in the opposite direction. "I *don't* think I got them all," Morris shouted as he ran. Gordon was too busy running to answer him. The agent felt his sanity unraveling. He'd thought he had lived in a world of shadows and secrets before.

Pursued by monsters, the two men fled into the night.

Origins

In many ways, the history of Spook Squad (or, as some members prefer to call themselves, the American Defense Agency or ADA) is the history of every intelligence-gathering and federal law-enforcement agency in the United States. At the time of the Dark Day invasion, the U.S. had dozens of "alphabet soup" agencies — the FBI, CIA, NSA, ATF, DEA, and more. Growing paranoia about crime, terrorism and the "war on drugs" had

greatly increased the power and influence of those agencies, and allowed some of their members to start abusing their power and getting away with it. But even the abuses that were made public were only part of the story. Behind the "overt" agencies and organizations were "shadow" or "black" operatives and groups, hidden from media scrutiny and even members of Congress.

Shadow agencies were first born in the chaotic years of the 1950s. Faced with the (real or imagined) threat of Communism, certain elements of the U.S. government felt that even conventional "covert" agencies were not enough to fight the "enemies of democracy." Strategic assassinations, kidnappings and other illegal activities that could not be publicly condoned were deemed to be "necessary evils," and small but highly trained and dedicated groups of men and women were quietly organized. These ultra-secret organizations did not act often, but they were responsible for a number of mysterious deaths and disappearances across the world. After the Vietnam War, the shadow agencies became even more influential, so well hidden that only a handful of people in government knew of their existence. They continued to fight for democracy in all kinds of ways, from training death squads in El Salvador and helping destabilize the Soviet Union to quietly assassinating terrorist leaders.

After the Cold War was over, many of these organizations were left without a purpose. Still, those who controlled them insisted that they were still necessary; terrorists and mad dictators remained threats that needed to be dealt with. Most agencies survived, albeit in a diminished capacity. The same thing happened to their better-known counterparts like the CIA and NSA. Crime-fighting agencies like the FBI and DEA remained strong due to growing concern and paranoia about crime. New ones were established as special crime-fighting units. As the number of "alphabet soup" agencies grew, rivalries and competition between them often ensued. More importantly, the growing federal powers given to those agencies made a few believe they were above the law. Some agencies like the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms (AFT or BATF) and the DEA were accused of abusing their power on many occasions, but by the end of the century all of these organizations continued to be strong and influential.

Shadow Agencies Before Dark Day

In addition to the organizations previously mentioned, the U.S. was a hotbed of secret (or "shadow") agencies; groups funded by the government but whose existence was kept hidden from the general public and even most members of the government. Their very secrecy often allowed these groups to operate above the law. Before the Night Lords' takeover, there were four ultra-secret agencies operating within the U.S. government. They were, in order of importance:

The War Room: This was the smallest but most influential group in the U.S. The founders of the War Room were prominent members of the Truman administration who unofficially declared war on the Soviet Union and Communist expansion. To maintain a "coherent war footing," the War Room recruited military officers, senior members of intelligence and law-enforcement groups, and a small corps of master assassins and spies to serve under their direct control. It is rumored that the leadership of the War Room included two U.S. Presidents, an FBI Director, and several top foreign policy advisors. The group made and im-

plemented plans without consulting or informing Congress or other government officials. Among other things, the War Room tried to assassinate **Fidel** Castro (unsuccessfully), performed a number of illegal activities in Korea, China and Vietnam, and is suspected of having orchestrated assassinations within the U.S., including the deaths of several important political figures.

The Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB): This organization was created to deal with unusual phenomena ranging from UFO sightings to reports of psychic powers. Since public officials claimed that all paranormal events were hoaxes or delusions, the existence of an organization dedicated to investigating them had to be kept secret by necessity. It was also their responsibility to make certain that any "real" evidence did not fall into the media's hands. This included acts of theft, coercion, and a campaign of discrediting witnesses and falsifying data and evidence. The agency discovered a number of supernatural beings but its emphasis on secrecy kept this knowledge from the general public and most government officials.

Team Epsilon: This military unit did not officially exist, and appears in no government records. It was partially under the control of the War Room and was used when military force was needed, but could not be revealed to the public. This small army was made up of elite soldiers often recruited from the ranks of the Green Berets and the SEALs (only the best members from those outfits). The dedicated Team Epsilon soldiers did what they were told, and fought in many a conflict around the world.

The Pandora Project: Partially linked to the PAB, the Pandora Project was the U.S.'s entry into the Psionics Race with the Soviet Union. The goal of the Pandora Project was to create an army of psychics who would use their powers for warfare, espionage and security purposes. Over the years, the Project managed to recruit or kidnap hundreds of psychics, and developed a few technologies designed to detect and counteract their powers.

The Dark Day Invasion

The Nightlords and their minions had been studying the Earth for decades, perhaps centuries. The takeover of the Earth's governments took less than 48 hours. By the end of Dark Day, several key government officials had been replaced by *Doppelgangers*, *Night Princes* or *Avatars*. During that fateful day and the weeks that followed, many security agents were killed or removed from their positions. Very public figures like the President, prominent Congress people and other public servants were left alone — the year 2000 elections were designed to remove them from power without raising any questions. However, almost all Secret Service agents on duty around such figures were killed, and their places taken by supernatural minions. Many of the key figures in charge of keeping the President and Congress informed about the state of the nation and the world were replaced.

The first week after Dark Day was a time of cover-ups and shameful incidents. The War Room and the PAB knew something dangerous was going on, but they were more concerned about covering it up than anything else. Several dozen *Nightbanes*, whose natures were revealed during Dark Day, were taken in by the authorities and placed under the custody of federal agents, allegedly to find a "cure" for their situation. In reality, about ninety of these unfortunates were taken to a secret camp in Montana. An additional hundred or so were captured or

lured into the camps over the following week. On March 15th, the commander of the base received an order from an unidentified member of the War Room. The commander separated the nearly two hundred Nightbanes into two groups and sent them off into the woods under the watch of a company of special forces soldiers. The teenagers, most of them in their Facade form, were then mowed down by machineguns and grenades fired by the two companies of soldiers. The massacre did not go as well as planned, however. Several Nightbanes changed into their **Morphus** shape and attacked the soldiers or made a successful escape. Seventeen soldiers were killed, and about a dozen Nightbanes managed to escape.

The "official" story among Spook Squad members is that the orders were given by a Doppelganger of a War Room member. The ongoing rumor is that the orders came from a human trying to cover up the existence of such creatures by killing them all. Some of the Nightbanes who escaped later went on to join the Resistance or other underground factions. Furthermore, because of countless incidents of extermination and persecution, many Nightbane harbor an abiding hatred for all government agencies, and have sworn revenge against Spook Squad.

Meanwhile, agencies like the **CIA**, **FBI** and **DEA** were taken over by the Nightlords "from the top," by replacing their leaders with Doppelgangers, Ashmedai and Night Princes (see the *Nightbane RPG* for details on these minions). At first, most agents were left alone; the Nightlords did not have the resources to go after all of them, at least not at first. This proved to be a mistake, as many members of these organizations quickly realized that something was terribly wrong. A few unfortunates who discovered hints of the conspiracies made the mistake of taking their discoveries to their superiors — superiors who were no longer human. After disappearances and mysterious "accidents" started increasing in number, many agents became completely paranoid and went underground.

The very secrecy of the "shadow agencies" spared the lives of many of their operatives. At first, the *Ba'al* did not know of their existence, and by the time they did, it was too late. Many members of the War Room, for example, no longer held "public" positions with the government, but had many unofficial ties. Through those ties, they were able to determine what was happening and warn the rest of the group. Even with these advantages, however, about half of the leaders of this and other ultra-secret agencies were killed or captured during the first few weeks of the invasion.

By the end of March of 2000, many agents were in hiding, fearful and paranoid. Ironically, many of the agency operatives in the field continued carrying out their duties, totally unaware that a "new world order" was in effect. To some degree, the members of these agencies were too busy **to notice** what was going on. After all, it was primarily their leaders and the poor fools who stumbled onto the Nightlords who were being initially targeted for elimination; with crime rates and disappearances soaring in the U.S. after Dark Day, and war and chaos erupting elsewhere in the world, there was too much work for the man in the trenches to realize what was happening.

The Rise of Spook Squad

The core of **Spook Squad** was built out of the remains of two shadow organizations, the *War Room* and the *Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB)*. Although both groups were relentlessly persecuted by the Ba'al's minions, enough members managed to escape to reorganize. The surviving members of the War Room went into hiding, some of them putting into effect plans they had in place decades before; anticipating a possible overthrow of the American government — although not even their most paranoid imaginings had accounted for supernatural monsters secretly taking over the world. Years of operating in secrecy within their own government helped them. Many agents faked their own deaths or simply disappeared. Bank accounts and safehouses set up against a future eventuality were activated, and a network of information sources was slowly built.

The first goal of the growing organization was gaining more information about the enemy. This proved to be difficult and dangerous. Many intelligence operatives sent to infiltrate the new government disappeared without a trace. Even worse, others were replaced by Doppelgangers and sent back to spy on the spies! The only thing that stemmed the tide was the survivors of the Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB) and, to a lesser degree, the Pandora Project. Their psychic powers were (barely) able to detect, avoid or foil the supernatural minions of the Nightlords sent to destroy them. Their special abilities, training, experience and other resources also enabled them to firmly entrench themselves between the shadows of even this monstrous new power.

This new covert organization called its self the **American Defense Agency (ADA)**, but would soon become known as the *Spook Squad*. To further bolster their numbers, the organization recruited several "retired" agents who abandoned their civilian lives when they were told about the secret overthrow of the government. It was these old-timers who first dubbed the organization the "Spook Squad." The name was a word play on the term "spook," an old nickname for secret agents, and on the fact that they were going after "real spooks," supernatural monsters with unknown powers. The name stuck, although the organization's official name remains the **American Defense Agency (ADA)**.

Spook Squad learned a few hard facts, gained at the cost of dozens of lives. First, the link between the *Preserver Party* and the mysterious invaders was established beyond a doubt during the 2000 elections. The agency also discovered that some of the strange creatures (Doppelgangers) could mimic the shape of specific humans, and that trained psychics could tell the difference between a normal human and a supernatural replacement. Beyond that, details were sketchy. The invaders had somehow been able to overcome the best security measures of the twenty-first century. It was also unknown as to where they came from. Many intelligence analysts concluded that the strangers must be *aliens* with a high level of technology; this theory continues to be held by several members of Spook Squad. The term "Nightlords" was also discovered, but the former spies weren't sure if it referred to actual people or whether it was some sort of code name, or secret political or religious rank or title.

As information trickled in, the early Spook Squad felt confident enough to attempt taking direct action against the invaders. A team of assassins who tried to terminate the new president was killed to the last man; their horribly mutilated remains left in a hotel room as a warning against future attempts. Several other



operations also went wrong, although the Squad was able to claim a few small victories. The leaders of the organization eventually realized that men with guns and bombs were no match for beings who could change shape, create illusions, or use strange, reality-twisting magic and psionics. Thus, they turned their focus on learning everything they could about their enemies. Regrettably, their enemies did not plan to give them any respite.

In 2001, the **Ba'al** were secure enough in their position to strike at all security agencies in the U.S. They did so by going public with allegations that implicated most federal and national agencies in a secret conspiracy to take over the U.S. government. The so-called "**Alphabet Plot**" (a term coined by the media since it involved most "alphabet soup" agencies) allegedly involved medium-ranking officials in most intelligence and law-enforcement organizations. According to the Preserver Administration, these agents were trying to overthrow the government and establish a dictatorship. There were even allegations that claimed these rogue agents had somehow been involved in causing **Dark Day itself**!

There was little solid evidence to back up any of these accusations. What was presented were compelling fabrications. Unfortunately, some of Spook Squad's own activities against the inhuman usurpers of the U.S. government were uncovered and seemed to supply "proof of the conspiracy. The public, long used to claims of abuse and corruption in the government, was ready to believe and to blame. The media, already under the sway of the Ba'al, helped fuel the hysteria and fear, and did nothing to dispute the allegations or to uncover hard facts. Dozens of federal agents were arrested for treason and conspiracy. An alarming number were killed resisting arrest and others simply disappeared (some went underground, while many were secretly hunted down and executed by Nightlord minions). A few public trials resulted in the convictions and the death penalty for eleven directors and deputy directors. Over a hundred others were sentenced to life in prison, without parole. The new administration with the cooperation of the Congress (largely controlled by the Ba'al), used the conspiracy plot and the public's outcry to disband virtually *all* the agencies created during the twentieth century! The FBI, **CIA**, **DEA** and all the rest were disbanded. When the dust settled, the only federal law-enforcement agency left in place was the **National Security Bureau (NSB)**, a new agency that was totally controlled by the supernatural invaders.

Spook Squad did not meekly accept this turn of events and the massacre of hundreds of dedicated patriots. The still-small organization was able to warn hundreds of agents of the impending catastrophe. At first, most of them were unbelieving — who could accept these stories of shape-shifting monsters taking over the world? But as the first charges and arrests were made, it quickly became obvious that something was terribly wrong. Left with no other recourse, scores of agents joined Spook Squad. The now rapidly growing organization was able to provide agents turned fugitives with new identities, new places to live, and new jobs. In many instances, their entire families were moved; the method used was similar to the Witness Relocation System, only in this case the people involved were fleeing from the U.S. government. Many did not make it, and were captured or murdered by the NSB, but enough managed to survive to strengthen the growing organization by leaps and bounds. A con-

tinient-wide network sprang into existence, ranging from Mexico to Canada.

By 2004, Spook Squad's network was well-established and included thousands of men and women. The organization confronted the invaders on a multitude of fronts, from propaganda aimed at discrediting the Preservers to "the Beachhead," a military base located in the **Nightlands** that conducts raids against the Nightlords' very own homeland! The organization has ties to the military, which has enabled them to "liberate" a sizable arse-



nal from Army storehouses (especially during the early days of the conspiracy, military cooperation becomes more difficult as the Nightlords tighten their control over the country). The Squad operates in many parts of the U.S. and the rest of the world, and has many connections with similar organizations in other countries. Furthermore, a handful of Spook Squad agents, spies and sympathizers can be found operating within various regional police, government and news agencies.

The War Room

Cigarette smoke drifted hazily through the room and stung Doreen's eyes. *Didn't* these people know anything about second-hand smoke? Doreen swallowed her increasing annoyance; she was professional enough to admit to herself that at least some of her anger was there to counteract her fears. The entire setup was meant to intimidate. The long table surrounded by seven seated men and two women. The weak light, ostensibly to allow for the video projection she was going to show them, but which also served to obscure their faces.

Doreen was left standing at the end of the table. No chair had been offered. She was here to report, not to sit with the true leaders of the nation.

No, she corrected herself, the former leaders of the nation. She was still overwhelmed by the fact that the new, public leaders of America, and perhaps the world, were not even human.

"Please proceed, agent Johnson," one of the seated men told her, a hint of impatience in his voice. Doreen realized she had been quiet a few seconds too long.

"I have here a portion of the security camera tapes from the Oval Office," Doreen said. Her laptop computer fed the information to the projector. A color picture appeared on the wall-mounted screen. There was the President, sitting and talking to Congressman Leary, the House Minority Leader. There was no sound. "You have the transcript of the conversation," Doreen continued. "The short version of it is that Congressman Leary was accusing President Carson of illegal use of the NSB to persecute political enemies."

On the screen, Congressman Leary *jumped* to his feet, pointing an accusing finger at Carson, obviously shouting angrily. "Note the time and date on the corner of the screen," Doreen warned. "The tape cannot be tampered with. There was no editing."

President Carson got to his feet. For a second, his thousand-dollar suit bulged at a dozen different places. An instant later, leathery tentacles broke through, shredding the suit. Carson's face twisted horribly; his mouth grew until it became a maw big enough to *swallow* a basketball. Nothing human remained in his place. Even without sound, it was clear that Congressman Leary was screaming in horror. The minority leader turned to *run* from the tentacled monstrosity. He *didn't* go far.

"There is no need to watch the rest of the tape," Doreen broke in, pausing the presentation. Congressman Leary was frozen in mid-step as tentacles reached for him. "We confirmed that Congressman Leary did not survive the encounter."

"*We'll be the judge of what we need and need not see,*" one of the nameless women said coldly. Doreen released the pause button. It did not take long; Doreen had counted the seconds ticking on the *tape's* timer. Nine seconds to shred a human body beyond recognition. The room was silent. She could feel the tension mounting among the power brokers around her. These men and women had known Leary; some of them could have been in Leary's position, but for the grace of God. No one could watch the slaughter and be untouched by it.

Doreen realized the videotape had turned to white fuzz for several seconds before she switched it off. No one turned on the lights, and she did not offer to do so. She knew these people preferred to operate in the shadows. "More interestingly than the tape itself is the fact that President Carson was giving a speech in Nebraska at the time Congressman Leary was killed," Doreen said.

"What conclusions do you draw from this, agent Johnson?" a War Room member asked her. No one asked her for confirmation of the seeming impossibility. They knew she would have enough witnesses, live camera tapes and other proof that the president had been in two places at the same time.

"We believe that there are two or more impersonators operating under Carson's identity," she reported. "Whether or not all of them are creatures like the one we saw on the tape, remains unknown."

"Thank you, agent Johnson," another man said. She recognized his voice; a highly respected general who might have been president had he wanted the job. "You may go now."

As she left the room, she could hear somebody say "I *don't* think we can fight them and win."

Doreen closed the door on the most powerful men and women in the U.S., and shivered.

The creation of the War Room was an outgrowth of the fears caused by the Cold War and the rise of Communism. Its founders believed that war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was inevitable, and that the only way to win such a conflict would be through covert means. With the development of atomic weapons, open warfare was out of the question, so the members of the War Room used less obvious means of attack, such as propaganda, espionage, and assassination. Secrecy was vital; many of the tactics they proposed were illegal and would have resulted in the indictment of the people involved.

For over fifty years, the members of the War Room continued to watch over "the safety of America." The tightly knit circle of men (and by the 1970s, a few women) had access to all the information collected by intelligence agencies at America's disposal, including the Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB). To some degree, the organization helped shape the history of the nation, although for the most part they only watched and acted in small ways. The group would like to take credit for such things as the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, but it is unlikely that their cloak-and-dagger games had much to do with any major world events.

During the last years of the 20th century, the War Room had many clues that something threatened American security. The rapid rise of the Preserver Party, even before Dark Day, had been followed with concern. Attempts to infiltrate and investigate the leaders of the party failed, and resulted in the mysterious disap-

pearance of five agents. Through the PAB and the Pandora Project, the organization was informed of a rise of paranormal activity, but these two organizations were rarely treated seriously by the hardened "realists" of the War Room, and the warnings were ignored Until it was too late. Dark Day came as a shock and a complete surprise; three of the War Room's senior members, all of them active in the government, were killed on that day. Others

were hunted down over the following months, and many of them were implicated in the **Alphabet Plot** scandal.

Now the survivors of the War Room are all living in hiding, some in armored bunkers in the Midwest, others in secret bases in cities. The group meets occasionally, especially to review new evidence about the enemy. They are the leaders of Spook Squad, and they are desperate to regain their lost power and save America.

Paranormal Activities Bureau



It was my fault. I should have never gone in with a first-timer.

Everything was going fine until I realized that the perp was holed up in the motel room. The local yokels were going to move in, and that would have been a massacre, so it was up to Ryan and me to do it right. And Ryan was a first-timer.

"Why are we making the bust ourselves?" Ryan asked as we were gearing up. I let his question slip by unanswered. I was too busy making sure no moron was driving by the motel with their cop lights on. If we spooked the Highway Slasher, he'd be long gone — if we were lucky. If we weren't, the entire Santa Monica Sheriff Department was going to be slaughtered right here on this parking lot.

"This ain't no bust, kid." After I finished putting on the heavy bulletproof vest with the official, unauthorized, FBI label, I opened the mini-safe in the trunk. "First, unload your weapon and use one of these. Don't forget to chamber the first round." I handed him the magazines with an "S" painted on them.

"What's this 'S' stuff? Super-bullets?"

I probably should have lied to him. Might have saved his life. "Silver."

He chuckled. "Silver bullets?"

"Actually, sabot-discarding silver flechettes," I replied levelly. "Silver doesn't tumble worth a damn, so we put a silver

dart on a sabot casing, and it works just *fine*. Same range and power as a 10 millimeter round."

Being *matter-of-factly* about it *didn't* work. Ryan shook his head with disbelief. "What the *hell's* going on? You think the Slasher is a werewolf?"

I shook my head. "Vampire. You've read the briefing material, Ryan. You know this kind of crap exists." Always happens; one out of every three or four agents will think that all the stuff we write about in the PAB files is just bull, stuff to scare the newbies. Ryan was one of those, and we were about to get into it for real. I overrode his next comment. "Listen, load the weapon and follow my lead. If it moves, shoot it. Hell, if it blinks, shoot it. If *there's* any flak about it, it was my direct order. *Kapeesh?*"

He nodded. Hell, I thought he understood, or at least *he'd* follow my damn orders.

We did the creeping routine, got right by the door. The sheriff wanted to back us up, but I waved his men off. They *didn't* have any silver rounds, and I was under orders not to reveal anything. Including the fact that vampires do walk the Earth and sometimes feed on travelers staying at the local Motel Six.

I nodded to Ryan and kicked the door in. We went in.

Even before I entered, the rich, coppery scent of blood flooded my nostrils. According to the *motel's* records, a couple was spending the night here. The Slasher must have brought in the neighbors, too, because I could see enough body parts for four or five people. I went right and Ryan went left. I was betting on the closet, but the bastard was in the bathroom and Ryan saw *him* first.

"Freeze! Hands over..."

Ryan never got a chance to finish the cop routine. Before Ryan said "*hands*", the blood-drenched Highway Slasher was moving. Ryan said "*over*" an instant before the *creature's* claws found his unarmored neck. In the background I heard cries of terror from the deputies in the parking lot as my *partner's* head came flying out of the *motel's* door.

I yelled as I emptied my gun into the Slasher. He *wasn't* expecting silver; the bloodsucker *didn't* even try to *jump* out of my line of fire. I mowed him down where he stood. That *wasn't* enough — silver wounds, but *doesn't* kill vampires — but it gave me time to plant into his chest the small wooden peg I carried in a concealed holster. Even the stake would only subdue the Slasher, but when the PAB team arrived, we would dispose of the bastard the right way. Permanently!

As I waited for the recovery team I tried to avoid looking at the headless corpse of my partner. I ordered the deputies to stay the hell away. They *didn't* seem all that eager to come in anyway.

Ryan had thought the *stakes-in-a-holster* were a gag, just like the files we had on vampire activities. I'm sure that wherever he is now — wherever the dead go — he knows better.

In the world of Nightbane, the supernatural has existed since before the dawn of history. For the first few thousand years of mankind's existence, they were taken for granted. Shamans and priests used psionic and mystic powers to ward off and destroy demons and evil spirits. Warriors and crusaders hunted down monsters that preyed on humankind. Our myths and legends are filled with tales of vampires, faeries, shape-changers and de-

mons. Even modern psychic investigators like Victor **Lazlo** tried to warn society that these creatures were real. With the passage of time and the proliferation of humans as the dominant race, most monsters and entities learned to hide from the growing human population. Eventually, they became so skilled that by the 20th Century, most people thought they were nothing but myths and fantasies. Technology and science had banished the fear of the dark and the ignorant superstitions that claimed there were things out there that walked like men but were not human. And hidden in the darkness, in remote places or among the largest cities, the monsters feasted, protected and concealed by humankind's refusal to believe in them.

The advent of technology and mass media eventually started working against the supernatural. There were enough reports of disappearances, mysterious murders, and strange occurrences to make even rational people wonder. Photographs and movie reels of unexplainable events made it harder to ignore them. By luck, it was the U.S. government that first realized there was more to the world than was apparent. During the 1950s, the fear of Communist saboteurs and spies prompted a number of federal agencies to pay close scrutiny to the people of the U.S. and to keep an open mind about paranormal phenomena. Eventually, a pattern started developing; a pattern that revealed the secret kept hidden for centuries: monsters existed on Earth. The 1950s G-Men discovered not only monsters but people with psychic powers, UFO sightings, and similar strangeness. Even more disturbing, the Soviet Union was conducting its own extensive research into the supernatural. If the Russians ever managed to harness these paranormal powers for their benefit, the entire world might be in danger.

To the U.S. government officials involved, there were no alternatives. Divulging their discoveries would only cause fear and panic. All in all, confirmed and even suspected supernatural (or, as they preferred to call them, "paranormal") occurrences were very few and far between, perhaps two to three dozen every year, and resulted in only a dozen deaths — nothing compared to, let's say, automobile accidents. On the other hand, if the truth was ever revealed, riots, persecution and chaos could ensue. A decision was made to create a secret agency dedicated to both the elimination of supernatural beings and the suppression of evidence that such beings existed. Thus, the **Paranormal Activities Bureau** (usually referred to only as the PAB) was founded in 1954. Every year since then, the organization received its relatively small funding and was left to operate largely on its own. Its agents operated covertly, using FBI or Secret Service I.D.s. These two agencies were kept informed of the activities of the PAB, but only indirectly, and little complete data regarding paranormal events was ever shared.

The PAB's purpose was threefold. First, the agency was responsible for investigating unusual events and to determine whether paranormal elements were involved. Secondly, it was to discredit and hide any information leading to the discovery that the supernatural existed. And finally, it was in charge of developing ways to identify, destroy and neutralize all paranormal threats. By the mid-60's, a fourth goal was unofficially adopted: to research psychic abilities (including magic, which the PAB considered to be a manifestation of psychic abilities), and to find another way to use them for the nation's benefit; this goal was shared by the **Pandora Project**.

For decades, the agency followed their directives with moderate success. PAB agents were the now-mythical "Men in Black" that often cajoled, bribed, sabotaged, discredited, or threatened witnesses to unusual events. On the positive side, the PAB discovered (by trial and error, with the "errors" often costing lives) several ways to fight many supernatural beings, including vampires and even the occasional **Nightbane**.

Collaboration with the Pandora Project led to the training of an elite group of agents with psychic powers. Several dozen such agents were operating in the U.S. at the time of Dark Day. Their abilities allowed them to find and deal with several types of paranormal dangers. The existence of this "psychic team" was kept even from insiders who knew about the PAB. It is not known whether this decision was made to prevent the misuse of psionic powers or to one day make a power play within the U.S. government. It might have simply happened because neither the PAB nor the Pandora Project could positively prove the existence of psionics. Even the cases where psionic powers had actually made an impact did not produce enough evidence to convince many "disbelieving" government officials.

The organization went through a lot to keep their existence secret. The accidental discovery of one of their psychic research programs during the 1990s was "disguised" as a CIA program, and the media ended up ridiculing the CIA without ever suspect-

ing the much larger truth. Very few people in the U.S. government even knew that the PAB existed, let alone what discoveries it had made. Among this privileged minority were the leaders of the War Room, select members of the Pandora Project, the PAB agents directly involved, and a handful of Washington insiders..

Unfortunately, one of these insiders was involved in one of the *Cults of Night* (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 177), and he alerted his masters about the PAB. During Dark Day, the Director of the PAB and most of his staff were murdered by Hounds and Ashmedai. Despite their best efforts, however, the minions of the **Ba'al** were unable to find most PAB agents and researchers; the secrecy surrounding the organization saved it from utter destruction.

When the survivors from the PAB joined the Spook Squad/ADA, their knowledge and abilities proved to be invaluable. Psychic agents were able to deal with Doppelgangers, Hollow Men and other supernatural infiltrators. Even normal agents had the advantage of learning about the supernatural, accepting its existence without psychological trauma, and being taught known ways to identify and fight many of these inhuman creatures. Two of the organization's directors now sit at the War Room, where they help shape the policies and tactics of the entire Spook Squad/ADA.

The Pandora Project

"Once again I must recommend, in the strongest terms, that we disperse the test subjects over a wider area. I am fully aware of the need for secrecy and the difficulty of keeping the current eighty-four subjects in more than ten locations. Yet these difficulties are rendered moot if the subjects manage to break free. The Redwing Farm incident is a stark reminder that we are dealing with abilities we cannot yet understand. The preliminary report shows that once the three subjects managed to interact, they used their abilities to neutralize the drugs and restraints that held them. I believe there is no need for me to attach the casualties report to this memo, nor to emphasize the fact that the same or worse can happen elsewhere. We are dealing with powers that we cannot fully understand, and no precaution can be enough."

— *Memo from Albert Sipowitz, Ph.D., 1998*

During the 1960's, a troublesome report from the Soviet Union was brought to the attention of members of the U.S. government. The Russians appeared to have discovered a number of psychics in their territory, and were in the process of training them to serve as living weapons against the free world. The report was supported by evidence obtained by the PAB — evidence that proved the existence of psychic abilities. Just as the early Soviets' early success in space exploration had spurred U.S. activities in that field, this discovery led to a "psionics race." Unlike the arms or space races, however, this competition was conducted in the strictest secrecy; the government officials in charge felt that the discovery that psychic abilities were real might create panic and paranoia among the public.

The Pandora Project was secretly funded through the same means as the PAB. In fact, the two foundations worked very closely with each other. Pandora's research was made available to the field agents of the PAB, which in turn often helped find and "recruit" potential psychics, as well as to gather paranormal "specimens" for their scrutiny.

Sometimes the recruitment of **paranormals** was honest and above-board; many patriotic youths with psychic powers voluntarily joined the organization. However, willing or not willing, psychics had no option but to cooperate with the PAB and the Pandora Project. Those who refused, and those who were considered to be "potential troublemakers" (a group that often included women, minorities and the poor), were often forcibly kidnapped without even an attempt at convincing the subject to join peacefully. All subjects were brought to a secret facility in Kansas, a former military base converted into a training camp (and, for some, a prison). There the psychics were studied and trained.

Over the next four decades, about five hundred people with psychic abilities were brought into the Kansas research center, and, in 1999, to ten similar facilities scattered around the country. Many of these people died of old age, disease or other natural causes. Some thirty subjects were killed during escape attempts or when their powers were deemed too dangerous. By the 1990's, over a hundred agents with psychic powers were working for the PAB (see the *Spook Squad O.C.C.'s Section*). By the year 2000, the project had over four hundred psychics of varying power in its facilities, and it had started a major avenue of research in the city of Detroit (described later).

In addition to the psychics, the organization had discovered and "acquired" one hundred or so supernatural beings, including about a dozen **Nightbanes**, several vampires and wampyrs, and even a couple of Guardians. Some of these beings were willing participants, but most were prisoners. Some of the Pandora Project's researchers had little compunctions in performing vivisection and other savage experiments on these "monsters." As brutal and inhumane as some of these experiments may have been, through these studies, a wealth of information was acquired, much of which was shared with the PAB (and latter with the Spook Squad).

All this knowledge did not save the organization when the Nightlords arrived. The **Ba'al** knew that the project existed, so all known facilities were attacked by Hounds and Hunters during Dark Day. About half of the researchers, along with half of the psychic or supernatural subjects were slain. However, the Nightlord minions had underestimated the raw power and resourcefulness of the people at these facilities and the other half managed to escape. Some went with the surviving researchers, while others, fearing their former captors as much as the monsters who attacked them, went into hiding. A few of the escaping researchers managed to take all their years of research with them on computer files, adding valuable information to the Spook Squad.

The Pandora Project has carried on its work under the umbrella organization commonly known as the Spook Squad (officially the *American Defense Agency* or ADA). Under this new, secret organization, the Pandora Project relies on volunteers rather than coerced prisoners. Given the dangers facing the entire world, many psychics, the occasional mage, and even a few supernatural creatures have willingly joined the organization. The surviving scientists are now concentrating on learning more about the Ba'al and their minions.

Detroit Metallurgical Laboratories (DML)

The Detroit Metallurgical Laboratories was one of the most ambitious initiatives conducted by the Pandora Project. DML was a front set up to study *Psi-mechanics* — a combination of psionics and technology to create a unique, new brand of technology. Pandora researchers had discovered a small number of psychics who appeared to build "psychic machinery" that could replicate certain psionic abilities and powers. The goal of this sub-project was to create a revolutionary form of technology based on psychic powers.

In the **mid-1990s**, DML purchased several blocks in the worst slums of Detroit. The area was then razed and rebuilt into a shopping mall-sized complex. Security was extremely tight, ostensibly to protect against the street crime outside the complex, but actually to guard the secret research being conducted inside. The DML labs housed a number of psychics and scientists trying to quantify extra-sensory powers. Some of the more "wild-eyed" researchers envisioned a slew of psionic gadgets, brain implants, and instruments that would allow surveillance operatives to read and capture thoughts and emotions, telekinetic machinery that could be operated from a distance (very useful when handling

and disposing of toxic or radioactive materials), and weapons that could destroy or disorient the mind of the target.

Overall, the research did not yield the results the government was hoping to achieve. Despite their best efforts, the scientists were unable to understand how psionic powers worked. Psi-mechanics (see the P.C.C. of the same name in the *Psychic Powers Section* for more information) built dozens of gadgets that worked — but only if *they* were using them themselves. When the devices were disassembled, they were shown to be little more than useless junk, obviously a psychological crutch by which the psychic could funnel his mind powers, rather than an actual psionic machine.

The only breakthroughs came in the field of detecting psionic powers. The DML had access to PAB research (and a few test subjects), and its team of scientists discovered that the use of psychic, and so-called magic powers, emits a previously unrecognized form of energy and high-frequency radio waves. This appears to be a side-effect of the energies released by the use of these powers, and the radio emissions are so weak that most normal receptors cannot register them even at close range. In 1989, DML was able to develop a man-portable sensor system specifically attuned to this energy use (see the *Equipment Section*). The main limitation is that the sensors can only pick up psychic and magic abilities when they are being actively used, and maximum range is a mere 60 feet (18.3 m), depending on the raw power of the psychic unleashing his powers. Still, PAB agents have used this device on many occasions to locate and identify supernatural beings as well as human psychics.

During Dark Day, the DML research center was burned to the ground, allegedly by rioters. In reality, a force of two dozen Hounds led, by an Ashmedai attacked the facility and slaughtered every scientist, psychic, and worker they could find. A gas main was deliberately ruptured and ignited to make it all look like an accident. The DML survivors have successfully reconstructed most of their research and have new facilities. Furthermore, psionic detectors are now part of the Spook Squad's arsenal.

Team Epsilon

The Unknown Soldiers

In the years since the Vietnam war, some people in the U.S. government came to the conclusion that most future conflicts "would need to be resolved in a covert but lethal manner. The only way to promote secrecy was to create a team of highly trained soldiers whose existence was kept even from the President, Congress and all but a handful of non-elected officials. Team **Epsilon's** birth was a matter of handshakes, promises, and carefully diverted funds from other parts of the government budget. Talented, dedicated soldiers were taken to special training bases at secret locations across the country and then "blanked." Their original records were altered and for all practical purposes they ceased to exist. Even in the age of the information super-highway and computers, they were invisible.

When operating with the regular military, Team Epsilon members passed themselves off as members of other elite Spe-

cial Forces teams such as the SEALs, Delta Force, and Ranger units. When they operated on their own, they carried forged documents identifying them as Russians, Bulgarians or members of other nations. Although many of the soldiers led relatively normal lives when not on active duty, nobody, not even their spouses or children, knew exactly what they did or where they went.

In the last three decades, Team Epsilon participated in fifty-eight secret missions, none of which has ever been revealed to either the public or most U.S. government members. Most of the missions consisted of assassinations, military and industrial sabotage, and preemptive strikes against terrorists and other national threats. Fifty-two of the missions were successful and resulted in the collapse of four governments (two of them were nations allied to the U.S.). They were also responsible for the utter destruction of dozens of terrorist and guerrilla movements, many of which never survived long enough to be noticed by the world media. A handful of these missions dealt with the supernatural. On a few occasions, Team Epsilon worked with the PAB, including the eradication of a vampire nest in the Nevada desert and the destruction of a vampire intelligence.

Its secrecy and the non-existence of its agents, at least on paper, saved Team Epsilon from certain destruction after the Dark Day invasion. The government officials aware of them all escaped the first wave of murders and Doppelganger infiltration, so when they went underground, they activated Team Epsilon and had its members go underground as well.

Currently, Team Epsilon has about 300 soldiers, all now part of the ADA/Spook Squad. The soldiers are extensively cross-trained and can operate in teams of 4-12 members. Likewise, one

or two may be attached to a Special Forces Team or espionage team within the Spook Squad or the PAB. About half of them are actively training new recruits (many of them former Special Forces soldiers from "lesser" branches of the service); the other half is conducting secret operations against the Nightlords; some fifty of them are involved in *The Beachhead* operation, a direct attack into the Nightlords' lair (described later in this section).

Regrettably, the enemy is often more than a match, even for Team Epsilon's skills. Before Dark Day, the unit had only six failures in thirty years. In the four years since Dark Day, seven of two dozen missions it has undertaken have failed due to the supernatural powers of the enemy. Only recently have the soldiers learned how to deal with some of the abilities of their inhuman enemy.

The Aftermath

By 2004, the Nightlords' control over all the worlds' governments was close to being absolute. Spook Squad was an organization of outlaws, identified by the Ba'al controlled media as "terrorists" and pursued by the NSB. The leaders of the rogue group called it the ADA, the American Defense Agency, and considered themselves the "government in exile" of the U.S. A secret war was declared.



The Spook Squad Organization

The American Defense Agency

"Spook Squad" is just the nickname for the more impressive and official sounding **American Defense Agency** (ADA). The organization now has thousands of full-time agents and hundreds of additional support personnel, from occasional helpers, sympathizers and informants to mercenaries, freelancers and allies in other factions. The ADA has enormous resources and equipment, easily the equal of a small nation. Yet despite all of this, the group appears to be hopelessly outmatched in its war against the inhuman Nightlords.

The American Defense Agency has organized itself into three major sections. **The Intelligence Section** is in charge of information gathering about the Nightlords, their allies, their activities, whereabouts, and their plans. **The Research Section** draws on the raw data collected by Intelligence and the PAB, as well as from its own experiments and investigations regarding the paranormal in general and the Nightlord minions specifically. This Section is in charge of devising new strategies and weapons to use against the enemy. Finally, the **Operations Section** is the striking arm of the organization. They coordinate all assaults against the enemy and conduct operations ranging from assassinations and sabotage to full-fledged paramilitary raids. Each section has a Director and a Deputy Director. These officials inform and follow the directives of the War Room, who are the ultimate leaders of the ADA organization. Beneath the Directors, there are a number of senior agents and analysts who are in charge of specific projects and special operations.

The rank system after the Directors and Deputies depends mostly on the person's security clearance and what secrets they have at their disposal. Ranks among the operatives are the same as the U.S. army; corporal through major. Field operatives are often simply called "agents," but typically have ranks of sergeant to captain. Commanders and the heads of special operations, safehouses and sub-departments are typically captains and up.

Security Clearances (SC) have been given a number ranking of **zero** (no clearance, nothing secret is revealed to that person), **one** (minimal clearance; can rarely get access to important confidential importation), to **ten** (has access to every piece of information collected by the ADA). Each person's clearance varies from section to section; for example, an agent could have a 4 security clearance in Intelligence and a 1 at Research and Operations. SC-10s are granted only to members of the War Room and (it is rumored) to a few top agents. Directors have an SC-9 in their own department and SC-6 with the other two departments. Information is kept compartmentalized to minimize the damage caused by information leaks and betrayals. Most agents have an SC ranking of only 2-4.

Assignments

Agents are given assignments and missions for which they are deemed best suited for, however, sometimes a situation or available resources place agents in awkward or extremely dangerous missions. Some assignments can include a regular post and/or

duty within the agency, while others involve a variety of field missions. Most field agents operate in the same way that modern-day police and FBI agents function. Basically they are on-call, and either wait until a situation arises that requires them to investigate or take action, or they engage in a daily regimen (street patrol, follow-up investigations, research, etc.) until they are called away on a special assignment or uncover something on their own.

Some missions may last for months or years, and their requirements and importance determine how large and how organized the Spook Squad group will be. The "cell" system developed by the revolutionaries (and the *Nightbane Resistance*) is often used, especially for assignments in "enemy territory." Each cell is a group of 2-20 people performing a specific mission; the members of the cell know very little about anything not directly related to their activities, so if the entire group is captured, they cannot reveal any secrets that will harm other cells.

ADA Personnel

The American Defense Agency, itself, does not have exact records of how many people, directly or indirectly, work for the organization, or exactly who all active operatives are. Most of that information is so deeply classified and compartmentalized that perhaps only the members of the War Room have a clear idea of how many men and women are acting on behalf of the Spook Squad. The best guess is "several thousand"; they include thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands of agents/spies/soldiers, thousands of support personnel, researchers, analysts and mercenaries. Hundreds of informants, sympathizers and dupes who are fooled into helping the agency are found among the dozens of militia and revolutionary organizations, as well as among regional police agencies, the U.S. military and the media. The different types of personnel are classified as follows:

Former Federal Agents: Ex-members of the FBI, NSA, DEA and the PAB all fall on this list. These agents have good investigation skills, as well as some weapons training. Their law enforcement training and field experience has taught them a lot of tricks in such areas as creating false identities, hiding from the authorities, surveillance, investigation, undercover operations and dealing with police agencies. These agents are usually part of Intelligence or Operations missions.

Former Spies: For the most part, these are former CIA or military intelligence agents, with a few members of other countries' spy agencies. They have the most experience working in "enemy territory" where they cannot call for backup or support. Many of these agents spend most of their time training the new recruits for Spook Squad. Regrettably, there were very few "real" spies in the U.S. at the time of the Dark Day invasion, due to shrinking budgets and a growing reliance on electronic and satellite information, instead of actual espionage activities. Most spies have had experience in building and maintaining secret identities, hiding from the authorities, surveillance, investigation, undercover operations, and gathering intelligence. Most former spies work for the Intelligence section.

Former Soldiers: One of Spook Squad's first objectives was to recruit members of the military and law enforcement agencies. The drastic reductions of military budgets have resulted in a lot of ex-soldiers returning to civilian life, where Spook Squad could more easily contact them. Additionally, the ADA has already absorbed many *special operations* units, who are actively fighting the Nightlords. Most "grunts" are now part of the Operations Section.

Although the **Ba'al** have for the most part, left the military alone, they have made a couple of major exceptions. **Fort Bragg**, North Carolina, the headquarters of the best-known Special Forces units in the nation, was one of them. Fort Bragg was the only military base targeted for destruction by the Nightlord minions. The official story is that on October 14, 2000, a psychotic soldier triggered an explosion in one of the armories, an explosion big enough to devastate much of the base and start a fire that destroyed the rest. In reality, a force of 500 Hounds (100 of them Master Hounds), 300 Hunters, 50 Ashmedai, 5 Night Princes and one Avatar descended on the camp and proceeded to massacre the base personnel. The Special Forces soldiers did not die easily, and the attackers lost over half their forces, but at the end of the fight, the Green Berets and Delta Force, among others had been gutted. The few survivors managed to flee into the countryside, and some of them were picked up by Spook Squad agents. The Preserver Administration was painfully careful to cover-up the true events, and most U.S. soldiers have no idea of what happened.

Analysts: Most members of the CIA and NSA at the time of Dark Day were analysts, people who analyzed books, newspaper clippings, and radio and television traffic (as well as the growing Internet electronic messaging), and then wrote papers explaining what it all meant. These skills are not as valued by Spook Squad as by their former employers, especially since many of these "experts" are completely out of their depth when dealing with the Nightlords and their minions. However, some analysts have joined the ADA, where they monitor civilian, military and governmental events/activity, and try to figure out ways to manipulate American public opinion against the Nightlords without starting a panic by revealing the terrifying truth. Most analysts work in the Research section, but a few can also be found helping Intelligence.

Researchers and Scientists: Students of the psyche, supernatural and more traditional men and women of science are actively recruited by the ADA. The former members of the Pandora Project fall under this category. Hundreds of medical doctors, occultists, parapsychologists, weapon designers, and scientists from a dozen specialties are now feverishly working to understand their enemies and find ways of crippling and destroying them. Most of their answers remain unsatisfactory. Researchers work exclusively in the Research Section.

Psychics: The Pandora Project and the PAB had access to a small "army" of men and women with psionic abilities. Additionally, the Spook Squad is always trying to locate and recruit new psychics. In this they are competing with minions of the Nightlords who are also looking for psychics — although they want to kill or enslave them instead. Psychics are considered to be the last line of defense against the nearly invulnerable minions of the Night. Depending on their abilities and skills, psychics can be found in any of the three ADA sections.

Militia Groups: Many people view the events of the early 21st Century with concern or outright panic. Among these are members of groups that resented the government's intrusion into their individual rights, even before the Preserver Government started openly oppressing the American people. Although most militia groups lost a lot of popularity after the Oklahoma City Bombing of 1995, many continued to thrive, especially in the less populated states of the Union. Militia members run the whole gamut from patriots and concerned citizens who wish to protect their civil rights, to gun-crazy maniacs willing to kill anybody who is considered a threat. During the first years of the invasion, the new *National Security Bureau (NSB)* and the Nightlord minions destroyed most large militia organizations, killing hundreds of people and imprisoning thousands more. The few survivors are scattered in small but often well-armed camps. Spook Squad has connections with these groups, often because they were monitoring them before Dark Day. Although the militias hate the former spooks, they hate the current government even more, so most will help the Squad. Some ex-militia members have even joined the military branch of the ADA.

Sorcerers and Mystics: Although the PAB had discovered evidence of the existence of magic in the years before Dark Day, it was considered to be a form of psychic manifestation. A number of men and women with occult powers were captured and studied by the Pandora Project, but always with inconclusive results. Now a few mystics work for the Spook Squad; their biggest contribution has been opening portals into the Nightlands, which was the only thing that enabled *Operation Beachhead* to be launched. Magic practitioners are often underestimated or distrusted by many "mundane" agents, including some of the psychics.



Supernatural Creatures & Nightbane: Most ADA agents will have nothing to do with supernatural beings — except to hunt them down and destroy them. The War Room leaders realize that they may need the unique abilities and knowledge of these superhuman creatures to win the war. These leaders are pragmatic enough to make deals with a "lesser evil" in order to defeat the greater one.

Currently, two dozen **Nightbanes** are working for the organization. Most of them have fairly human-looking or attractive **Morphus**, which reduces the fear and suspicion on the part of their fellow agents. One of the Nightbanes goes by the code name *Lazarus*, and has been working for the U.S. government since the end of World War I! It appears that even then the leaders of secret agencies were prepared to make exceptions if they served their purposes. In addition to the Nightbanes, several **wampyrs**, a few vampires, and some **Doppelgangers**, among others, are part of the organization. However, many field agents and even one or two of the Directors have very little tolerance or respect for these beings, and they sometimes find ways to betray or frame them. At least 50% of the agents avoid having to work with them, although Special Forces teams have shown amazing tolerance for these superbeings.

Note: Although the Spook Squad description has focused on the organization's origins, structure and war against the Nightlords, it is important to remember that they generally regard *all* supernatural and **nonhuman** creatures to be the enemy. As a result, members of the Spook Squad actively (and secretly) hunt down monsters preying upon American citizens. This includes vampires, **wampyres**, **Nightlord** minions and evil Nightbanes. Unfortunately, these warriors are so war weary, jaded or prejudiced that they frequently shoot first and ask questions later when **Nightbane**, Guardians or other superhuman beings are involved. This means innocent and even friendly Nightbane are killed by Spook Squad. And in some instances, the ADA agents are so blinded by hate (or fear) that they deliberately kill any supernatural creature they encounter, man, woman or child — a reason for the Nightbane and others to fear and avoid the Spook Squad.

ADA Resources

Before Dark Day, all the agencies of the U.S. had budgets in the billions of dollars, as well as the support of American government, one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Spook Squad's resources pale by comparison, although they are still greater than those of any other faction fighting the Nightlords.

A number of the leaders of the ADA left their original posts with several billion dollars of government funds in their pockets. Most of the embezzling was done electronically, transferring huge quantities of money to special accounts, and from there, "laundered" through dummy corporations. It helped that some of the thieves were FBI agents who had been fighting money launderers and embezzlers for years. Some of it was actual cash; a number of renegade Treasury agents stole over a hundred million in old bills about to be burned off; others made similar, albeit smaller heists. More money was acquired by "liberating" cash from the government. A number of robberies targeting federal and state institutions have carried away millions of dollars in government money. Some of the members of the War Room also have large personal fortunes, and have donated them to the cause. Regrettably, all these resources only barely cover the Squad's expenses, and the organization may suffer monetarily in the future, which might lead to robbing private institutions like banks.

In addition to money, Spook Squad has access to one of the largest arsenals in the world. During the chaotic months following Dark Day, a number of U.S. Army and National Guard armories were looted, with the stolen weapons and equipment taken to secret storage facilities across the country. It is believed that Spook Squad has enough weaponry to field an army 50,000 strong — far more people than they actually have. Among the stolen weapons were a dozen tactical nuclear warheads — one of the first operations from *The Beachhead* consisted of a nuclear strike against one of the **Nightlords'** City States in their home dimension, the **Nightlands**. The weapon's conventional explosives went off, but failed to trigger a nuclear reaction. Two other bombings were attempted, and both failed. Either the entire series of weapons were defective, or the Nightlords have some magical measure to protect against the activation of nuclear weapons. For the time being, Spook Squad is hanging on to the rest of their weapons; they have no intention of using them on Earth, at least at this stage.

Other resources include hundreds of cars, houses, research centers and other facilities. The ADA also maintains a strong presence in "cyberspace" through the services of dozens of hackers and computer programmers who have built a number of communication nodes in the Internet. Through these nodes the Squad keeps in touch with other agents, as well as other agencies in other nations.

ADA Bases

Spook Squad operates from a number of locations. Some are small and unremarkable, places like a general store in a small town, or an apparently harmless software company in a big city. Some are more impressive, secret military bases in remote areas of the U.S., large underground complexes in mountains, and small Pacific islands that are kept supplied by nuclear submarines.

The more notable bases of the organization are described below. For some examples of Spook Squad's common bases of operations, refer to the *Places of Interest* Section.

Doomsday Island

This melodramatically-named place is the largest stronghold of Spook Squad. Its location is a closely guarded secret, but is believed to be a tiny island somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, far away from normal shipping lanes. In fact, it is so small and insignificant that it was never inhabited, although it had a weather station erected in the 1960s; now long abandoned. Unknown to most people, as the weather station was built, a secret underground facility was also constructed. The facility is a network of man-made caverns with a subterranean entrance usable only by submarines. Nicknamed "Doomsday Island" by those in the know, the underground facility was one of the hideaways intended for use by the U.S. president in case of global nuclear war. Its existence was known only by half a dozen people in Washington and a small team of maintenance and security people; not even the president knew of it.

After the Nightlords and their minions had seized control of the U.S., Spook Squad activated Doomsday Island. The place is now used for training missions and as a research center. The base is kept supplied by four nuclear submarines, vessels that were to be decommissioned and that the War Room secretly kept active immediately following the Dark Day invasion. The subs do not **have** their nuclear weapons anymore, but are useful as secret transport ships.

Groom Lake

For decades, this mysterious military base has had a reputation for holding strange secrets; ostensibly a weapon research facility, the Groom Lake base has been accused of holding a captured UFO and perhaps some alien prisoners, among other things. Now, Groom Lake is a fortress under siege. Officially, this military base continues to serve the U.S. government as a testing ground for new aircraft and weapon systems. Unofficially, it is in open rebellion against the U.S. government (actually, against the Nightlords and their minions).

The base is surrounded by NSB agents and Nightlord-controlled military units, supposedly to keep the curious out, but actually to keep the rebels in! Attempts to take the base covertly (using Hounds, Hunters, Ashmedai and other minions) have, so far, failed miserably. Two Night Princes and one Nightlord Avatar were destroyed in these raids. In 2003, a "military exercise" used an armored brigade (composed mostly of Doppelgangers and Hollow Men, with a few human sell-outs) and over a hundred Hounds to attack the base. The attackers retreated with heavy losses, reporting that the enemy was using energy weapons to destroy both tanks and supernatural creatures. Furthermore, a number of Guardians were spotted helping the base troops defend the area.

Nothing gets in or out of the Groom Lake base! Yet the rebels holed up inside continue to survive and communicate with the rest of Spook Squad. How this is done remains a mystery to even the rest of the Squad, although UFO sightings are numerous in the surrounding area. Most Squad members only know that some unusual research was being conducted at the base, and that it somehow has managed to survive. A number of rumors circulate among the spooks, ranging from the reasonable to the outlandish:

- The technology at Groom Lake is all Earth-made, and consists of cutting-edge weapons and vehicles that have been able to fight the Nightlord's minions to a standstill.
- The base is supplied from the Nightlands, where its counterpart sits in a forbidding mountain range, too well-defended for the Nightlords to attack.
- The Groom Lake base has been taken over by extraterrestrials (the Guardians?) who have agreed to work with the ADA against the common threat of the Nightlords.
- Groom Lake has a number of crash-landed UFOs captured over the last fifty years. Researchers have used this alien technology to build wondrous weapons and devices that continue to protect the base from the Ba'al. Small UFO ships are among these wonders and are used to travel in and out of the base unnoticed on supply runs.
- The base has several dimensional portals built years before Dark Day. These portals lead to a secret Astral Domain (see the *Astral Planes* section for more information) where several other portals going to other places on Earth and perhaps the Nightlands, enable the forces at Groom Lake to slip people and supplies past the siege lines the Nightlords have built around the base. A related rumor also claims that the people or entities controlling the Astral Domain made contact with a group of Guardians from beyond the Void, and these Guardians have been assisting the base personnel, much to the chagrin of the Spook Squad's leadership.
- Scientists at the Lake opened a *rift* to a dangerous and violent dimension of magic. A number of powerful monsters slithered through before it could be closed; and now the scientists, assisted by Spook Squad psychics, are doing their best to contain the creatures in a dimensional envelope. The Nightlords have not mounted a decisive assault because they fear what might be released. Guardians have slipped through the siege lines to help contain the horrors, which they believe to be a bigger threat than the Nightlords themselves!

ADA Operations

Spook Squad's war against the Nightlords is relatively quiet and subtle. Although violence has a place in the conflict, the organization is more interested in infiltrating and destroying the Nightlords without damaging the American people any more than they already have been. The former secret-keepers also want to hide the situation from the "masses." Ideally, the leaders of the War Room want to destroy the Nightlords and restore order without ever letting the "man in the street" know that something was ever amiss. This seemingly impossible goal sometimes causes the ADA to botch or abort operations because its members **don't** want to alert the public to the fact that monsters walk the streets and rule the world. This sentiment also divides the organization's resources to strike at other supernatural menaces whenever they are unearthed, particularly raids against vampires and evil/criminal Nightbane (friendlies get caught in the cross-fire regularly).

Operations on Earth

Operations on Earth can be broken up into the following categories:

Espionage: Many agents are actively working to gain intelligence on the Nightlords, their minions, and their plans. Other targets include the Preserver Party, the Nightbanes, vampires, and other supernatural beings. In the years before Dark Day, most espionage was done by satellites that took pictures of any facilities or places of interest; old-fashioned methods were all but abandoned. Since the satellites are now out of their hands, the spies of Spook Squad have come to rely on the "human intelligence" aspect of espionage. A number of old tricks like wiretaps, electronic surveillance, informants, interrogation of captives, and the stealing or photo-copying of documents are back in use, supplemented with newer tactics like computer hacking, magic or psionic eavesdropping, telepathic interrogation and similar unorthodox methods. Issues like civil rights have been set aside; Spook Squad agents will follow, spy on, intimidate, brutalize and even kill anybody they deem to have information or seems to be a threat. Although most agents are not ruthless enough to harm innocent people (especially Americans), some will do whatever is necessary, and many are especially savage and cruel when dealing with Nightbane and other nonhumans. The moral dilemmas of such tactics, even in the face of the danger from the Ba'al, remain a problem for Spook Squad members.

Research and Development: The Research Section is concerned with developing new and better ways to destroy, contain and spy on the enemy. Their studies are conducted in hidden facilities, usually far away from cities; a few are operating "undercover," posing as legitimate and harmless private companies while they work for the destruction of the Ba'al.

So far, R&D has produced little to show for their efforts. The best developments have been in the field of weapons. A number of weapon systems have been designed to handle supernatural creatures and are in production, albeit in limited quantities (see

the *New Weapons and Equipment* section). Captured minions of the Nightlords have been studied, dissected (and in some cases, vivisected) and put through a battery of tests. The tests have provided very little beyond the fact the creatures are not human and are immensely strong and hard to kill. As one biologist put it, "Everything I know, all my knowledge of life and nature, tells me that they shouldn't be alive — they shouldn't even exist." The apparent failure of science to provide an adequate explanation has been kept a secret from most agents due to fear it would lower morale. It has certainly demoralized many of the scientists involved, a couple of whom have even suffered nervous breakdowns.



Disinformation and Propaganda: The purpose of these operations is two-fold: to hide the existence of Spook Squad to the Nightlords (and to the public at large), and to subtly undermine the credibility of the Preserver Government.

The *disinformation* part of the operations is usually meant to confuse the authorities. Common stratagems include "framing" an individual or organization for an operation carried out by Spook Squad. Common scapegoats include human members of the Preserver Government (always a nice twist of irony for the agents), criminal organizations, gangs, police officers and law enforcement agencies, rogue militia groups, terrorists, other supernatural beings, and Nightbane factions, especially the Resistance. Since many Spook Squad members consider the Nightbane to be just as dangerous as the Ba'al (particularly those who have been approached by the Spook Squad but have refused to work with them), the Nightbane, and to a lesser degree Guardians are a favorite targets of "the frame."

Also, some agents have discovered that the Nightlords have their own rivalries among themselves, and sometimes a carefully crafted deception will play their minions against each other. The most successful operation of this type led to all-out warfare between Hounds serving two different Nightlords. When the dust settled, dozens of the creatures were dead, and the two Nightlords involved no longer collaborate (they won't even talk to each other).

Propaganda operations are meant to arouse public opinion against the Nightlords and their administration. With the press firmly under the control of the Nightlords' minions, would-be rebels cannot count on the news to make their point. Instead, some Spook Squad teams operate pirate television and radio stations. These stations are usually mobile, built into a van or small truck, but are rarely strong enough to break into the regular programming of more than a 2-5 mile (3.2-8 km) radius in a city (double in the country). Their transmissions tell the truth about the corruption and some of the crimes of the Preserver Administration, although they never mention the fact that "monsters" are involved.

A few of the "pirate" stations are operated by idealistic journalists who do not realize that some of their contributors and sponsors are members of a secret organization like Spook Squad. Others are under the control of ADA agents or militia members who will not hesitate to put all manner of lies on the air if it will help their cause.

Additionally, underground newspapers, pamphlets and fliers are printed by personal computer and distributed widely; hundreds of thousands of Americans read these papers, even though most do not believe their claims and accusations. The Internet is another place to disseminate information. Despite the best efforts of the NSB and their equivalents in other countries, it is almost impossible to trace electronic posts if they are properly camouflaged. The main problem with the Internet is that Spook Squad's posts share space with all manner of lunatic babblings, as well as reports from other factions, and thus are often lost or overlooked by 'net surfers.

Assassination: Although this practice has never been officially condoned by most governments, it has been used time and time again. Spook Squad feels no need to restrain itself, especially since the enemy is not even human. Targets of assassination attempts include Doppelgangers and Ashmedai masquerading as government officials, human collaborators, especially Preserver Party leaders, traitors to the Spook Squad itself, and, of course, the Ba'al and their minions. The easiest targets are human; scores of successful "hits" have decimated the few remaining human leaders of the Preserver Party and has eliminated many prominent NSB agents. Doppelgangers are only marginally more difficult, except that the doubles of important government figures are very well protected by both the NSB and minions of the Nightlords. Most assassination failures have involved the more powerful supernatural servants of the Ba'al, which has required changes in weapons and tactics.

The most common assassination method is sniping; a small team of 2-5 people assists a pair of riflemen in finding, securing and then escaping from their firing position. Usually, the target is placed under surveillance days or even weeks in advance, while the assassin team familiarizes itself with the target's routine, as well as estimating the dangers of any defenses, body-

guards, possible obstacles to the escape route, danger to civilians, witnesses, and other factors. When the victim is in the open (often as he or she steps off a car or is walking out of a house), one or both shooters will fire once or twice and then follow the escape plan. This method works fine for human targets, but some supernatural creatures are too hardy to be killed even by heavy rifle slugs. When the target is identified as non-human, the sniper team sometimes uses anti-tank rockets or grenade launchers (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 218). It is taken into account that these military weapons may kill or injure dozens of innocent bystanders, so populated areas are avoided. Sometimes, agents have been ordered to carry out the assault even though innocents may be endangered. One such occasion was the reported visit of a Nightlord Avatar to New York City. The attack involved firing on the target's limousine with two anti-tank rockets. One passerby was killed in the ensuing explosion and half a dozen others were injured; to add insult to injury, it appears that the avatar survived the attack!

Other assassination methods include using silenced handguns at close range, car bombs, poison (rarely used now, since many supernatural beings are resistant or immune to toxins) and the occasional stabbing or strangulation. A few agents are trained to kill people and make the murders look like accidents. These methods are used by the more ruthless factions of Spook Squad against "civilians" whose only sin is that they know too much. Most agents do not know and would not condone such actions, even if done in the name of the war against the Nightlords.

Military Strikes: This option is avoided whenever possible, since it involves valuable resources and equipment, however some objectives are worth the price. Spook Squad is particularly interested in the locations of the Nightlords and their Avatars, since they are the leaders of the invasion. Other favored targets are large concentrations of supernatural beings such as Hounds and Hunters (only if the ADA can mount a large enough assault), or large groups of NSB agents, all of whom are considered traitors to humankind. Most military strikes are small raids; Spook Squad does not dare concentrate more than a hundred soldiers at any one time; they cannot afford to lose more operatives than that on any one strike.

Most military strike operations follow a "special forces" pattern: a group of infantry soldiers, with minimal support, attack using hand weapons against a specific **target(s)**. Some of the more notable operations included: a mortar and rocket launcher strike against a Los Angeles mansion — the headquarters of a Cult of Night in which over a dozen Hounds and other minions, two Night Princes and nearly a hundred human cultists were destroyed; a failed raid against a Rehabilitation Camp (see the *Places of Interest Section*) to rescue political prisoners (the raid failed and half of the sixty-man team was captured or killed in action); and the ambush of an Ashmedai masquerading as the Governor of Kansas, in which the Ashmedai and several dozen Hollow Men were destroyed.

Theft: Funding continues to be a problem for Spook Squad. As one agent put it, "We are serving the taxpayers but we ain't getting any tax money." Larceny is one of the ways to resupply the coffers of the organization. Over the years, Spook Squad has recruited a number of talented hackers, burglars and safecrackers, and has put them to work stealing from the Preserver Administration. A few major robberies have been conducted with

full military support; special forces soldiers have helped scout the area, subdued or killed guards, and protected the escape of the thieves. For the most part, these robberies avoid harming innocent people. Some rumors speak of rogue ADA agents lining their pockets with stolen money, and even planning and executing their own capers using weapons and equipment from Spook Squad.

The Beachhead

Operations in the Nightlands

The sky was the same as in Dark Day. The first time he had seen it, Lucas had known. This was Earth's future unless somebody stopped the enemy.

"I really don't like all this Voodoo crap," Minelli muttered under his breath. Lucas nodded in agreement. It was surreal; their arrival to the Beachhead had been wrapped in mystical mumbo-jumbo. He and the rest of the platoon — a mixed force of former SEALs, Green Berets, Marines, Rangers — had stood in a field in Nebraska, surrounded by a painted circle, while half a dozen people in outlandish costumes had chanted and performed a heathen ceremony of some sort. At first, he had not thought anything was going to happen. A part of him did not want anything to happen. Another part remembered the massacre at Fort Bragg, the deaths of hundreds of the best U.S. soldiers at the hands of inhuman monsters. If going through this "Voodoo-crap" allowed him to strike back, that'd be fine with him.

Something had happened after an hour of chanting. The platoon had been engulfed in a flash of light and reappeared in the Nightlands, the source of the invasion. The briefings had tried to explain where they were, and what was going on. Half of the platoon members still did not believe the briefing.

Now his scouting team of three Desert Patrol Vehicles — three sand buggies equipped with machineguns and rocket launchers — were moving around in a hellish wasteland. The briefings had been right; this place could not be anywhere on Earth.

The calls on the radio were becoming shriller. "Relief team, what's your ETA? My position is being overrun!" Not even the hissing static could mask the sound of guns in the background. The same sound that Lucas could hear echoing in the distance.

"ETA's less than a minute!" Lucas responded. Standing behind him, Minelli chambered the first round in his .50 caliber machinegun. Their patrol was the only unit who would get there in time. "Hold what you've got, we're on the way!"

"...oger...out." Static and gunfire drowned out the answer. Lucas wanted to speed up, but the broken terrain threatened even their highly maneuverable vehicles. The soldier remembered a time when he would have never gone charging into a firefight with three jeeps. A time when the beleaguered foot patrol could have called for an air strike, for helicopter-dropped reinforcements, for tank and artillery support. Now it was all back to guys with guns running around and hoping not to get killed.

"I see 'em!" Minelli shouted. Their patrol vehicle had crested a dune. The foot patrol had made their stand on top of a similar



hillock. Dozens, perhaps well over a hundred Hounds had surrounded them. The muzzle flashes of the survivors' rifles gave off enough light to show that over half of the twenty-man patrol were down, some of them hacked to pieces. A Hound waved a severed human head as a banner as it organized the rest for a final charge.

Minelli cursed hoarsely and fired his *machinegun* at the leader. Two of the heavy bullets actually bounced off the armored skin of the beast; the rest of the burst cut it down. Lucas fired the two anti-tank rockets mounted on the sides of the vehicle. One hit a rock outcropping and exploded harmlessly. The other hit a Hound *squarely*, turning its body into shrapnel that peppered the others. The other two dune buggies opened up; instead of a machinegun they had *MK-49* grenade launchers, enabling them to rain *dozens* of explosive *charges* on the enemy. The monsters were tough, but not even they could survive that onslaught. They stood their ground, though, some charging the survivors on top of the hill, others trying to reach the patrol vehicles. Lucas saw a flurry of fighting on top of the hill, where none of his men dared to fire for fear of hitting their own. He drove on while Minelli used short bursts to mow down the Hounds attempting to stop them.

It wasn't over until every single one of the monsters was down, literally shot to pieces. Lucas drove the buggy all the way

to the top of the hill, careful to avoid any human-looking bodies.

Three men were still moving. One was *Maclean*, a Marine Sergeant and probably one of the toughest men Lucas had ever known. He was still hacking at an unmoving Hound with his K-Bar. The *knife's* stip was broken, embedded into the eye socket of the creature. The *Hound's* spear had run Maclean through; the Marine had pulled himself up the shaft to slash at the monster. Even as Lucas and Minelli leaped from the vehicle, Maclean convulsed and went limp, still clutching his broken knife.

Lieutenant Collins from Delta Force was holding his Beretta pistol in one hand and the hand radio in the other. He was laughing maniacally, uncontrollably. Next to him was *Chavez*, the machinegunner, staring at his surroundings with empty eyes. His light machinegun had overheated; the near-melted barrel had burned *Chavez's* hands to the bone, but the soldier didn't seem to notice. A thin line of drool ran down his mouth.

The best soldiers in the world, dead or insane. Lucas wanted to join *Collins's* insane laughter. "How long?" he screamed towards the sky. "How long can we take this?"

The impassive blackness held no answers.

Seen as an exercise in futility by many senior members of Spook Squad, The Beachhead is a human-held base in the Nightlands. Here, soldiers and assassins try to stage raids and attacks

on the cities of the Ba'al, hoping to cause confusion and chaos and to learn more about the enemy. This base is an attempt to take the fight to the enemy, if nothing else, for morale purposes.

The existence of the Beachhead is only possible through the intervention of Angus Dowson, a mysterious individual who somehow convinced the members of the War Room to trust him. Dowson appears to be a sorcerer of some sort. He has built, or found, a fortress inside an enormous cavern at the foot of a mountain range, sixty miles (96.5 km) north of the Nightlands' version of Chicago. The fortress appears to be very old. Among its features is a small pyramid, in the middle, which Dowson claims to use to power his magic. The medieval-looking buildings are large enough to house hundreds of troops. Army engineers recruited by Spook Squad have added a great deal of shelters, vehicle depots and camouflage. So far, the Nightlord's minions have not discovered the site; mainly because the base's troops never strike at a target within one hundred miles (160 km) of its location.

Most missions from the Beachhead have been scouting and exploratory expeditions. Occasional clashes with minions of the Ba'al and other creatures prowling the Nightlands make even those missions a lethal gamble. Typical scouting missions use teams of 10-40 soldiers (squad to platoon strength), sometimes with a few vehicles. As the base grows, more combat vehicles are being employed, mainly Bradley IFVs and Desert Patrol Vehicles (see the *Weapons and Equipment* section). The teams have built a number of smaller firebases, some hundreds of miles away from the Beachhead. This is a risk, but the planners reason that the discovery and destruction of one team will at least not give away the location of the main base or other satellite outposts. So far, the Hounds and Hunters that usually go after the soldiers are not interested in taking prisoners for interrogation. The Beachhead soldiers do not know if this is because they are relatively simpleminded creatures and have not been given such orders, or simply because the Nightlords do not consider this invasion to be a threat.

Smaller teams of 4-10 soldiers have ventured into the City States of the Nightlords. These teams include spies as well as Special Forces teams. Their mission is to try to learn as much as possible about the enemy, and also to try to start a resistance movement in the Ba'al's backyards. About half of the teams were discovered and slaughtered, but the rest have managed to hole up in the cities and have linked up with refugees and renegades; mostly Dopplegangers and human ex-slaves hiding in abandoned buildings or underground tunnels. Some Nightbanes who operate in this area have also formed alliances of convenience with the human troops.

Despite a handful of little victories, including the destruction of hundreds of Hounds and Hunters, the Beachhead constitutes a drain of manpower and resources that worries many members of Spook Squad. Casualties are high, and the soldiers involved often suffer devastating blows to their morale; several dozen soldiers have been psychologically scarred by what they have seen and experienced on this front. It is estimated that nearly one-third of the veterans of the Beachhead are suffering from enough mental disorders to disqualify them for duty under any other circumstances — but the situation is so desperate that these soldiers are still being sent out to fight the minions of Night.

The ADA actually has a number of operations running in the Nightlands. As the "spooks" like to say, "There's no defense like a good offense." Besides the Beachhead, a few psychics, magicians and Nightbanes from the organization, occasionally venture into the lands of night. Most of these operations are information-gathering missions. Spook Squad has quickly learned that trying to fight the Nightlords on their own turf is almost always doomed to failure.

Agents operating in the Nightlands have discovered, to the chagrin of their superiors, that other supernatural factions, especially those led by Nightbanes, have been far more successful in this area. Furthermore, agents active in the Nightlands are establishing more ties and friendships with Nightbanes who they are beginning to recognize as committed enemies of the Ba'al and trustworthy allies. The leadership back on Earth finds this extremely troubling. Instead of making the ADA leadership recognize that they need to forge an alliance with these nonhuman groups, it has only strengthened their distrust of all supernatural beings.

Missions in the Nightlands tend to be standard military style operations, as well as the same patterns previously described, however support is greatly reduced due to the difficulty in reaching the Nightlands. So far, a handful of sorcerers are the only people who can transport men and materials into this shadow world, making resupply, reinforcements and movement of agents extremely difficult.



Dangers Within

As one of the largest freedom fighting organizations in the world, Spook Squad could hold in its hands the key towards victory against the Nightlords. However, the organization is beset by a number of internal threats that may bring down the entire organization.

The "Need to Know" Syndrome

The American Defense Agency (ADA) is the bastard child of a number of covert agencies. For most of the men and women of Spook Squad, secrecy has been a vital element of their careers and even their lives. As a result, many within the organization pay more attention to keeping things from the public, and even from each other, than in actually getting things done. The most pathological members of Spook Squad would probably let the Nightlords destroy the world as long as they can hide the fact from the general public! Thankfully, most ADA members are not quite as unstable as that.

Still, "need to know" is a big problem, made worse by the fact that some of the activities of the Squad are not condoned by other factions or groups within the organization. For example, the assassination of human dupes or servants of the Nightlords is something many of the more research-oriented members do not like. By the same token, many Spooks want nothing to do with supernatural beings and may avoid or actually attack or betray members who engage in the recruitment or rescue of Nightbanes, psychics and nonhumans.

To the leadership of the ADA, the solution is simple: do not let agents know anything that might upset them. As a result, the organization suffers from the "do not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing" syndrome. Many field agents have no idea of what they are fighting against, or are not prepared to deal with the unexpected. Sometimes, important data that would lead to the success of a mission or even the survival of the agents involved is not passed along, with catastrophic consequences.

Due to this disinformation and secret-keeping, many if not, most ADA members only have vague rumors (often totally off the mark) to guide them. Common rumors include:

- The Dark Day invasion was the brainchild of a team of renegade scientists, possibly Communists trying to regain their former grandeur.
- Aliens from another planet used high technology to mask their UFO landings (thereby triggering Dark Day) and relied on shape-shifting artificial creatures to take over the government.
- The Nightlords are myths created by a Satanic cult that somehow has managed to convert some of the most powerful people in the U.S. There is no such thing as monsters, Hounds or other creatures; it's all a huge hoax perpetrated by the cult to convince its followers.
- So called "supernatural" beings exist, but they are actually the result of genetic engineering experiments that were designed to create a breed of super-soldiers. The experiment got out of control and now the bio-engineered monsters have taken over the world. Competing rumors blame the U.S., a coalition of European nations, the Chinese, the **former** Soviet Union, or even the **ADA**!
- The coming of Dark Day is the beginning of the end of the world! Some religious members of the ADA try to compare the events following Dark Day with depictions found in the Bible, Kohran and other prophetic writings. Those who believe in this rumor see themselves as being on the side of good in an epic struggle. Many of the more zealous members will not hesitate to do anything to win this war, including harming innocents.

- The Nightlords, Nightlands, Nightbane and vampires are all real. Supernatural beings have always co-existed with humans, but were dismissed as myths and legends. Dark Day, whatever it was, has opened one or more dimensional portals to the world of the supernatural, allowing demonic monsters to flood into our world. The most powerful of these malignant beings are the Nightlords and their minions. The Nightlords have somehow managed to take over the U.S. government and are quietly tightening their control over this nation while they continue to expand into others, including Canada, Mexico and Russia. Agents with an interest in New Age literature may point to pop-authors like Victor Lazlo as pioneers in the area of supernatural research, and who warned that something like this could happen.

G.M.'s Note: When running a Spook Squad campaign, it will be sometimes difficult for the players to not act on knowledge their characters should not have. To emphasize the atmosphere of deceit and confusion, it would be a good idea to actually change some of the "facts" presented in the Nightbane RPG. This will keep the players, and their characters, guessing.

Disbelief

Even some agents and researchers in Spook Squad who know some of the real facts about Dark Day and the invasion of Earth often have trouble believing it — the entire notion seems too impossible to believe. Invading aliens from another solar system, maybe, but demonic, shape-changing monsters from an evil dimension? It seems too outlandish to be possible. Many new recruits need to confront these "monsters" firsthand before they can believe, and be prepared for them. The highest number of casualties is among the new recruits and peripheral supporters (informants, stool pigeons, meres, etc.).

Sometimes the agents would rather listen (cling) to any number of unlikely rumors than face the truth. This disregard for the horrible reality is reinforced by some unofficial policies within Spook Squad. For example, terms like "magic," "supernatural," "demons," and "monsters" are avoided in most reports and briefings. They are replaced with such euphemisms as "paranormal," "of undetermined origins," "psychosomatic effects," or "currently unexplained." Monsters like the Hounds are referred to as "the enemy," "aliens" and even "Hounds," but the latter is not particularly descriptive. The Nightlords are often called "cult" or "enemy leaders."

Low-ranking agents, new recruits, informants and well intentioned (but foolhardy) militia members, vigilantes and peace officers are often lulled into believing that they are not facing superhuman monsters with powers they can barely understand, let alone deal with. This attitude even exists among some scientists who will absolutely refuse to accept the fact that the beings they are studying are utterly inhuman, not bound by the laws of nature, and may be creatures of magic.

Not everybody is as stubborn, however. Former members of the PAB and the Pandora Project have had first-hand contact with the unexplainable even before Dark Day, and they are not fazed by the horrors of the supernatural. The leaders of the War Room are realists, and pragmatic enough to accept things, no matter how hard they are to believe, but only after they are confronted with incontrovertible evidence — they are among the converted.

The problem remains, however, that a large percentage of Spook Squad members are not psychologically prepared to deal with the supernatural invaders, even when they accept psychic phenomena, the existence of magic, and the fact that they are engaged in a covert war against inhuman monsters. Imagining it in one's mind is one thing, but seeing it, and living it, is quite another.

Factions Within the Squad

As in many institutions, not everybody agrees about what the means and ends of the ADA should be. In the four years since *Dark Day*, groups within the organization have been jockeying for a position of power, or pursuing their own agendas. Often, these agendas run counter to the main objectives of Spook Squad.

Note: Many of the groups described below are nicknames given to them by outsiders or informal titles not commonly used.

The ADA Preservers: Members of this group often refer to themselves as the "True" Preservers to distance themselves from the corrupt Preserver Party. Like the political party, the ADA Preservers claim they want to restore America to its past glories. Unlike the official Preservers Party, however, this faction is serious about its goal, and one of their primary objectives is the eradication of the paranormal from the world. This group's ultimate desire is to destroy all supernatural beings, all sorcerers, and all psychics, and completely rid the Earth of such scourges.

This faction is itself divided into two camps. The first one includes people who still refuse to believe in the supernatural, but who agree that anything that appears to be supernatural must be eliminated and all evidence of it covered up. The second camp realizes that the paranormal exists, but fear it to such an extent that they also want it to be eradicated. The main target continues to be the **Ba'al**, but the Nightbanes, other supernatural beings, psychics and sorcerers are on their hit list. Such beings who operate within the organization are regarded as spies (not that the ADA Preservers are fooled) and often betrayed, framed or even murdered by this faction.

The ADA Preservers can be found throughout Spook Squad. It is rumored that one of its leaders sits in the War Room and helps make policies designed to minimize the participation of psychics and nonhumans in the organization. Some catastrophic failures of missions involving supernatural or psychic agents may have been engineered by the ADA Preservers in an effort to discredit their "enemies."

Profiteers: This widely disparate group of individuals are not an actual faction, but consists of Spook Squad members who care little about the outcome of the war and are concentrating on lining their pockets or otherwise looking out for number one. These include people who skim money off the top, rogue agents who use their training and equipment to go after personal enemies (including other Spook Squad members), and operatives who rob and terrorize innocents and otherwise abuse their power. Not everyone involved in these activities is consciously evil; in fact, many if not most of them think of themselves as "the good guys," and see the "perks" of their job as their just rewards. Others used to be dedicated agents who, after three or four years of fighting what they now see as a hopeless battle, have decided to cut their losses and make the best of a bad situation.

Some of these profiteers will even sell out fellow agents to the Nightlords, if the price is right, but most are strangely loyal to the ADA and won't sell-out the organization as a whole. A few try to justify such betrayal as a way to "earn the enemy's confidence" and eventually enable them to infiltrate the Ba'al and help destroy them. The reality is that the Ba'al would never trust traitors in the first place, and most of the time, profiteers who sell-out to these beings often end up dead or enslaved themselves. Others will deal with any of the other factions for money, selling information, weapons and equipment, and rationalizing it by saying, "We're all on the same side, aren't we?"

Since the profiteers are a class of individuals rather than a formal group, there is no leadership or organization beyond a few bands of thieves and rogues. And although they represent a small percentage of the group, they do a lot of damage to Spook Squad. Worse, their numbers are growing as more and more agents decide they are going to lose the war.

The Mind Masters: Some of the psychics working with Spook Squad have their own agenda, and it doesn't include a return to the status quo. Most of the members of this very secret faction include some ten or so "true" mind masters (the P.C.C. is described in the *New Psionics* section), as well as dozens of lesser psychics and a few mystics and sorcerers. The Mind Masters have three major objectives. First, to unify all the psychics in Spook Squad (and eventually the world) under their leadership. Secondly, they plan to take over Spook Squad by mind-controlling the War Room, and use this control to deal with the Nightlords once and for all. Third, once the Nightlords are destroyed, the psychics will use their power to take over the entire planet and "guide" the **psi-blind** to a Golden Age of peace and prosperity.

The third part of the plan is only known to a select group; most psychics who have been approached by the Mind Masters are only told that the group is meant to protect people with mental powers from the fear and prejudice prevalent in Spook Squad. Given that many agents, not to mention the ADA Preserver faction, truly hate or distrust psychics, it is easy for the Mind Masters to recruit new members. At this point, well over a hundred psychics work directly with this faction, and perhaps twice as many know of its existence but refuse to report it to the rest of the Squad.

For the time being, the group has made no attempt to take over the War Room; the leaders of Spook Squad are so paranoid and security-conscious that not even psychics feel they can approach them safely. Also, many psychics have refused to join the group, or have not been contacted yet, and they may be able to discover such a takeover attempt before it was successful. For now, the Mind Masters are concentrating on recruiting efforts and carrying on the fight against the Nightlords.

The Sanction Pack: During the last decades of the 20th Century, the War Room supported a large team of assassins, unofficially referred as the *Sanction Pack* ("sanction" was used as an euphemism for assassination during the 1960s and '70s). The Pack had over forty members by the year 2000. During their decades of service, the assassins killed thousands of people, including hundreds of innocents, at the behest of the War Room and other government officials. Although several "sanctioners" were killed in ill-advised attempts on the lives of servants of the Nightlords, it is still believed that a dozen or more of these **ruth-**

less assassins are still at the beck and call of the War Room. One rumor claims that their services are most often used against other Spook Squad members, especially those who have betrayed, or are believed to have betrayed the organization. The Sanction Pack **also** performs jobs that nobody else would have the stomach to do.

A few people "in the know" claim that the members of the Sanction Pack were recruited from Third World countries as little children, no older than three or four, and who were then raised in special camps across the U.S. In the camps, psychologists deliberately inflicted abuse and living conditions on the children designed to create sociopaths with no regards for human life. It is suspected that some of these scientists were secretly taken into the U.S. from Germany after the collapse of the Nazi regime, and allowed to carry on experiments designed to produce psychological "super soldiers" able to kill without any remorse. These men and women were indoctrinated to feel loyalty and respect only for their superiors. If these tales are true, the War Room kept this hidden from all other legitimate U.S. agencies. It is possible that members of the *Anti-War Room* have evidence of these and worse atrocities committed in the name of freedom and peace.

Whatever their origins, it is a fact that Sanction Pack exists, and is made up of some of the best assassins in the world. Each superbly trained in all forms of death dealing, from martial arts to modern weapons, poisons and booby traps. Although they are often no match against supernatural beings, over the last few years they have perfected tactics to "sanction" even them.

Recently, new rumors about the Sanction Pack have begun surfacing. According to them, several of these assassins are no longer following the orders of the War Room. One of the rumors claims that the entire Pack has gone rogue and is now working to achieve some unknown end. The wilder stories speak of some supernatural creature that is now in control of this team.

The Realists: This is a tiny but growing faction, especially among the former "leaders of the nation," who believe that some sort of accommodation with the Nightlords is the only logical solution to their problems. These self-professed "realists" point to the many failures of Spook Squad and believe that compromise is the answer, not bloody conflict. The Realists do not want to surrender unconditionally to the Nightlords; even they realize that doing so would mean their deaths or at best, a life of slavery. Instead, they are hoping to negotiate some sort of deal. An arrangement in which they may regain some of their lost power in return for abandoning the war effort.

The Realists think that the Ba'al's goal is world domination; most of them believe the rumors that the Nightlords are extraterrestrial, and think Earth is fated to become a colonized world in the hands of these powerful beings. Their reasoning is that a colony will still need leaders from the native populace, men and women that can act as advisors, security officers, and hold similar positions. The idea that the Nightlords might want nothing less than the complete destruction of all human life has never crossed their minds.

So far, the members of this group have been watching and waiting for a good opportunity. A couple of operations that might have seriously harmed the Nightlords have been sabotaged by Realists who feared their success would have enraged those beings too much. Attempts to covertly communicate with the

Ba'al have been so far unsuccessful, but the group keeps trying.

The Anti-War Room (AWR): This small and secret group believes that the War Room is thoroughly corrupted by the power its members wield. The AWR was founded by a former NSA agent who stumbled upon some files detailing a number of crimes committed by the leaders of Spook Squad. The evidence was so appalling that the agent and the few people she trusted with the information have decided that the War Room is as dangerous as the Nightlords, and that they must be stopped at some point. For the time being, the members of this informal group do their jobs and bide their time, realizing that the threat of the Ba'al is the more immediate one. They watch their orders carefully and will never harm innocents. Some members of the group have already gotten into trouble by not carrying out their instructions to the letter, although so far they have gotten away with it by getting the job done **anyway**.

In 2005, the AWR has about a dozen members, among them two Nightbanes. In general, the group has no biases against supernatural beings as long as their actions prove them to be worthy allies. There is no formal organization. *Lorna Forrester*, the ex-NSA agent who created the group, holds informal meetings in safe places across the country. Her job in Spook Squad allows her to travel throughout the nation, and she is always on the lookout for new people to convert to her cause.

Cortez's Cannibals: In the **Nightlands**, the bodies of such creatures as Hounds and other minions of the Nightlords do not vanish when they are destroyed. A group of human soldiers from the Beachhead, driven berserk during a fight with Hounds, actually drank the blood of these creatures in an act of defiance! One such character is Lieutenant Edward **Cortez**, a latent mystic who somehow turned the act of drinking the creatures' ichor-like blood into a mystical ceremony. A ceremony that has endowed Cortez and other members of his platoon with some of the strength and endurance of the Hounds! Cortez and his companions have experimented, and unless Cortez is not present during the "ritual," humans who drink the blood of Hounds suffer from a mild case of poisoning resulting in retching and a state of delirium that can last one to six hours (lose all but one action per melee, cannot strike, is at -3 to parry and dodge, and -20% on all skills until the effects pass. A save versus poison reduces the duration of the effect to 1D6x10minutes instead of 1D6hours).

Under Cortez's mystical influence, those who drink the blood of a Hound are gifted with +50 S.D.C., and +4 P.S. and P.E. (which become supernatural). The enhanced soldiers heal damage at five times the normal rate, and they are at +3 to save versus magic and psionics. Unfortunately for Cortez and his gang, drinking the blood of Hounds does more than grant them tremendous strength and resistance to damage, it has become a powerful addiction. If the Cannibals do not drink the blood of a Hound or Hunter within a week, their skin begins to dry out and shrivel; their physical attributes are unchanged, except for P.B. (which drops by 1 every day without the ichor); by the time P.B. is reduced to 3 or less, the character's skin acquires a hideous scaly appearance. Additionally, the drinkers become progressively **psychotic**, feel little empathy for other human beings and love to kill for its own sake. Every day after the first week, the character has a cumulative 3% chance of flying into a murderous rage at the least provocation (roll every time something provokes him; even something as small as losing a game of chance or having

somebody bump into the character may act as a trigger). Drinking more Hound's blood restores the character back to sanity, albeit only temporarily. Even when well "fed," the addict feels a craving for blood, and will often take insane risks to feed on the creatures.

There are twenty-three members of Cortez' Cannibals operating in the Nightlands. Spook Squad does not know of their existence; Cortez decided that the secret should be kept from their superiors, and the rest of the squad agreed. Even so, the side-effects of their actions are beginning to show, and some officers at the Beachhead are getting suspicious at the slight disfigurement many of the team's members suffer, and their increasingly psychotic behavior. On the other hand, Cortez's Cannibals have the highest kill ratio of any group operating on the Beachhead, with the fewest casualties. The officers in charge are unwilling to mess with success, unaware that they may be creating a new breed of monster.

New O.C.C.S

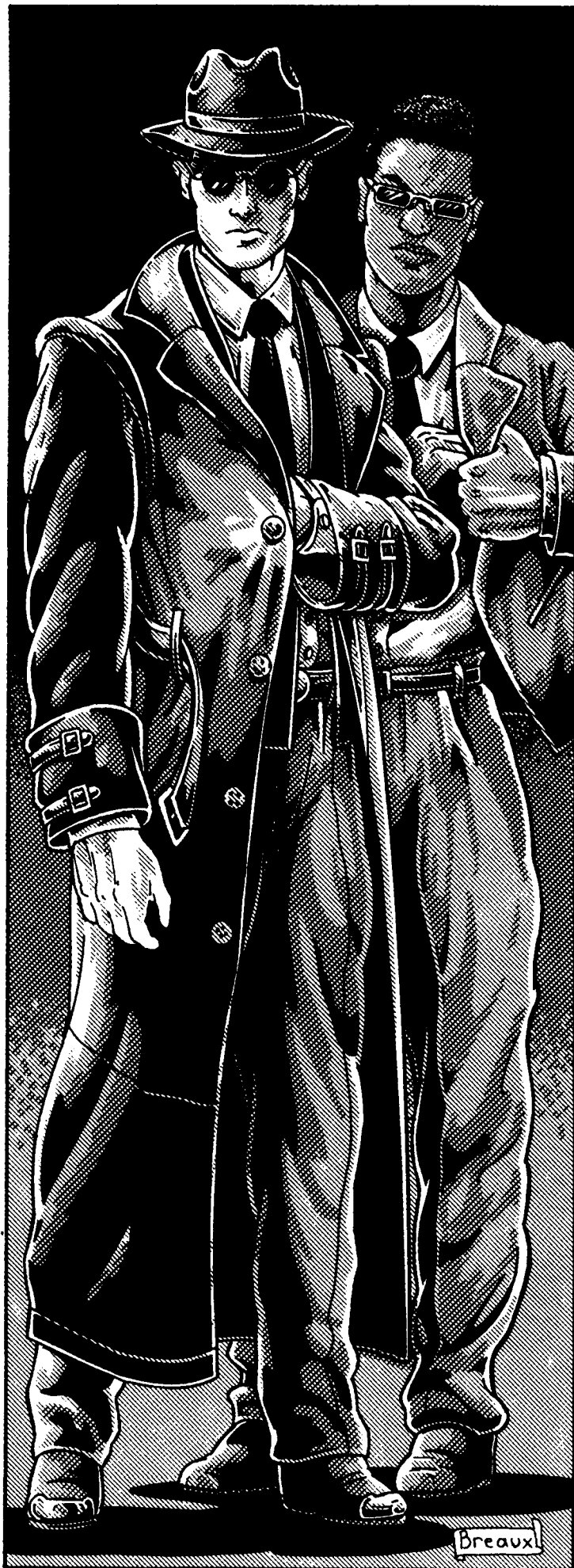
Ex-Government Agent

This O.C.C. covers members of such law-enforcement agencies as the FBI, BATF, DEA, and Secret Service, among others. They were elite agents until the Dark Day invasion and the foundation of the NSB cost them their careers, and in some cases, their former lives as law-abiding citizens. Many of them have seen inhuman monsters like the Hounds kill fellow agents, or have realized that exact doubles (Doppelgangers) have replaced their superiors. They have decided to strike back, and (often reluctantly) have joined Spook Squad.

These federal agents have a wide variety of skills in the law-enforcement field. Their criminal contacts and knowledge have come in handy over the last few years, as they have had to evade and thwart a growing army of NSB operatives on their trail. Although all agents receive some basic combat training, they are not expert soldiers; most of their skills are in the field of interrogation, finding clues and investigation techniques. Only members of elite **SWAT-like** teams have training comparable to that of professional soldiers (to simulate such agents, simply use O.C.C. related skills to upgrade the combat and weapon skills of the character).

Former government agents are often traumatized by their fall from grace. These men and women were allowed to carry weapons openly, and had the power to investigate and arrest people, to save or destroy lives. Whether or not they abused those powers (and some did), these agents had come to take them for granted. Now they hide among the shadows of their own country and are persecuted as traitors and criminals. Many lack the will to continue fighting in the face of this tragedy. Only the most dedicated (or stubborn) agents have joined Spook Squad.

Some agents are self-righteous, prejudiced and narrow-minded, but even they realize that they are fighting to rescue the world from a horrible conspiracy. The majority are well intentioned law enforcers, patriots and freedom fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause.



O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses: +1 on initiative and perception rolls.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10

O.C.C. Skills:

Native Language and Literacy (98%)

Basic Math (+20%)

Basic Electronics (+15%)

Basic Radio (+15%)

Automobile (+10%)

Computer Operations (+15%)

Intelligence (+15%)

W.P. Pistol

W.P. of choice

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to hand: basic can be changed to expert at the cost of two "other" skills or to martial arts or assassin (if evil) at the cost of three "other" skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 12 other skills. Plus the character gets an additional skill at levels three, six, nine and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any (+5%)

Espionage: Any (+10%)

Mechanical: Any

Medical: Criminal Science & Forensics, Paramedic or First Aid only (+5% on First Aid)

Military: Any

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any (+5%)

Rogue: Any (+5%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+5%; +10% on languages)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, secondary skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Cellular phone, three sets of government-issue dark suits, a modest personal wardrobe, **sidearm** (usually a 9mm or 10mm handgun), pocket knife or sap gloves, nightstick, flashlight, a car, and \$1D6x1000 in additional equipment (not cash).

Money: 2D6x1000 dollars in savings and 1D4x10,000 dollars in property (may include vehicles, a home, furniture, home computers, etc.).

Team Epsilon Trooper

Former Special Forces

A great many of Spook Squad's agents are recruited from the ranks of military organizations. For the time being, the Nightlords have been careful in keeping the U.S. military deceived as to what's going on, but many have discovered the horrible truth. Dozens of elite soldiers have deserted, taking a great deal of equipment with them. Many more have been contacted by Spook Squad; while most were at first unbelieving ("Monsters have taken over the White House? Sure. Tell it to the Marines."), they are soon convinced by the evidence, including first-hand observation of Doppelgangers, Hounds and other supernatural beings.

This O.C.C. has two sub-categories. The first one covers members of the "public" special forces units, such as the Green Berets, SEALs, Marine Recon, Airborne Rangers and similar units. The other group is Team Epsilon, the top secret military unit previously described. Soldiers from Team Epsilon receive even more training and physical conditioning, and gain a wide variety of skills.

Former soldiers now working with Spook Squad have undergone special training in secret camps scattered in the less populated regions of the U.S. and Canada. Part of this training consists of meditation exercises to help resist mental domination and torture (in many ways an advanced form of pre-existing techniques). Also, the soldiers have spent weeks learning to target vulnerable spots on Hounds, Hunters and other heavily-armored supernatural beings. This training still does not make a soldier a match for a Hound or Nightbane, but they now have a better chance of surviving such an encounter.

Special O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses:

1. Physical Bonuses: Former Special Forces soldiers have a base S.D.C. of 4D6+20 plus physical skill bonuses. Their high physical training also gives them plus 1D4 to P.S., +2 to P.E., +1 to P.P., and 1D6 to Spd., in addition to physical skill bonuses. Team Epsilon Soldiers have 4D6+25 S.D.C. and +1D6 P.S.; all other bonuses remain the same.

2. Combat Bonuses: Add one additional attack per melee round, +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +2 to save vs horror factor, +1 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs psionic attack and mind-controlling magic (a result of special meditation exercises).

Team Epsilon Soldiers have all the above bonuses, except they have a +4 bonus to save vs horror factor, +2 to save vs psionic attack and mind-controlling magic, and +3 to save vs possession. All bonuses are cumulative with attribute or skill bonuses.

3. Special Anti-Supernatural Bonuses: These bonuses apply only to soldiers who have been trained in methods to fight supernatural beings and who know how to target relatively weak areas. The monster species in question must be known to the soldier; a Lore: Demon and Monster skill roll may be required when facing a rare or possibly unfamiliar creature — that skill is a prerequisite. By carefully aiming his attacks (both ranged and hand to hand), the character can avoid or penetrate the creature's

Armor Rating (A.R.), needing only a normal roll to strike to inflict damage (the target can still parry and dodge normally). This action counts as two normal melee attacks/actions. The damage is applied to the **S.D.C./Hit** Points of the opponent. If the supernatural being is also wearing regular body armor, the A.R. of the armor will still function as normal, so the attack roll must be greater than its A.R.

Alignment: Most Special Forces soldiers are scrupulous or aberrant; the second group are those who will do whatever it takes to defend the nation, even if innocents are harmed by it. A few "lone wolf" types are of selfish alignments, and those whose principles have been twisted by choice or circumstances may be miscreant or diabolic.

Attribute Requirements: P.S., P.P. and P.E. 11 or better. I.Q. should not be low (minimum 6). A high M.E. is preferred.

O.C.C. Skills:

One language of choice (+15%, includes literacy)

Climbing (+10%)

Swimming (+10%)

Radio: Basic (+15%)

Computer Operation (+15%)

Demon and Monster Lore (+15%)

Detect Ambush (+10%)

Military Etiquette (+15%)

Strategy/Tactics (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

Piloting: One of choice (+10%)

Prowl (+10%)

W.P. Assault Rifle

W.P. Pistol

W.P. Knife

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to hand: expert can be changed to martial arts or assassin (if evil) at the cost of one "other" skill.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 8 other skills, but at least two of them must be physical skills. Plus select two skills at level three, and one at levels five, eight, eleven and fourteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%)

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Any (+10%)

Mechanical: Any

Medical: First Aid (+10%) or Paramedic (+5%) only.

Military: Any (+12%)

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable)

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any (+10%)

Rogue: Any (+10%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+5%)

W.P.: Any

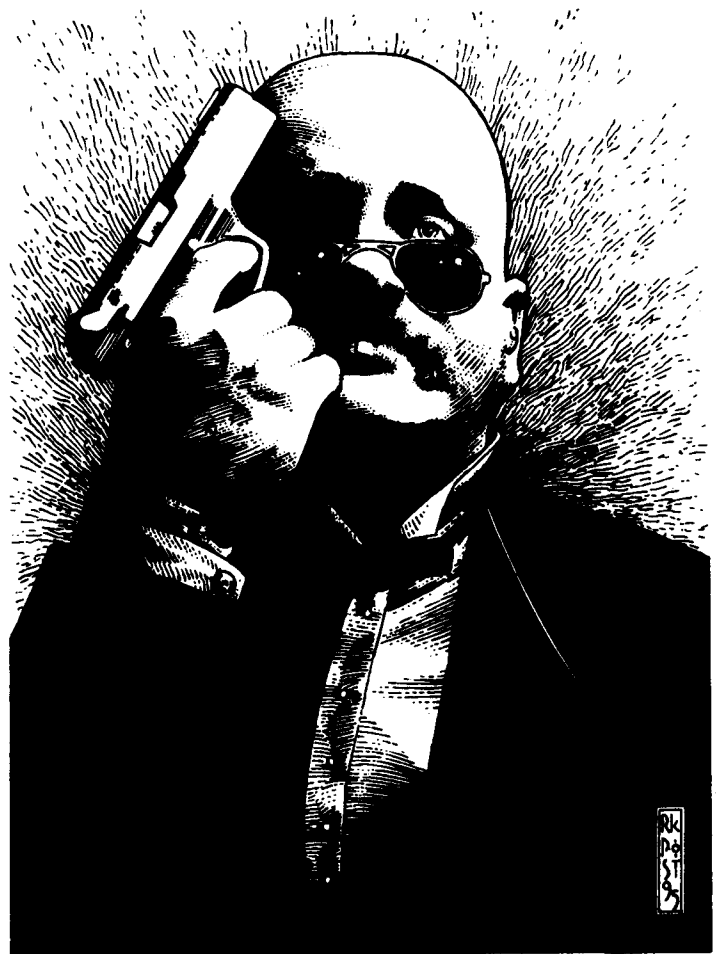
Wilderness: Any (+10%)

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Varies with the mission. Spook Squad has access to a variety of military weapons. Common per-

sonal weapons and equipment include a **sidearm** (typically a 9mm or 10mm pistol), a combat rifle (an **M-16** or an **MR-30**; other rifles are often substituted), a combat knife, basic survival kit (canteen, matches, survival knife, compass, **meals**-ready-to-eat, insect repellent, flashlight), **camo** or black fatigues, combat boots, and radio, and an improved suit of full body armor (A.R. 15, 250 S.D.C.). If traveling as "civilians," equipment is similar to that of ex-government agents.

Money: 3D6x1000 in personal savings. Pay under Spook Squad consists of a stipend of 1D6x100 dollars a week (it varies from week to week). Money can be made available for missions; depending on the situation, ADA may provide hundreds to thousands or even millions of dollars in equipment.



ADA Field Agent O.C.C.

CIA/War Room Operative

These operatives were very few and far between during the last years of the 20th Century. The CIA depended almost exclusively on surveillance satellites and CNN for information-gathering. HUMINT (Human Intelligence) resources were minimal; in other words, the largest spy agency in the U.S. had very few agents left by the turn of the century. The secretive War Room, on the other hand, had a larger reservoir of operatives at their disposal. These agents were trained in all forms of espionage and assassination.

The agents described below represent the best and most highly trained people of their category. The CIA had less than ten such agents at the time of Dark Day; the War Room had about thirty. In the last four years, these agents have been working feverishly to train new recruits in the arts of espionage and silent death. Additionally, all agents have undergone a lot of training in identifying supernatural creatures and dealing with them. Most agents specialize in either information gathering or assassination techniques. A few receive training in both fields, making them more flexible but less adept than either of the other two.

O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses:

1. Bonuses: Vary depending on the specialization of the agent.

Bonuses for Spy Specialists: +2 on perception rolls, +1 to pull punch, +1 to roll with impact, +3 to save vs mind control, and +2 to save vs horror factor.

Bonuses for Assassination Specialists: +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to pull punch, +4 to damage, +4 to save vs horror factor.

Dual-trained Agents: +1 on perception rolls, +1 to parry and dodge, +1 to pull punch, +1 to roll with impact, +2 to save vs mind control, and +3 to save vs horror factor.

2. Specialty Skills: These skills are determined by the specialization of the field agent:

Spy Specialists: Two Rogue skills of choice (+20%)

Assassination Specialists: Sniper and one W.P. of choice.

Dual-trained Agents: One Rogue skill of choice (+15%) and one W.P. of choice.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10; Assassins: P.E. and P.S. 10.

O.C.C. Skills:

One Language of choice (+15%; includes literacy)

Intelligence (+15%)

Computer Operation (+10%)

Lore: Demon and Monster (+10%)

Interrogation (+10%)

W.P. Pistol

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to hand: basic can be changed to expert at the cost of one "other" skill or to martial arts or assassin at the cost of two "other" skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills. Spy specialists must select at least two skills from the Espionage category, while assassins must upgrade their hand to hand skill to expert. Dual trained agents have no special requirements.

Communications: Any (+10%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Any (+10%)

Mechanical: Any (+5%)

Medical: First aid or paramedic only (+5%)

Military: Any (+5%)

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any (+5%)

Rogue: Any (+10%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+5%)

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Varies according to mission. Agents working for Spook Squad will be issued a **sidearm** (typically a 9mm or 10mm semi-automatic pistol), a cellular phone with a scrambler, flashlight, tool kit, and perhaps a bullet proof vest (A.R. 10, 70 S.D.C.) and a car or motorcycle. Additional and special equipment may be available on special assignments.

Money: 2D4x1000 dollars in savings and 4D6x1000 in property (includes vehicles, clothing, housing, etc.). Spook Squad pays a monthly stipend of \$3,000.



PAB Field Agent O.C.C.

The Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB) employs a core of special agents, usually recruited from the ranks of the FBI, DEA and NSA, who are then trained in dealing with such unexplainable events as supernatural beings, psychic and magic activities, and UFO sightings. Often, the agents are former members of "regular" agencies who accidentally stumbled onto a paranormal event and were later offered a place in the PAB. If they refuse, they are ordered to "forget" what they saw and left alone. If they accept they are inducted into the secret agency.

Most PAB agents have had at least one or more paranormal experiences. Many have destroyed inhuman creatures, learned to deal with psychic abilities, and have confronted unfathomable mysteries head-on. After Dark Day and the near destruction of

their organization, most PAB survivors became dedicated Spook Squad members, using their hard-earned knowledge to fight the new supernatural threat.

O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Bonuses: +2 to perception rolls, +1 on initiative, +3 to save versus psionics, mind control and possession, +2 to save versus magic, and +4 to save versus horror factor.

2. Special Anti-Supernatural Bonuses: These bonuses apply only to agents who have been trained in special methods to fight supernatural beings and who know how to target relatively weak areas. The monster species in question must be known to the agent; a Lore: Demon and Monster skill roll may be required when facing a rare or possibly unfamiliar creature — that skill is a prerequisite. By carefully aiming his attacks (both ranged and hand to hand), the character can avoid or penetrate the creature's Armor Rating (A.R.), needing only a normal roll to strike to inflict damage (the target can still parry and dodge normally). This action counts as two normal melee attacks/actions. The damage is applied to the **S.D.C./Hit Points** of the opponent. If the supernatural being is also wearing regular body armor, the A.R. of the armor will still function as normal, so the attack roll must be greater than its A.R.

Attribute Requirements: P.S., P.E. and M.E. 10 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

- Basic Radio (+15%)
- Computer Operation (+10%)
- Intelligence (+10%)
- Interrogation (+15%)
- Lore: Demon and Monster (+15%)
- Lore: Psychic (+15%)
- Lore: **Nightbane** (+10%)
- Pilot: Automobile (+15%)
- W.P. **Sub-machinegun**
- W.P.: Any modern weapon of choice
- Hand to Hand: Basic
- Hand to hand: basic can be changed to hand to hand: expert at the cost of one "other" skill or to martial arts at the cost of two "other" skills.
- O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select 8 other skills. Plus select an additional skill at levels three, five, eight, eleven and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.
- Communications: Any (+10%)
- Domestic: Any (+5%)
- Electrical: Any
- Espionage: Any (+5%)
- Mechanical: Any
- Medical: First aid only (+10%).
- Military: Any
- Physical: Any
- Pilot: Any (+5%)
- Pilot Related: Any
- Rogue: Any (+10%)
- Science: Any
- Technical: Any (+5%)
- W.P.: Any
- Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All sec-

ondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: A Beretta pistol and a small sub-machinegun (usually carried in a briefcase), a cell phone with scrambler, a light bulletproof vest (A.R. 10, 70 S.D.C.), and a personal car. Special equipment includes silver bullets, cross-bow pistol, a mallet and short stakes and other odds and ends. A team of two agents will usually have a psionic detection system, a psychic jammer and some special restraints (see the *New Weapons and Equipment* section). During emergencies or combat missions, agents will have access to weapons and body armor comparable to those worn by the NSB or Special Forces.

Money: 1D6x1000 dollars in savings and 4D6x1000 in property (includes vehicles, clothing, housing, etc.). Spook Squad pays a monthly stipend of \$3,600.



Pandora Project Researcher O.C.C.

Both the PAB and the Pandora Project employ a small army of scientists in their efforts to understand psychic and magic powers, as well as other paranormal things. The ideal scientists and researchers are multi-skilled people with a working knowledge of dozens of fields with one or two areas of specialty. Their work on the paranormal expand this knowledge to include such esoteric fields as parapsychology and occultism. Medical doctors, physicists and chemists work side by side, trying to analyze and quantify the paranormal. Much of the time, their research is unsuccessful, but their direct access to the secrets held by the PAB make the members of this elite group the leading authorities in the supernatural.

Most of the scientists who survived the **Nightlords'** purges now work in the R&D section of Spook Squad, trying to discover ways to defeat the relentless conquerors of Earth. They are among the most knowledgeable humans with respect to the secret invasion, although their prejudices often get in the way of the facts. A few researchers have gone into "the field" to get first-hand knowledge of the enemy they are studying. These adventurous scientists will receive some combat training to help them survive such encounters.

O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Bonuses: +2 to perception rolls, +1 on initiative (but only when fighting the supernatural and mystical), +1 to save versus magic and psionics, and +2 to save vs horror factor.

2. Recognize the Supernatural: An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the supernatural. This is usually reflected in areas of lore knowledge, but the character is also likely to recognize the following: mind control and possession, the **morphus** of a Nightbane, vampires and magic circles, symbols and portals.

Base skill: 30% +5% per level of experience. The character may also recognize Dopplegangers and Ashmedai but as half his normal skill ability. Roll once per subject of scrutiny. A failed roll means he can't be certain about his observations.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 12 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic and Advanced Math (+20%)

Language and Literacy (one language of choice) (+25%)

Computer Operation (+15%)

Lore: Demon and monster (+20%)

Lore: Psychic (+15%)

Two Medical, Science or Technical skills of choice (+20%)

Hand to Hand combat must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic costs one skill selection, expert counts as two, and martial arts (or assassin, if evil), counts as three skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 12 other skills, but at least four must be from the medical or science or technical categories, or prerequisites to such skills. Plus select two skills at level three and one at levels six, nine, twelve and fifteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Any (+5%)

Espionage: None

Mechanical: Any (+5%)

Medical: Any (+10%)

Military: None

Physical: Any except acrobatics and gymnastics.

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: None

Science: Any (+10%)

Technical: Any (+10%; +15% for lore skills)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Most researchers get the use of a research facility with \$50,000 in lab equipment at their immediate disposal, plus a personal computer, printer, and a lap top for field trips, as well as a personal vehicle. Spook Squad researchers who qualify for marksmanship (i.e., if they have a W.P.) may be allowed to carry a handgun or small sub-machinegun for self-defense.

Money: 2D4x1000 dollars in savings and 5D6x1000 dollars in personal property. Researchers are paid a monthly \$4,000 stipend.

PAB Psychic Agent P.C.C.

The Psychic Agents are the result of the Pandora Project, the culmination of years of research. Most of them are latent psychics who were recruited by the project and then volunteered for service in the PAB. Before the Dark Day invasion, about a hundred field agents with psychic abilities were active field operatives. Of these, only thirty or so survived the **Nightlords'** assault, as minions pursued them with particular savagery. It became obvious that the **Ba'al** fear psychics because they are among the tiny minority who have the ability to sense the supernatural, ferret out Dopplegangers and recognize the full scale of their secret takeover of the U.S. government. Those who escaped this purge have joined Spook Squad.

Since the founding of Spook Squad, additional volunteers with psionic abilities have joined the organization. In addition, PAB has the ability to endow or bring out psionic power, but the difficulty and possible consequences of the treatment has prevented the more widespread use of the *Pandora Techniques*.

Many of the psychic agents are embittered men and women. Once, they had been the most feared and respected people in their line of work. Now they are persecuted by beings that not even their psychic powers can overcome. Some of the most disappointed agents have turned their backs on Spook Squad or have joined the secret Mind Masters faction within the organization.

P.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Psychic Powers: At first level, the character can select three powers from the "lesser" categories (sensitive, physical or healing). An additional power from these categories can be selected at levels three, five, nine and twelve.

2. I.S.P.: M.E. attribute plus 5D6 I.S.P.; add 2D4 I.S.P. per additional level of experience.

3. Physical Bonuses: The agents' intensive physical training makes them tougher than the average person. +2D6 to S.D.C., +1 to P.S., +1D6 to Spd. These are in addition to physical skill bonuses.

4. Combat Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to parry and dodge, +1 to roll with impact, +1 to save vs psionic attack and all forms of mind control (in addition to any M.E. bonuses), and +3 to save vs horror factor.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 11 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Basic Radio (+15%)

Computer Operations (+10%)

Intelligence(+10%)
Interrogation (+10%)
Lore: Demon and Monster (+15%)
Lore: Psychic (+15%)
Pilot Automobile (+15%)
W.P. Automatic Pistol
Hand to Hand: Basic
Hand to hand: basic can be changed to hand to hand: expert at the cost of one "other" skill or to martial arts at the cost of two "other" skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 7 other skills. Plus select an additional skill at levels three, five, eight, eleven and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Any (+5%)

Mechanical: Any

Medical: First aid only.

Military: Any

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Access to a vehicle (typically a four-door sedan), a cell phone and scrambler, laptop computer, flashlight, 9 mm pistols (with conventional and silver bullets), and a bullet-proof vest (A.R. 10, 70 S.D.C.). Additional weapons, including automatic and semi-automatic rifles, explosives, and PAB special equipment, are sometimes included among standard. Special weapons and equipment are available for special assignments.

Money: Starts out with 2,000 +3D6x100 dollars in savings plus Spook Squad will pay a stipend of 1D4x1000+2000 dollars a month. Plus owns personal property (house, apartment, cars, furniture) valued at 2D4x10,000 dollars.



The Astral Plane

There are more worlds between Heaven and Earth than dreamt of by our philosophers. In years past, I have seen the Astral Plane. I have been to domains where medieval sorcerers recreated the castles of their youth. I have seen man-made paradises and hells. I have caught glimpses of Earths different from my own, Earths where Canada was conquered during the American Revolution and where the U.S. capital is named after Benedict Arnold instead of George Washington; Earths where Nazi Germany won the war and plunged the world into horrible darkness. And yet, despite the beauty and horror of it all, I have found myself returning to my world, my "real" world. Everywhere else, I have felt like an intruder.

Now, the war for Earth may be decided on the astral fields. The Ba'al have a presence here, and if they pervert the Worlds Between Worlds, our planet will be surrounded and cut off from the rest of the infinite worlds. Here, Nightbanes and Astral Lords must join forces and fight the enemy, or all will be lost.

— From the Wanderer Diaries

Hidden between the shadows of reality, visited only by those with the ability to separate their minds from their bodies, lie many worlds, as close to Earth and the Nightlands as a second skin, and yet cut off from most people. They are the **Astral Plane** and the **Dreamstream**. The **Dreamstream** is the place our minds visit when we sleep; it is fully described in its own section. The Astral Plane is a realm of thought and imagination, a place of pure mental energy where reality can be altered at will. Both realms have become battlegrounds in the war against the Ba'al. If one falls, so may the other.

The Astral Landscape

The Astral Plane is also known as The World Between Worlds, the Ethereal Realm, and the Ghost Zone. This mysterious plane of existence has often been confused with countless religious and spiritual realms. Many versions of Heaven and Hell, abodes of gods and demons, spirit lands and other legendary places can be reached from the misty Astral Plane. Many occultists and **paranormals** refer to the Astral Plane as the Realm of the Mind, a place where reality can be reshaped if one's will is strong enough.

The "white mists" are a constant feature of the astral landscape. These rolling or swirling clouds of white are made up of pure mental energy, commonly known as ectoplasm or "astropiasm." Ectoplasm is somewhat responsive to the moods and thoughts of the sentient beings around them. People who are angry tend to darken the clouds in the immediate area (a 5 foot/1.5 m radius). If the person is scared, the clouds tend to move away from him.

Two of the most important characteristics of ectoplasm are that it can block the senses and bar the path of astral travelers. In the physical world, the astral traveler can walk through walls and see the invisible, but walls made of ectoplasm in the astral plane will block the astral body. One might think of ectoplasm as be-

ing similar to water back on Earth. Thin clouds of ectoplasm, like those that fill the Outer Layer, offer no resistance — just like water vapor (fog) on Earth, it does not impede one's movement through it. Yet just as water can be frozen into ice, ectoplasm can be "hardened" and made into walls, ceilings, floors and barriers; solid materials that the astral form cannot penetrate. Additionally, those with the right psychic and magical abilities can learn to reshape ectoplasm to suit their purposes and imaginings. In this way they, the most powerful can create their own miniature worlds out of ectoplasm — the so-called "Astral Domains."

Regions of the Astral Plane

Experienced dimensional travelers know the Astral Plane consists of three major "regions" or zones in it. Each region has different physical laws, advantages and dangers. Exactly how these regions are separated from each other is not clear to anybody, not even to the natives. Some visualize the plane as an immense sphere separated into three layers; others picture it as an ocean with different conditions as one goes deeper into it. The most knowledgeable astral travelers scoff at these paltry explanations, and claim that any attempt to describe the astral plane in "three dimensional terms" is bound to fail, because the plane is beyond such limitations.

In any case, the plane is usually divided into these three regions, commonly called the Outer Layer, the Inner Plane and the Void. The Outer Layer is "closest" to the material world, and is easily reached by astral travelers. It is a mostly unformed place with no sense of direction, and where it is easy to lose one's way. The Inner Plane appears to be an endless misty plain, where ley lines, also known as **Dragon Roads**, shine brightly. The Void is the most alien place of all, a mixture of endless black nothingness with pockets of matter and energy. Entering the void is a very risky enterprise, as all forms of matter and energy break down unless they are protected.

The Outer Layer

Leaving the world is a dangerous temptation for travelers. The exhilaration of flight, the ability to go where one wills, unseen and unfettered, often makes the beginner feel invincible. Even one who projects for the first time can sense he is but standing on the outermost layer of a complex Universe — only a little push, and he will be Elsewhere, in what we call the Outer Layer, the Unformed Place. And by doing this, the traveler will put himself in great danger, for it is easy to get lost there, and many predators watch and wait for the unwary and the foolish.

— From The Gray Ghost Journals

The Outer Layer is the best known zone of the Astral Plane. This place of white light and swirling clouds separates the Earth and the Nightlands (and perhaps countless other worlds) from the more stable Inner Plane and the endless, destructive chaos of the Void. Most psychics and mages with the ability of astral projection believe that this is the whole of the Astral Plane. Few learn enough to understand or realize it is but the first of three major regions.

The Outer Layer is the easiest region of the Astral Plane to reach from the material world. Even beginner astral travelers can open a small portal into the Outer Layer with little effort. As one goes "deeper" into the Astral Plane, it is harder to return, somewhat like a diver braving the ocean depths. The region is also known as a place of *confusion*, full of swirling waves of ectoplasm that appear as mist, fog and shifting white clouds. It is very difficult to find one's way through the Outer Layer and many an astral traveler has found himself unable to return to the physical world. This may explain why the Outer Layer is not heavily populated. Even astral natives prefer the more stable Inner Plane.

Astral travelers in the Outer Layer look like ghostly, shimmering energy versions of their own selves, "aglow with a bright, translucent, blue-white light with countless tiny flashes of white, yellow and blue light" (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 71). Non-human astral travelers and dwellers, including Nightbanes, Necrophim and Millek (described elsewhere), retain a more "solid" look about them, but still appear vaguely ghost-like.

Time in this region moves more slowly in comparison to the physical world and Inner Plane; usually, a week spent in the Outer Layer is the equivalent of a minute in the physical world. Astral domains and kingdoms in this region often share the same time differential. It is quite possible to have epic adventures in the astral plane while only a few minutes have passed in the material world. Humans in astral form do not age while in the Outer Layer, so there is no risk of aging years in a matter of hours.

Floating in this cloudy realm are hundreds, perhaps thousands of *astral domains*. Domains are small, self-contained "pockets" of ectoplasm that some powerful psychics, magicians and supernatural creatures can build. Domains in the Outer Layer tend to be smaller and less common than in the Inner Plane. On the other hand, it is easy to stumble onto one of them, although some of these places are extremely hostile for uninvited guests.

Entering or leaving the Outer Layer is relatively easy; by concentrating for a few seconds, the psychic can open a "window" into the Inner Plane (see below); this window will look like a shimmering pool of light. Returning to Earth is more involved, and requires the psychic to "retrace his steps." Characters without the power of *astral navigation* can get lost with relative ease.

The Inner Plane & the Dragon Roads

Once one gets beyond the outer layer of the plane, the terrain appears to settle down to a more "normal" surrounding. Instead of flying in a swirling cloud formation, astral travelers in the Inner Plane find themselves walking on an endless expanse of mist-covered **flatlands**. Long lines of shimmering blue light crisscross the ground; a typical expanse of the Inner Plane will have 3-6 of these roads within their line of sight. These are the so-called **Dragon Roads**, which are in effect the ley lines of the Astral Plane. Some scholars propose that this network of ley lines is what stabilizes the Inner Plane, "fixing" ectoplasm into a more solid state. Dragon roads link the entire Inner Plane, allowing travelers to get to almost any destination they know of, albeit with some difficulty (see the *Traveling in the Astral Plane section* for more information). The junctions of these roads often hold Portals leading to other dimensions or regions of the Astral Plane.

Unlike normal ley lines on Earth, however, the Dragon Roads do not grant practitioners of magic or psychics any increased psychic energies. Apparently, most of the ley line energies coursing through the roads are somehow blocked or syphoned by the nature of the Astral Plane. Only if a domain is created on these ley lines, and the creator or creators psychically open a "tap" into this energy, will the benefits of normal ley lines be available. These benefits do not increase during special times of the year, as the astral plane is removed from such influences.

As in the Outer Layer, astral domains can be found in this region of the plane. These ectoplasmic creations are more numerous here, mainly because it is easier to create stable structures here than in the other two regions. The Inner Plane is also the place where countless astral kingdoms can be found. These are expansive domains, some of them nearly as large as the Earth or the Nightlands (see the *Astral Kingdoms section*, described elsewhere).

The floating ectoplasmic mists covering the Inner Plane are like a fog that obscures vision beyond a few hundred feet. Denser clouds float overhead; travelers who fly into them usually find themselves in the Outer Layer, or (more rarely) in the Void. Experience has taught most astral travelers that sticking to the Dragon Roads is the safest thing to do, but even the ley lines have their dangers. On some rare occasions, nexus points will flare with dimensional Rifts that can drop any manner of beings and entities into the plane. Apparently, the same dimensional anomaly that drags things and people into the plane will "transform" the castaways into astral beings (as per the psionic power of astral transference, described in the *New Psychic Powers section*). These Rift-brought people can be anybody, from human innocents to vicious demonic creatures and mischievous entities.

Unlike the Outer Layer, this region has a "native" population; many non-human races have made the Inner Plane their home. It is unknown whether some of these races evolved in the astral plane or came there from somewhere else (perhaps Rifted from another dimension in great numbers), but most of them have dwelled in the plane for centuries, if not millennia. Among the most common races encountered are the *Tarantuloids*, large creatures who resemble hairy spiders, and the *Millek*, spindly humanoids with great powers over ectoplasm. There are also a number of predators, from the small but vicious *Mountebanks* to the lethal *Astral Vampires*. These and other entities are described in the *Dwellers of the Astral Plane Section*.

The Void

The innermost "layer" of the Astral Plane is a place where reality appears to break down. Reaching the void is very difficult except through dimensional portals. Travelers without access to such dimensional doorways can only stumble into this realm by flying or walking into the dense clouds of the Inner Plane. However, trying to deliberately get to the Void by plunging into a cloud is usually doomed to failure — finding such random cloud portals when desired is a million to one shot. Besides, when it comes to the Void, success can be as dangerous as failure.

People seeing the void for the first time may think they have reached outer space, as the lights and small swirling clouds appear to be stars and nebulae superimposed on a black background. A closer look will reveal this is not the case. The "stars" are often so close they can be touched by an outstretched hand,

and the nebulas are nothing more than thin wisps of ectoplasm being eaten away by the entropic energies of this region. Despite its name, the Void is not truly empty — except of life. Very few psychics or creatures can survive long in the chaotic maelstrom of psychic surges that rage within. The very life energies of living things are sucked away by the Void. Without taking the proper safeguards, few psychics cannot survive for more than a few minutes. For example, some powerful astral constructs are able to keep astral travelers alive, but not for long. A few daring scavengers can build energy bubbles or even movable domains to venture into the Void, but risk total destruction in the process. The only exceptions to this rule are the *Void Ships*, crewed by Guardians or beings who look like Guardians, and the deadly *Shadow Mantises* (see the *Astral Denizens* section).

Anybody (and any thing) who enters the Void, including supernatural beings (and mega-damage structures), will lose 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points every minute (4 melee rounds). Living beings will additionally suffer the loss of 1 P.P.E. or I.S.P. every minute (if the character has both I.S.P. and P.P.E., this loss begins with the larger of the two energy pools). This damage cannot be healed or regenerated by any means until the traveler has left the Void. Psionic or magical force fields will protect the body from damage and temporarily stop the power drain as well — damage

is subtracted from the force field; when the field dissipates the character will start taking damage. Likewise, travelers protected by magic force fields, the armor of **Ithan**, spells of invulnerability and similar magic, will only suffer 1D6 points of damage every hour.

Given these dangers, it would seem to make little sense for anybody to want to venture into this chaotic layer of the Plane, but there are things here that make it worth the risk. For one, Rifts are constantly opening in the Void, depositing all manner of **transdimensional** beings, objects and artifacts; some of them things of great power. Unlike most other things, magic items are much hardier and can survive intact in the unstable void for centuries, so the vast percentage of debris found floating in the Void will be of some value.

Additionally, one can travel anywhere (some say anywhen as well) from the Void. It appears that this realm of *potentiality* and *entropy* connects to everywhere at once, and that by merely wishing to be somewhere and focusing a great deal of energy into the wish, a person can go to any place he might desire, despite most barriers or other obstacles. Would-be invaders, raiders and explorers have braved the dangers of the Void to reach otherwise impossible destinations. However, many have failed and lost their lives in the attempt.

Traveling in the Astral Plane

"Can you get there from here? Mister, you can get ANYWHERE from here!"

—Astral Lord Smiley O'Rourke

Some scholars believe that the Astral Plane is a single dimension that is linked to what some dimensional travelers call the *Megaverse*, an infinite or near-infinite collection of worlds and dimensional realms. According to the most experienced travelers, there are four ways to get to where you are going from the Astral Plane.

First, in the Outer Layer, travelers can open "dimensional windows" into Earth or the Nightlands, and then travel in astral form to those physical realms. The risk of traveling anywhere in the Outer Layer is the chance of getting lost. If an astral traveler whose physical body is on Earth (or who started his journey on Earth if using Astral Transference) tries to get to the Nightlands from the Outer Layer, the chance of getting lost is much greater. The same is true in the reverse, traveling from the Nightlands to Earth. Roll on the following table both when trying to reach a destination or to return to their point of departure. All other rules are as per the *Nightbane RPG*, page 70:

1-40 Hopelessly lost; try again at -5%.

41-60 Uncertain, confused; roll again (no modifiers).

61-80 Fairly certain of location; roll again (+10%)

81-00 Definitely certain of location; fly through the ectoplasmic cloud and reach destination.

It is possible that the Outer Layer may lead to other worlds besides Earth and the Nightlands. Such travel is likely to be extremely difficult — no known mage, psychic or astral traveler has been able to do so. The Game Master is left to decide whether or not this method of travel can allow characters to

reach other worlds and dimensions (if so, finding one's way there and back will be at least two or three times as difficult as previously described).

The second way to travel requires reaching the Inner Plane. In this region, one can "walk," following the Dragon Roads and using one's will and astral senses to reach the desired place. This requires a great deal of time and ability (see the *Astral Navigation* psionic power), and is not always successful. Furthermore, it requires that the astral traveler have a clear idea of where he is going. If the psychic has never been to his desired destination, the trip is nearly impossible, and one can never reach a totally unknown place in this manner, except by accident. Some travelers start on a Dragon Road and walk it randomly, not thinking about any destination. Doing this may lead the character to any number of locations, but it certainly won't take him anywhere in particular. Such a random method of travel is commonly known as "the Fool's Walk," since by doing so, the traveler is exposing himself to all manner of dangers. Still, abandoning the Dragon Roads is very risky; not only can the traveler get lost, but there are beings in the "astral wilderness" even more dangerous than those that stalk the planar byways.

Additionally, special dimensional gateways (commonly known as portals or Rifts) can instantly transport the character to other worlds and dimensions. Portals can be found at **Dragon Crossroads** (ley line nexus points), as well as in astral domains and kingdoms. The main problem with portals is that unless someone knows for a fact where they lead, one can end up anywhere in the Megaverse, including places where human life cannot survive. Some portals lead to a multitude of worlds, but these often have guardians or owners. There are also rumors about

"dimensional stations," places where travelers can secure passage to almost any destination in the Megaverse. The price for such passage is supposed to vary widely, from precious metals to promises of future services to living souls! As far as most astral travelers' are concerned, however, these places are the stuff of tall tales and fantasies.

The fourth and riskiest mode of travel is entering the Void. As stated previously, entering the Void is a danger by itself. A person or creature trying to reach a place, no matter how remote, can attempt to do so in the void. All it takes is for the person to clearly visualize the location and then pour his or her entire psychic energies into that image while wishing to go there. The process of visualization usually takes 1D4 minutes (damage is sustained during this period). The character must use up all his remaining P.P.E. and/or I.S.P.; the percentile chance to travel successfully to the desired location is determined as follows:

The character has visited the location: 1-60%

The character has heard of the location and has some convincing proof that it exists: 1-40%

The character believes this location exists, but has no knowledge, even second-hand, of it: 1-30%

The character is not even sure the location exists: 1-25%

The character wishes to travel to the past: 1-15%

The character wishes to travel to the future: 50%, -1% per five years in the future. Note that such a travel may remove a player from the campaign, effectively "killing" that character (roll up a new one).

There are stories among astral travelers of people who ended up in fantasy worlds that looked exactly like places described in fictional novels, role-playing games and movies, or places that have never existed, or could never exist in our reality. Some legends speak of psychics and magicians who wished to go to Heaven or Nirvana, and disappeared without a trace. Countless astral voyagers who have used the Void have never been heard of again! Time travel appears to be possible, although it seems the people involved are shunted to parallel worlds rather than Earth's actual past, so their meddling never seems to have an effect on their own timeline.

Astral Domains

Like air bubbles in a vast sea, a multitude of small, self-contained "pockets" of astral space dot the planar landscape. Each domain is the personal creation of an individual or group of psychics, magicians or other astral visitor. By channeling his will and personal energy into a project, a few psychics and sorcerers can isolate a portion of the astral plane and modify it to suit their whims. If enough power and imagination are available, a psychic can reshape his domain to look like anything he visualizes. Many domains resemble castles or palaces; others manage to replicate vast forests or jungles and are **populated** with animals brought from Earth or the Nightlands. Most domains never span more than several square miles and some are as small as a single castle, tower or home, floating in the mist. However, the most powerful and ambitious builders of domains have erected places the size of a sprawling city (spanning a radius of 100 miles/160 km, or more) or even a small country! The largest ones are sometimes mistaken for astral kingdoms.

Characters who have the power to reshape ectoplasm call themselves the *Astral Lords*. Despite their lofty names, these

"lords and ladies" come from all walks of life, from ancient mystics of Earth's past to present-day, young and inexperienced human psychics. All they have in common is their ownership of an astral domain, a domain where their word is the only law. Some are concerned only with the growth of their little worlds, while others indulge in all kinds of perversion in their personal empires. **Still** others travel forth from their domains to help those in need, and may offer their domains as refuges and sanctuaries.

Most of these domains are protected from casual or accidental intrusions by ectoplasmic barriers and concealment. It is nearly impossible to stumble into those protected realms, except from the Void or through dimensional Rifts. Others are less well defended, and can be entered without too many difficulties; these domains are plagued by raids from astral dwellers unless they are at least hidden from view.

Astral Kingdoms

It is not clear whether the so-called Astral Kingdoms are enormous domains or actually independent dimensions located in astral space. These areas are typically the size of a continent; many seem to be as vast as the planet Earth or the Nightlands. They can only be entered through portals, the Void, or well-hidden astral paths. Some adept astral navigators can find their way back to a kingdom after visiting it only once, but for the most part, these kingdoms are very difficult to discover, let alone enter.

It appears that unlike domains, kingdoms are not created by one or more people regardless of how powerful they are. While some have claimed to be the creator of a particular kingdom, it has never been proven and seems unlikely. Legends speak of powerful entities, perhaps the gods of old, who used their enormous resources to build these realms, and then were forced to abandon them for some unknown reason. It is also possible that they are natural formations, places where astral energies coalesced and formed the equivalent of a continent or planet. Some have also suggested that the areas known as kingdoms are the giant, scattered fragments of entire worlds that were somehow "Rifted" into the Astral Plane and absorbed.

Travelers using astral projection will find themselves appearing much more solid and real when they enter a kingdom. In fact, in most kingdoms the characters lose their ability to fly and feel like normal flesh and blood beings, subject to hunger and pain (their S.D.C. remains the same).

All kingdoms have a contained **eco-system**, including many animals and plants that would not be able to survive for long in astral space. The inhabitants are as varied as the kingdoms themselves; some are uninhabited or scarcely inhabited by sentient beings, while others have cities teeming with hundreds of thousands or millions of people — some humanoid, others utterly alien creatures, and all manner of beings in between.

There are hundreds of "known" kingdoms described in the archives of the *Gray Ghost Society* (described elsewhere); other astral organizations may know of even more. Three of the best known kingdoms are listed below; future *Nightbane* sourcebooks may go into more depth about these kingdoms, their politics and inhabitants.

The Land of Caves: The **Tarantuloid** race settled in this strange and rocky realm centuries ago. This kingdom is believed to be the size of Australia, and is dotted with mountains and



rocky terrain. Tarantuloids like to live in caves, and over the years they have built enough tunnels to transform the kingdom into a giant ant-hill. The hearts of some of these mountains have been carved out and replaced by elaborate cities sculpted out of the rock. Millions of Tarantuloids live in this kingdom where one can find the largest and most populated cities ever built by this race. Mossy and lichen-like plants are cultivated as their major food source, and metallic weapons and tools are created from ectoplasm.

Each Tarantuloid city is independent; wars between city-states are infrequent but not unknown, especially when a city grows powerful enough to threaten its neighbors. This independence is not only political, but cultural. Some cities have a vaguely Middle Eastern look to them, with towers tipped by dome-like structures, while others seem to prefer a more squarish, less decorative look. Most Tarantuloids feel that "their" city is superior to all others, and this competitiveness continues even in times of peace, with craftsmen, performers and other tradesmen always trying to outdo their neighboring rivals.

This kingdom is of interest to outsiders because of the **Crossroads Temple**. The temple is near the middle of the astral kingdom, in a city protected by an order of Tarantuloid mystics known as the *Door Keepers*. This hive-like structure is said to contain portals to hundreds of different locations in the Astral Plane as well as a handful of other worlds, including Earth and the Nightlands. Tarantuloids cannot materialize on "physical" worlds like Earth, but they can and do visit them in astral form, and they have amassed a great deal of information about the culture and people of these worlds.

Non-Tarantuloids can expect a wide variety of receptions in the Land of Caves. Some city-states will allow foreign visitors, provided they behave themselves, while others will be much more suspicious or downright hostile. The Crossroads Temple may allow strangers to use the Portals, but only if the abbot in charge of the temple considers them worthy. Some astral travelers have been put to the test by being required to perform a service for the Temple and/or the Land of Caves, or by undergoing a number of rituals and ordeals designed to test their worthiness. The mystic and psychic defenses of the temple have so far prevented any group of adventurers from entering it without permission.

Shortly after Dark Day, the Land of Caves received an embassy from the Nightlords, led by an Avatar of High King Moloch. The embassy wanted the Tarantuloids to surrender control of the Crossroads Temple to the Ba'al. The abbot refused, and since then, the Tarantuloids in the region fear a reprisal. This fear has made them all the more wary of intruders.

The Wilderness: This strange realm appears to be an expansive forest, at least the size of North America, if not larger. Everything living in this place seems to be sentient and capable of speech. Visitors can engage in conversation with animals, trees, and even rocks (only dirt appears to be truly inanimate); most animals are capable of very intelligent conversation (although their concerns remain primarily animalistic, like looking for food and shelter). Plants are less aware and intelligent, with the exception of large trees; most talk slowly as if in a drowsy state of awareness. Rocks speak even slower and are only aware of their immediate surroundings. The flora and fauna of this place varies wildly from region to region, covering almost every

possible forest and jungle environment found on Earth, plus a few alien ones. Travelers have reported reaching a teeming jungle populated by dinosaurs; others have seen different prehistoric animals and some creatures that appear to be natives of other worlds. Beyond their ability to talk, the animals appear to behave normally, except for the fact that they are not afraid of humanoids.



Attempts to harm the animals for sport are extremely dangerous. Hunting is not forbidden in The Wilderness, but apparently one has to ask for permission from an animal before killing it! If permission is refused and the animal is still killed, something horrible befalls the hunter. A team of astral hunters, with ties to the *Gray Ghost Society*, once went on an expedition to this land. According to the one survivor, they killed two deer, and then some sort of monstrous creature, all fur, claws and savagery, descended on the party, killing everyone in a matter of minutes. Only one hunter managed to escape by opening a dimensional portal while the supernatural beast slaughtered his companions.

The Casino of the Damned: Many tales circulate about this dangerous and mysterious place, and there is an element of truth in most of them. This "kingdom" is shaped like a huge 20th Century gambling establishment, very similar to those found in Los Vegas or Atlantic City. The main difference is the size and variety; the Casino appears to be larger than most cities with their surrounding suburbs. Visitors have walked through miles of corridors and connecting rooms without seeing any end to the place. This gargantuan structure is divided into thousands of rooms, many of which are gargantuan gaming halls, each with its own style, decor and range of specialties. Many resemble sophisticated 20th Century gambling establishments while others look like alien arenas where people bet on fights between alien mon-

sters. The Casino is always open, and there are always tens of thousands of creatures from hundreds of species, all gambling to their hearts' content. Some patrons insist that they've even seen **Nightlord** Avatars and Night Princes coming to play the tables at the *Casino of the Damned*.

Reaching the Casino is fairly easy. Anybody who has heard of it can reach it using the astral navigation power as if they had been there before. From the outside, visitors will see a relatively small domed building, maybe twenty stories tall, surrounded by a thin mist of reddish ectoplasm. At the entrance, visitors are given a bag of chits (**nonhuman** visitors often speak of being given colored pebbles, coins or other forms of gambling units). The chits given to humans come in four colors; white, red, black and gold. Each chit is worth ten chits of the previous color (a red chit is worth ten white chits, a black chit is worth ten red chits, and a gold chit is worth ten black chits, a hundred red chits, and a thousand white chits). The amount of personal psychic energy of the person, or his willpower, is what determines how many chits they are handed at the door. In game terms, psychic or magical characters receive 1D6 white chits for every one point of P.P.E. or I.S.P. (whichever is greater). Non-psychic or non-magical characters receive 1D6 white chits for every point of P.P.E. they have, plus an additional 1D6 white chits per point of Mental Endurance (M.E.). These can be used to bet in hundreds of different games of chance, from roulette to cards and dice, to **bloodsports** where the bets are on fights between two animals (or people!), often in duels to the death.

The games themselves do not appear to be rigged, although the odds will always favor the house. When leaving, guests can "cash in" any chits they won in excess of the chits they started with (i.e., if the character started with 120 white chits and came back with 170 chits, he would only get to cash in the last 50). Winners who leave the Casino can change their chits for a number of things. First of all, they can trade their chits for monetary wealth, which they will **find** once they return to their homes. Although the "exchange rate" varies, people can typically expect 1D4x100 dollars per white chit! The money just seems to appear over the next two days after the character returns to his or her home.

Money is just the least of it; winning gamblers can trade the chits for information, unique or rare items (including magical ones), and even good fortune outside the Casino! This "luck" works in game terms as follows: any 10 white chits "cashed" for luck can be used as a +1 on any D20 roll (including combat, saves, etc.) or as a +5% on any skill roll. This can only be used once. So, for example, a character cashing in 100 white chits for luck could use it all to get a +10 on one roll (once), or +1 on any ten rolls of his choice, or any combination in **between**! The G.M. determines how many chits will be needed to gain a specific piece of information, a rare item, or a similar reward. The Casino of the Damned appears to have enormous resources, but some things are even beyond their reach, or may cost so many chits that the characters will never have a prayer to get them. The minimum price for simple things should be 5-10 white chits, with very valuable things "costing" thousands or tens of thousands of white chits. In the Casino of the Damned, everything has a price.

What people are not told when they enter the Casino is that they *cannot* leave unless they bring back the number of white

chits they started with! If an unfortunate finds himself short of the amount, he is not allowed to leave. Violence as a means of escape never works; the Casino personnel (usually looking like members of the victim's species) appear to be immune to most forms of magic and physical attacks, and they will subdue (but rarely kill) unruly guests. Trying to sneak out might be possible, but so far, it has always failed. Any magic, psionic or other power used to try to leave the Casino of the Damned will fail automatically, and the staff is able to see the invisible (or the Nightbanes' Shroud, see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 112). According to some rumors, people who escape are then persecuted by **Necrophim** or demon-like beings for the rest of their days, until they are killed, or forcibly brought back to the astral kingdom.

People who lose all their chits are advised to talk to the Manager. This mysterious figure appears to have a thousand shapes, from a handsome humanoid out of a gangster movie to a demonic tempter. Usually the Manager will offer to "make a deal," typically services in return for a "loan" of more chits. Many of the services appear to be harmless (follow somebody on Earth, take a package to another astral kingdom, and so on), but others involve clearly evil undertakings like murder and theft, either on Earth, the Nightlands, or other kingdoms and domains. Once the service is rendered, the character will find himself back at the Casino, holding his new chits. These facts have convinced many that this kingdom feeds on people's psychic energies, or perhaps their very souls, and most wise travelers avoid it like the plague. The possible rewards are so tempting that many a foolish and greedy traveler has gone in and found himself gambling away his life for centuries, becoming, in effect, a slave to the Manager.

Psionics, Magic & Talents in the Astral Plane

Astral travelers can use any magic or psychic powers they possess without any limitations. Damage, range and effects remain unchanged. Some domains or kingdoms may be more resistant to certain powers and effects than others (see *Building an Astral Domain* for more information). However, a few spells, psychic powers and Nightbane talents may be limited by the very nature of the place. For example, spells dealing with weather will be next to useless in the Astral Plane — any "weather" in this place is the result of very different forces. Any power or spell that deals with the physical world or elements like water or earth will not work in most regions; modified ectoplasm, even when it resembles water or other substances, cannot be controlled by such abilities as hydrokinesis.

Nightbane talents like Shadow Slide would be useless in the Outer Layer or the Void, as there are no surfaces to stick to; the character would float about like an incorporeal cloud of blackness. Also, Nightbanes cannot Mirror Walk to Earth or the Nightlands from the Astral Plane. Mirror Walk seems to work only on Earth and the Nightlands, and nowhere else.

On the other hand, the ectoplasm psychic power is stronger while in the astral plane. At the cost of 6 I.S.P., ectoplasm will have the characteristics of solid vapor (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 78), while for 12 I.S.P. the ectoplasm will have 80 S.D.C. and 5 hit points, and a P.S. of 16. This is due to the fact that there is more ectoplasm available, which the psychic can easily mold to suit his purposes.



The Astral Plane & the Dreamstream

Many mystics and occultists believe that the Astral Plane and the Dreamstream are one and the same. The mistake is easy to make: the two worlds are removed from our "reality," they can be reached through the use of psychic projection, and the two are **equally** strange and alien places. However, the two places are quite distinct and separated from each other. Neither of them have common borders, and communicate through dimensional portals and the occasional **Mixed Domain**. Secondly, the Astral Plane is an independent world, a place that humans can visit, but which would exist whether or not humans existed. On the other hand, the Dreamstream may be a creation or a side-effect of the dreams and nightmares of humankind.

Despite these differences, it is possible to reach the Dreamstream through the Astral Plane and vice versa. Astral travelers who cross a Portal leading into a Dreamstream automatically transform into "dream visitors;" their attributes, S.D.C. and capabilities change as detailed in the *Dreamstream* section.

Psychics with astral travel and telepathy can enter the Dream Pool (the personal "dream world" of an individual, described in the *Dreamstream* section) of a sleeping person for short periods of time. This requires the use of the telepathy power (to give the psychic a vision of the person's dream) first and then the astral projection or transference powers. The astral traveler will have the same abilities and limitations he would have in the astral plane, and risks being hurt or killed by the Dream Personae inhabiting the Pool. Usually the astral form of a character will not

be able to penetrate the membrane separating a person's Dream Pool from the rest of the Dreamstream, but it can happen, especially if the dreamer in question is having a particularly vivid nightmare. Venturing into the Dreamstream from the mind of a dreaming person is extremely dangerous. If the person awakens, the astral projection takes **1D4x10** points of damage and the silver cord linking it to its body (if any) is severed, making it extremely difficult to return to one's body (use the table in the *Nightbane* RPG, page 70, but at -10 to the rolls!).

Dream travelers can enter the astral plane through dimensional portals; doing so temporarily transforms them into astral constructs, retaining their S.D.C. but losing many of their powers, which only apply to the Dreamstream; any psychic or magic powers remain the same.

The Astral Plane & the Nightlands

Astral projection and transference works the same in the Nightlands as it does on Earth, although the Nightlands have more supernatural beings that can "see" an astral form. Beyond that, there is no more closeness or remoteness between the Astral Plane and the Nightlands. The Nightlords have their own connections and operations going on there (described elsewhere), but most inhabitants of this dark world have little knowledge and contact with the plane.

There are a few astral domains that have portals linking them to both Earth and the Nightlands. One of these is controlled by the Nightbane Resistance (see the *Nightbane* RPG, page 17), and is used as a base of operations against the heart of the Ba'al's

power. According to some rumors and tall tales, there is a small but growing **Doppelganger** rebel movement that is led by an astral mage who has built a secret domain linked to several locations beneath the cities of the **Ba'al**. One of these cities is said to be the **Nightlands'** equivalent of Los Angeles. The Nightlords and their minions have never found any evidence of this, and dismiss such stories as groundless lies.

Groups & Factions of the Astral Plane

Nightbane

After Dark Day, many **Nightbanes** tried to find safety in the Astral Plane. Some Nightbanes have used magic or their personal talents to venture there. A few have established small communities in astral domains and kingdoms, preferring the dangers of the worlds within worlds to the persecution they experienced on Earth or the Nightlands. The *Underground Railroad* (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 20) managed to build a few small astral domains with the help of Millek Astral Sages (described elsewhere). The group uses the astral constructs as temporary safe-houses for Nightbanes who needed a place to hide. However, even in the Astral Plane, Nightbanes are not safe. The Nightlords and their minions seem to be interested in conquering this realm as well, and they have a growing presence here. Necrophim and other minions are as aggressive and hostile in the astral worlds as in the Nightlands. Consequently, many natives to the plane don't take kindly to strangers. Still, even before Dark Day there was a small and thriving community of Nightbanes in the Astral Plane.

There are rumors of a fabulous astral kingdom, built by an ancient Nightbane during the time of the **pharaohs** in Egypt, but few can find it. According to tales passed down through the centuries, this enormous kingdom is best known by a black pyramid, as tall as a skyscraper, that rises in the middle of a large city. The city is said to be populated by humans, Nightbanes and other creatures who live in peace and harmony. Other tales claim the city was destroyed years ago, and that the mysterious Wanderer, whose journals sometimes appear on the Internet, was its creator. For reasons not known, the Wanderer is forced to travel from place to place, fleeing the destructive forces that can destroy him (or her). The Nightbane are only now realizing that the key to their survival lies in the destruction of their enemies.

The Gray Ghost Society

This organization first appeared in the 1850s, when spiritualism and other esoteric activities became popular in England and the United States. A few would-be "mediums" and spiritualists had real **psychic** powers, and more Europeans started traveling to the worlds within worlds than ever **before**. In their travels, many encountered mystics of other cultures, including Native American medicine men, East Indian fakirs, Chinese **geomancers** and African **witch-doctors**. These diverse individuals, many of whom were enemies in the "real world," exchanged knowledge, explored and charted paths in the Astral Plane.

Eventually, some started meeting each other regularly. Their differences on Earth meant little in the strange world of mist and ever-changing reality. Most of them were outcasts among their own kind, either feared for their mystic powers, or ridiculed by unbelievers. More importantly, their shared knowledge and power was needed to survive in the often hostile plane. In 1867, seven of the most prominent mystics founded the Gray Ghost Society. The organization had elements from ritual lodges of Native Americans, the secret societies of China and Asia, and the magic brotherhoods of Europe. By the turn of the century, membership had multiplied tenfold. A group of five astral lords and mages banded together and built an entire domain known as the Society Chapter House. The domain looks like an oversized medieval castle, complete with wide battlements, arrow slits and ten towers (where the most prominent members could conduct experiments at their leisure).

The society continued to study the Astral Plane for over a hundred years. Its members ventured into the Void, and made contact with a number of kingdoms, including the Cavern Empire. Although wary of the humans at first, many natives to the Astral Plane eventually accepted the Gray Ghosts as their equals. Their Astral Keep was manned by a mixed force of humans from all over the world, Nightbanes and astral natives hired on as mercenaries. The society also had many contacts among the Seekers (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 22); fellow students of the occult who often traded information and assistance with the astral organization.

Aurora Investigation Agency

*I knew she was trouble the moment she walked into my office. Red hair, long legs and an aura that spelled D-A-N-G-E-R. I barely had time to wonder how she had gotten past Margo, my secretary. Margo can usually spot **supernaturals** a mile away. You might say **she's** got a nose for the abnormal. But then the redhead smiled, and I understood.*

*"I have a job for you, Mr. Samson," she said. "A job you can't refuse." She was almost right. If I'd been a normal human, or even a minor psychic like Margo, I **wouldn't** have been able to say no to her. Even with my mental blocks on, it was tough to resist the hypnotic impulse.*

I hate vampires. They never take no as an answer.

*"Oh, I can refuse it, ma'am. You may be able to control my secretary, but when **you're** playing with the Aurora Agency, **you're** playing in the big leagues."*

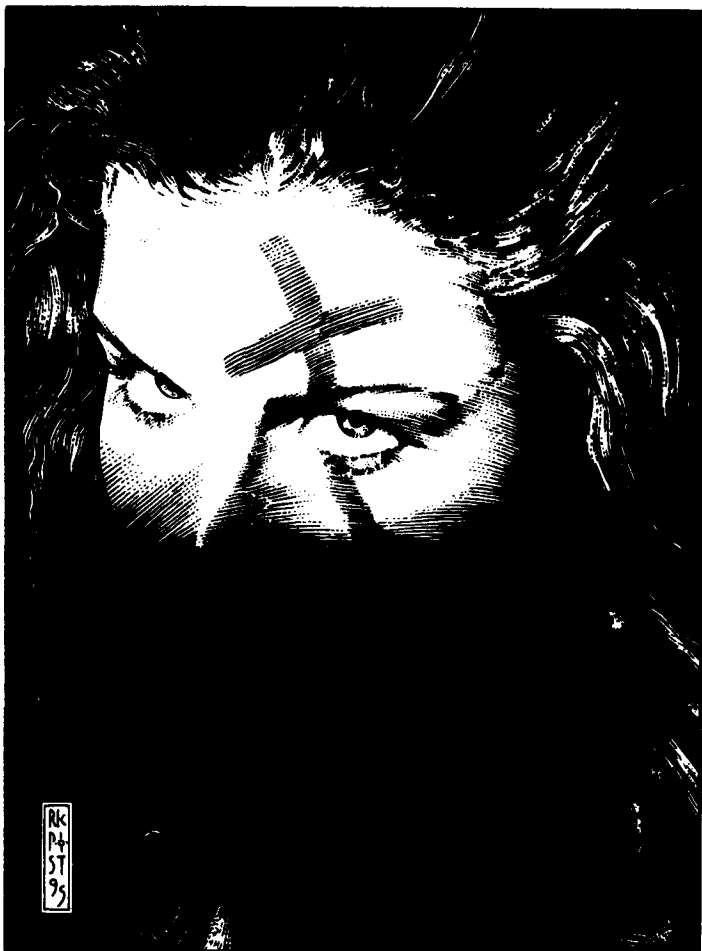
*Like I said, vampires hate being refused. She bared her fangs at me, and her good looks vanished, replaced by pure animal hunger. Luckily, I had a silver cross in my **desk's** right-hand drawer, right next to my old .45. I showed it to her, and she stopped the lunge that would have put her within necking distance of me. "**Down, Fifi,**" I said soothingly. She sat down.*

*"My name is **not Fifi**," the vampiress growled.*

*"And my name ain't '**chum**,' lady," I said. "If you need our services, why **don't** you start with an introduction and the facts?" Most vampires are also very pragmatic; after she decided that trying to kill me was probably too risky and inefficient, she started behaving like a real client.*

I could already smell two or three double-crosses, a major conspiracy and at least a couple of times where I would get the living crap beat out of me. If I was lucky.

I hate Mondays.



Founded in 1947, the Aurora Investigation Agency appears on the surface to be a normal detective agency, perhaps more successful than most, but quite mundane. This veil of normalcy has fooled the PAB (and more recently, the Nightlords), but beneath it there is a great deal more.

The two people behind the agency are anything but normal. Aurora Morgan was a former Army Nurse whose latent psychic powers were awakened during a brutal incident in the Pacific during World War II. A wounded Japanese soldier got hold of a knife and attacked the nurses and doctors who were tending to his wounds. Aurora was severely wounded, but in a fit of desperation she flung the fanatical soldier off a cliff—without ever touching him. This burst of telekinetic powers was but the tip of the proverbial iceberg, and the young nurse soon found herself able to read minds, to travel into the Astral Plane, and to sense the emotions of others. Shortly after she left the service, she met Martin Bronowski, a tough policeman from New York City. Bronowski was also a telepath whose astral projection powers had helped him solve many a tough case. The two met on the Astral Plane, and eventually got together in the physical world. Marriage and a partnership as private detectives soon followed.

Besides handling the cases common to their profession, the couple made it a point to find more psychics, both to help them develop their powers and to protect them from a suspicious world. Some of them also became psychic detectives. As the

agency grew, its private eyes started running into other unusual people and creatures. In 1956, Tammy Delrio joined the agency, a mousy little woman who wielded enormous magical powers. Delrio started teaching promising students the arts of magic while Aurora and Bronowski educated them in the finer points of detective work.

Whether by chance or design, or perhaps simply because like attracts like, the Aurora Agency was involved in an ever-increasing number of cases dealing with the supernatural, from haunted houses to **Nightbanes** asking for help. Despite this track record, the agency has evaded scrutiny from the **PAB**; as if something is protecting the agency, perhaps the same strange force that "brings" all these unusual cases to its doorstep.

In 1960, the **Bronowski's** built an astral domain and retired there, leaving the Aurora Agency in the hands of Tammy Delrio and her new partner, a powerful mind master called Joseph Samson. A second astral domain was linked through portals to the organization's Earth locale, an old building in New York City which the agency now owns. The astral version of the agency has actually started accepting cases from people living in that realm of reality! A few astral dwellers have made use of psychic detectives to search for missing people, recover lost items, and similar tasks. Although these "clients" cannot pay with money, they usually offer magical items, rare works of art, favors and similar articles and services for barter.

The Earth agency continues to prosper even under the Nightlords' rule. The psychic and arcane detectives working for Aurora, Inc. know that something terribly wrong is happening, and a few know the full extent of the Ba'al's conspiracy, but for the time being they are playing it cool and waiting for the right time to make their move. In the meanwhile, they do their best to protect the innocent from a corrupt government and brutal police force, as well as to maintain their integrity in a world of shadows and duplicity. In some ways, working for the Aurora Agency is, in the words of Joseph Samson, "like being in *afilm noir* with a script by Stephen King."

The Nightlords in the Astral Plane

"We are in Hell, aren't we?" Conrad whispered in Sara Li's ear. She almost had to agree. Spread below her vantage point was Lord Abal's Astral Realm. The echoing screams of agony were deafening. She cursed herself for bringing the psychic along for this raid. His "silver cord," which linked his body to h'is astral projection, made sneaking in and out of places a royal bitch. They had been lucky so far, but Conrad was not ready to handle the sights down below.

Torturians were sadistic fiends who revelled in the pain they inflicted on others. Even Sara, an experienced Nightbane, had to turn her head away from the horrors below. Astral forms were forced to assume physical reality in these realms, and they could bleed and suffer as much as their "real" bodies on Earth. The Nightbane shook her head and wished the unfortunates in the torture chamber a quick death.

"Hell," Conrad whispered to himself.

"Worse," Sara replied. "At least people in Hell are supposed to deserve what they get."

Unknown to all but those who frequent the Astral Plane, the **Nightlords** have established a presence in the realm of mists and imagination. Thankfully, it appears that the **Ba'al** cannot physically travel there, possibly due to the same forces that kept them imprisoned in the **Nightlands** until the Dark Day invasion. Even now, all they can do is send forth their Astral Avatars into the shadowy worlds between worlds. That, however, is bad enough. The Astral Avatars have the ability to mold ectoplasm with the same ease as the *Astral Lords*. Over the centuries, Avatars of the more prominent Nightlords have built large domains. Most of these realms are close replicas of the **Nightland Cities** (see the *Nightbane RPG*), but several are even worse. Places where the minds and souls of helpless humans are tortured and twisted in novel ways. One of the most common creations of these hellish domains are the **Torturians**, human astral beings who have been reshaped into inhuman forms. These pathetic creatures have experienced such suffering that they no longer care about anything beyond stopping their agony — and inflicting it on others (see the *Torturian R.C.C.*).

The largest and best-known Nightlord domain is known as the **Screaming Lands**. This large realm was the domain of **transdimensional** beings who were worshipped as gods on Earth until the astral minions of High King Moloch invaded and conquered it. The Screaming Lands consist of a plain of flowing mists, easily confused for an "unsettled" part of the Inner Plane, until one sees the Black Towers. Each tower has its own twisted design; some appear to be made out of huge needles and serrated rings; others protrude from the ground like gigantic, rotting fangs, still sharp despite its corruption. The wind that sweeps the ground between the Black Towers carries with it the howling screams of a thousand mouths. These echoing cries never stop, and they give the land its name. Some say these are the voices of the former rulers, imprisoned and tortured for centuries and driven mad from their suffering. Others have suggested these are the cries of a million ghosts beckoning vengeance.

The Screaming Lands act as the capital of the **Nightlords'** astral strongholds. From there, dozens of Hounds and Hunters prowl the Dragon Roads looking for victims, Necrophim report to their masters, and Torturians deal with prisoners and intruders. The ruler of the domain is an Astral Avatar of King Molochs named **Jainn Ba'al**, or "**Lord Jainn**." This avatar has existed for over a thousand years, and seems to be the most independent of King **Moloch's** creations. Lord Jainn rules the Screaming Lands with an iron fist. His minions have destroyed several dozen astral domains, killing or capturing many astral lords and other plane-dwellers. The captives are tortured and used as living P.P.E. batteries to power the portals leading to the Nightlands and Earth.

The Guardians & the Astral Plane

The mysterious Guardians seem to have a special relationship with the Astral Plane. Many rumors and legends link the Guardians to strange astral kingdoms, and to the even stranger Voidships. These tales speak of huge astral kingdoms made of light, where shining cities rise against a radiant red or blue background. A few stories claim this City of Light cannot be found in the Astral Plane, but is located somewhere beyond the Void, which might explain why the mysterious vessels of light are crewed by beings who appear to be Guardians.

Beyond the stories, there are few known and documented facts about the Guardians in the Astral Plane. Guardians who gain the power of astral transference can stay indefinitely in the plane; the lack of contact with sunlight does not affect them there. Also, a number of Guardians associated with the **Light-bringer** faction (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 23) have helped establish a number of small astral domains with the help of human mystics and psychics. These domains tend to look like places of shining light, although none are as grandiose as the tales proclaim. Also, most Guardians seem to have no knowledge of either the Voidships or the mythical City of Light. Some of the Elder Guardians seem to know a great deal more, but they do not share their knowledge with most people, even most other Guardians.

The Voidships appear to be elongated spheres of yellow or red light; they can travel through astral space at great speeds, and their structures appear to be immune to the entropic energies of the Void (for more information, refer to the *New Equipment section*). Rumors place these vessels on Earth and the Nightlands as well. Perhaps these ships are the ones that gave rise to the entire UFO mythology. These speculations are complicated further by ancient writings attributed to the mysterious Nightbane known as the Wanderer (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 7). This is a fragment of an ancient Greek document supposed to have been written in 257 B.C. and then copied several dozen times through the centuries:

"And I looked to the skies, and saw two flaming Vessels; one flaming red, shaped like a long amphora [wine jug]; the other, blue, more like a shield with two smaller ones, above and below. And the Vessels fought fiercely; hurling lightning bolts at one another with such intensity that not even the mightiest Nightbane could withstand it. A mighty roar followed, and the flying giant shield fell into the Aegean Sea and made the ground shake and the water boil and rise in great waves. And the red vessel, victorious, flew into the darkness beyond."

This and other stories seem to indicate that the Guardians' Voidships (if the "red amphora" was a Voidship) were fighting yet another kind of flying ship. Does this mean that more than one group or race uses this kind of ship? Are there rival factions of Guardians? Do they both come from astral space, or does one come from somewhere else? For the time being, these secrets remain unanswered (but some of them, including more details about the Voidships, may be discussed further in future Nightbane sourcebooks).





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Character Classes of the Astral Plane

Astral Lord P.C.C.

Many psychics and magicians have the ability to enter the Astral Plane, either by projecting a thought-self or by transferring their entire body into this misty realm. Astral Lords can do much more. These people are humans who somehow have gained an affinity with the astral world that far surpasses normal psychic powers. They can enter and leave the realm at will, navigate through the three regions and, more importantly, have the power to create their own personal astral **domains**!

Despite the implications of their title, Astral Lords come from all walks of life. Wealthy mystics, powerful psychics, inmates of psychiatric hospitals, and homeless, destitute people are all equally likely to be "lords and ladies of the Plane." *The Gray Ghost Society* (described elsewhere) is the only organization that has systematically studied a number of Astral Lords (many of them, members of the society), and has been able to determine some characteristics common to all or most of these psychics. First of all, most Astral Lords spontaneously develop the ability to travel into the Astral Plane, usually during their childhood or early teen years. At first, they are only capable of astral projection, and most of their experiences are believed to be dreams or wild fantasies, even by the psychics themselves. Despite all the grave dangers inherent to such travel, the young psychics appear to avoid them all during these unconscious journeys. It is believed that the latent powers of the "future lords" protect them from danger, at least at first. Eventually, the psychic experiences his or her first spontaneous *astral transference*. Many stories and legends of strange disappearances, vanishing and similar phenomena originate from the momentous event when the future Astral Lords suddenly discover that their "fantasy world" is real. The First Foray, as it is traditionally called (some modern Astral Lords simply refer to it as "the Trip"), is perhaps the most dangerous time in the character's life. Several young lords have perished at the hands of astral predators, evil travelers or other dangers; these untimely deaths are now cold-bloodedly referred to as "a one-way Trip."

The lucky and the resourceful manage to survive the First Foray, and eventually learn to control their powers. The very fortunate find a teacher, often another Astral Lord, but sometimes another psychic or an astral dweller like a Millek will become a mentor. Under their guidance, the would-be lord or lady develops powers over ectoplasm and the astral realms. Most Astral Lords start attempting to build their personal realm almost as soon as they discover their abilities. Over the years, they continue to improve the budding astral domain, or discard it and start anew. Others spend years exploring the endless mist and experiencing many wonders before deciding to "settle down" and build a home.

After spending enough time in astral space, the young lords discover an important fact: they do not age physically in the Astral Plane. By spending only a short time (weeks or a month) on the physical world and returning to the plane of endless mist, As-

tral Lords can extend their lifetimes tenfold or more. Some of the oldest humans currently active in the Plane discovered their powers during the Middle Ages or earlier, and appear to be in their mid-forties, despite having lived for hundreds or thousands of years. To stave off the inevitable, many Astral Lords only visit the Earth while in astral form (which does not age, either, but cannot be sustained for long while on the physical plane), rarely interacting with the world or its people. A few become hermits, shut-ins in their personal domains with no desire to leave for any reason. Insanity is another malady of these ancient psychics, which can lead to erratic and sometimes dangerous behavior.

Although it is easier to lose touch with the physical world after experiencing the wonders of astral space, not all Astral Lords abandon their former sense of reality. Some decide to use their powers to help the needy, their country, or cause. A number of famous spies, adventurers and travelers of Earth's history were Astral Lords who used their abilities in both the physical and spiritual worlds. The greedy and cruel exploit their abilities to even old scores, rob the wealthy, or to commit crimes. A long-lived legend among Astral Lords claims that the famous, 19th Century slasher, Jack the Ripper, was one of their own, and that he used ectoplasm to thicken the fogs of London while he committed his crimes, and may even have taken his victims to his astral "playground." The tales end with the possibility that "Old Jack" still prowls the Astral Plane, unaging and nearly immortal, and possibly increasing his tally of murder.

Creating & Role-playing the Astral Lord

The background and previous history of an astral lord or lady has a lot of role-playing and adventuring potential, if developed properly. Astral lords can be experienced planar travelers who have spent years developing their personal domains. Or they can be neophytes who have just undergone their First Foray and have not even considered building an astral domain. Is the character a native of the 20th or 21st Century, or was he born and raised in an earlier time? Has the character spent most of his life in the Astral Plane, and is now mostly ignorant of the ways of the "real world"? Did his First Foray drive him insane? What sort of allies, acquaintances, rivals or enemies has he made during his life as an Astral Lord?

After creating the character, the second step consists of creating the character's astral domain. Flexibility and imagination should be the key; if the rules described below seem too constricting or limiting, or do not cover all possibilities envisioned by a creative player, the Game Master might consider altering them to suit the situation, or even disregard them and substitute his own. Game balance should also be kept in mind; it is easy for some players to try to create god-like domains where they are all-powerful. One limitation is to require the character to have sufficient experience in the Astral Plane before he or she can even consider creating a domain that is anything more than a shack. This, again is left to the G.M.'s discretion (be fair and reasonable).

Gaming for a group of characters that includes one or more Astral Lords can also present some unique problems. Relying on the safety provided by an astral domain is a perfectly natural desire for an astral lord character, but both the player and the game master must work together so that the presence of this "safety net" does not become intrusive. Under some circumstances, astral lords will have to leave their domains; they include seeking an enemy, item or a lost or kidnapped loved one, having to deal with problems and opportunities on Earth or the **Nightlands**, or the realization that returning to the domain at a critical juncture might lead enemies to it, endangering all. What happens if the Nightlords or other villains find the domain? What if the lord returns from an adventure to find his domain invaded? Is the lord hunted every time he leaves his domain, or every time he enters one of the other regions or follows a Dragon Line? Likewise, astral travelling characters may come to rely too much on astral travel/spying. This is the time to have a **Nightlord**, his minions, or astral predator enter the picture and remind the character just how dangerous astral projection can be.

A player of an Astral Lord might also enjoy using the character's control over his domain to bully or abuse other player characters. The Game Master should be prepared to deal with such childish behavior if it threatens the fun of the game — both the G.M. and players should realize that the game should be fun for everybody and work to that goal.

Astral Lord P.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Astral Transference: The character can enter the Astral Plane at will. This is an innate ability that costs no I.S.P. but takes one minute (four melee rounds) of meditative concentration. At the end of the meditation period, the character's body (but not any clothing or equipment that has not been specially *reconfigured*; see below) is transformed into an astral equivalent. This astral form has all the abilities listed under the Astral Transference psionic power (see the *New Psionic Powers* section). The character can remain in coexistence with the real world or enter the astral plane completely. Changing back also requires one minute of concentration.

Traveling in the astral plane costs no I.S.P. and can be done indefinitely, but staying in the physical world in astral form (be it Earth or the Nightlands) will drain the character of one I.S.P. per every five minutes; this I.S.P. cannot be regained until the character either becomes solid again or moves completely into the astral plane.

2. Astral Senses: Both in physical and astral form, the character can sense energy entities and other travelers in astral form. Additionally, astral lords can sense the presence of ley lines and nexus points (range: 1 mile/1.6 km), and may be able to recognize/sense Nightbane, Guardians, Necrophim and other supernatural creatures by making a perception roll: typical level of difficulty is Moderate; raise to Challenging if the being in question is dampening its nature with a mind block or similar ability. In the Astral Plane, the character can find his way as if the power of astral navigation was active (no I.S.P. cost).

3. Astral Travel: The character can enter the Astral Plane by concentrating for one minute, as per the *astral projection* power. The Astral Lord has much greater control over his destination, however. Instead of being shunted to a random area of the Outer Layer, the character can determine where to arrive in either the

Outer Layer or Inner Plane (see the previous *Astral Landscape* section for more information), or directly to his astral domain. The location of the character's desired destination must be known to him, and it must not be magically warded against intrusion. Using this ability costs two I.S.P. per use, regardless of the destination. The character can bring others along at the additional cost of two I.S.P. per "passenger. The group must cross the astral entrance simultaneously. People brought into the Astral Plane are temporarily transformed into "astral forms," with S.D.C. equal to two times their combined S.D.C. and hit points. The passengers do not have to be psychics, but staying in the Plane for more than an hour will drain each of them (or their host) at the rate of one I.S.P. per hour. Rest will restore this lost I.S.P., but the drain will be continuous unless the "astral passenger" is taken to the character's domain or back to the physical world.

4. Astral Domain: The greatest power of the astral lords is the ability to reshape the ectoplasm of the Inner Plane and the Outer Layer to build a separate, self-contained "pocket universe." This ability uses up the character's permanent P.P.E. base! Depending on how much P.P.E. the lord (or lords; two or more psychics can collaborate in building a domain) spends, the domain can have a variety of appearances, qualities, defenses and inherent powers. See *Building an Astral Domain* for more information. As the character becomes more powerful (i.e., reaches new experience levels and gains more P.P.E.), he can improve his domain by permanently channeling more P.P.E. into it.

5. Astral Reconfiguration (Objects): The character can infuse items with I.S.P. energy. This process makes the objects "astrally sensitive." Reconfigured items can be used while in astral form, taken into the Astral Plane, and can affect astral beings in the physical world. An astrally reconfigured gun (and ammo) could damage astral travelers on Earth or the Nightlands! The main drawback is the permanent expenditure of I.S.P. required to charge each item.

I.S.P. Cost (Permanent): One point per pound (0.45 kg) of weight or fraction thereof. Very small objects (bullets, batteries, needles) can be reconfigured together as a group for the cost of one I.S.P. but anything larger (knife, sword, arrow, etc.) has to be treated individually. A loaded gun or a flashlight and its batteries can be reconfigured as a single unit, also. Once the bullets or batteries are exhausted, new ones must be charged up separately.

6. Ectoplasm Armor: The Astral Lord can surround himself with a skin-tight field of ectoplasm energy, drawn from the Astral Plane itself. This armor is effective in the Astral Plane, on Earth or the Nightlands, although it is most powerful in the former. In the Astral Plane, ectoplasm armor protects with 100 S.D.C. plus 20 S.D.C. per additional experience level of its creator. Furthermore, the character can shape the armor in any way he chooses. Many Astral Lords give their psychic armor a fanciful design, from demonic-looking decorations to a high-tech or science-fiction appearance. On Earth or the Nightlands, the armor has 25 S.D.C. at first level, plus 20 S.D.C. per additional level of experience. This armor is invisible to all but psychics, young children (12 or younger), those in astral form and supernatural creatures.

The armor surrounds the entire character, so it has no A.R.; it must be destroyed before being able to reach the character's body. Activating the armor (anywhere) costs 15 I.S.P. points; the armor will last until destroyed (S.D.C. reduced to zero) or for ten minutes per level of experience.

7. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to their innate abilities, astral lords have a few psionic powers. At level one, select two powers from each of the sensitive and physical categories, for a total of four powers. Every level after the first, select one more power from either of those two categories.

8. P.P.E.: Astral Lords have very high levels of psychic energy. This energy can be channeled into building their astral domains or into increasing their psionic powers. At first level, the character starts off with 3D4×10 P.P.E. plus the P.E. attribute! Add 2D6 P.P.E. per level of experience.

9. I.S.P.: 1D4×10 I.S.P. plus M.E. attribute. Additionally, the character can permanently convert some of his P.P.E. pool into I.S.P., on a one to one basis. P.P.E. spent in this way increases the character's I.S.P. total, but is permanently "lost" from his P.P.E. base. Also add 1D4 I.S.P. per level of experience (P.P.E. gained at higher levels can also be converted at the same rate).

Astral Lord P.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 13 or higher.

P.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native (98%)
Lore: Astral (+20%)
Two Technical skills of choice (+10%)
One **piloting/driving/riding** skill of choice (+10%)
Two domestic skills of choice (+10%)
Hand to hand combat must be selected as an "other" skill.
Hand to hand: basic costs one skill selection, expert counts as two, and martial arts (or assassin, if evil) counts as three skill selections.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, six, eight, ten and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency. **G.M./Player's Note:** The character's background should explain any skill selections taken. Most Astral Lords venture into the plane of mist during their teens or early adult years, so they rarely get the benefits of higher education. Also, characters from archaic times are not likely to pick high-tech skills like computer operations. Use common sense; just because "any" pilot related skills can be selected doesn't mean that a high-school dropout can have weapon systems!

Communications: Any (+5%)
Domestic: Any (+5%)
Electrical: Any
Espionage: Wilderness survival only.
Mechanical: Any
Medical: Any (+5% on first aid)
Military: None.
Physical: Any
Pilot: Any (+5% where applicable)
Pilot Related: Any
Rogue: Any
Science: Any
Technical: Any (+5%)
W.P.: Any
Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: If the character has an astral domain, any number of items can be created there, limited only by P.P.E. expenditure (see *Building an Astral Domain*). On Earth, equipment is determined by the character's profession and job (if any). Most Astral Lords have very little interest in the physical world and are correspondingly poorer and less influential. Typical value of all possessions is 3D6×100 dollars.

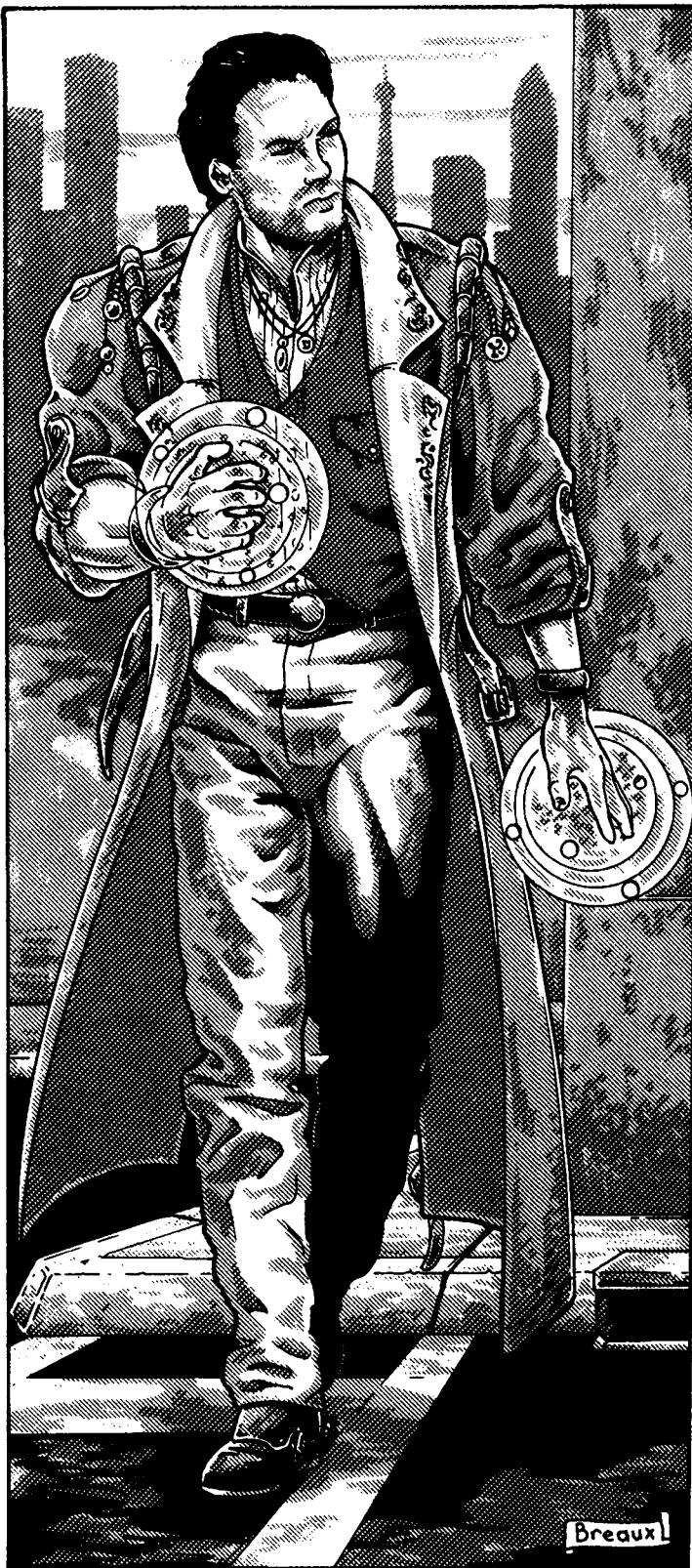
Money: 2D6×100 dollars; may be adjusted to represent the character's background.

Astral Mage O.C.C.

Astral mages are sorcerers who have forged a mystical link between themselves and the Astral Plane. These mysterious dimensional travelers are said to derive their magical and psychic abilities from the Outer Layer, the realm of ectoplasmic energy that lies closest to the physical world. These sorcerers appear to be born with the talent to astral project, in a manner similar to Astral Lords. Unlike the lords, however, the astral mages somehow communicate with and derive their powers from the Plane itself. A few of the oldest and most powerful mystics claim that they have been able to sense a living, sentient presence permeating the entire Astral Plane, a presence they refer to as "the Great Spirit," an essence that may be related to the Manitou of American Indian mythology.

Astral Mages undergo much of the same ordeals experienced by Astral Lords, including the visions of the Astral Plane and their First Foray. In fact, sometimes the term "Astral Lord" includes both the psychics and mages who can build astral domains, and many mages call themselves "lords and ladies." Like the "real" lords, the mages eventually build astral domains and shape them as they will, enjoying and suffering many of the same advantages and drawbacks. In general, the domains of astral mages tend to be smaller and less complex than those of their psychic counterparts. This is because the mages need P.P.E. to use their magical abilities and aren't willing to sacrifice it to build a large domain (and thus make them less powerful).

The mages have a different world-view than their psychic counterparts. Since their sense of the Astral Plane as something alive and the source of their powers (instead of just a home), the characters have a great deal of interest in anything that may affect the Astral Plane as a whole, not just their own personal realms. Thus, they will be much more active in "astral politics," trying to defend all domains, kingdoms and regions from such threats as the Nightlords, monsters and intruders. Many of them go even further, extending this feeling of kinship to Earth (or even the Nightlands), which seems to be somehow connected. These dedicated defenders will work with anybody, human or not, to protect both the astral and physical realities from danger. After Dark Day, they see the Nightlords as a universal threat that must be confronted at all costs.



Astral Mage O.C.C. Abilities & Bonuses

1. Astral Transference: The character can enter the Astral Plane at will. This is an innate ability that costs no I.S.P. but takes one minute (four melee rounds) of meditative concentration. At the end of the meditation period, the character's body (but not any clothing or equipment that has not been specially *re-configured*; see below) is transformed into an astral equivalent. This astral form has all the abilities listed under the Astral Transference psionic power (see the *New Psionic Powers* section).

The character can remain in coexistence with the real world or enter the astral plane completely. Changing back also requires one minute of concentration.

Traveling in the astral plane costs no I.S.P. and can be done indefinitely, but staying in the physical world in astral form (be it Earth or the Nightlands) will drain the character of one I.S.P. per every five minutes; this I.S.P. cannot be regained until the character either becomes solid again or moves completely into the astral plane.

2. Astral Senses: Both in physical and astral form, the character can sense energy entities and other travelers in astral form. Additionally, astral mages can sense the presence of ley lines and nexus points (range: 1 mile/1.6 km), and may be able to recognize/sense **Nightbane**, Guardians, Necrophim and other supernatural creatures by making a perception roll: typical level of difficulty is Moderate; raise to Challenging if the being in question is dampening its nature with a mind block or similar ability. In the Astral Plane, the character can find his way as if the power astral navigation was active (no I.S.P. cost).

3. Astral Travel: The character can enter the Astral Plane by concentrating for one minute, as per the *astral projection* power. The Astral Mage has much greater control over his destination, however. Instead of being shunted to a random area of the Outer Layer, the character can determine where to arrive in either the Outer Layer or Inner Plane (see the previous *Astral Landscape* section for more information), or directly to his astral domain. The location of the character's desired destination must be known to him, and it must not be magically warded against intrusion. Using this ability costs two I.S.P. per use, regardless of the destination. The character can bring others along at the additional cost of two I.S.P. per "passenger." The group must cross the astral entrance simultaneously. People brought into the Astral Plane are temporarily transformed into "astral forms," with S.D.C. equal to two times their combined S.D.C. and hit points. The passengers do not have to be psychics, but staying in the Plane for more than an hour will drain each of them (or their host) at the rate of one I.S.P. per hour. Rest will restore this lost I.S.P., but the drain will be continuous unless the "astral passenger" is taken to the character's domain or back to the physical world.

4. Astral Domain: The greatest power of the astral mages is the ability to reshape the ectoplasm of the Inner Plane or the Outer Layer to build a separate, self-contained "pocket universe." This ability uses up the character's permanent P.P.E. base (see P.P.E., below). Depending on how much P.P.E. the mystic (or mystics/mages; two or more characters can collaborate in building a Domain) spends, the domain can have a variety of appearances, qualities, defenses and inherent powers. See *Building an Astral Domain* for more information. As the character becomes more powerful (i.e., reaches new experience levels and gains more P.P.E.), he can improve his domain by permanently channeling more P.P.E. into it. The main limiting factor for astral mages is that they depend on P.P.E. to cast spells, so using a great deal of their reservoirs to build domains will weaken their magic abilities.

5. Magical Powers: At first level, astral mages know four spells from levels 1-3. At each level of experience after the first, the character can learn two more spells of the same or lower level of experience.

6. P.P.E.: **3D6×10** plus P.E. attribute. At least one-third of the P.P.E. rolled (rounded up) must be used to build the character's astral domain. Add **2D4** P.P.E. per level of experience.

7. **Psionic Powers:** Astral mages gain the following psionic abilities: empathy, mind block, see the invisible, and telepathy.

I.S.P.: **4D6** plus M.E. attribute, plus **1D6** I.S.P. per additional level of experience.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10 or higher. A high M.E. is desirable but not necessary.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: Native (98%)

Lore: Astral (+20%)

Two technical skills of choice (+10%)

One electrical or mechanical skill of choice (+10%)

One piloting skill of choice (+10%)

Two domestic skills of choice (+10%)

Hand to hand combat must be selected as an "other" skill.

Hand to hand: basic costs one skill selection, expert counts as two, and martial arts (or assassin, if evil) counts as three skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 11 other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, six, eight, ten and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency. **G.M./Player's Note:** The character's background should explain any skill selections taken. Characters from archaic times are not likely to pick high-tech skills like computer operations. Use common sense; just because "any" pilot related skills can be selected doesn't mean that a high-school dropout character can have the weapon systems skill!

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Any.

Mechanical: Any

Medical: Any (+5% on first aid)

Military: None.

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any (+5% where applicable)

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Varies with the character's lifestyle and history. Game Masters have the final say as to how much and what kind of equipment the character starts with; be fair and reasonable.

Money: Characters with little interest in the real world get **1D6×100** dollars (or less if deemed appropriate by the G.M.). Those active in the material world starts with **1D4×1000** dollars in cash and **2D4×1000** in possessions (such as homes, vehicles, etc.). Again, this may be adjusted to represent the background of the character in question.

Building an Astral Domain

Astral Lords and mages have the unique ability to permanently reshape astral "stuff" into almost anything they can imagine. This is done to create their own domains within the Outer or Inner layers of the Astral Plane by transforming the ectoplasmic mists and clouds into realms molded from their imaginations. Their only limitations are the amount of P.P.E. energy available to the characters and how much he or she is willing to permanently spend to create his domain.

An astral domain should be a base of operations, a place the player character can turn to when he needs somewhere that is relatively safe (although never completely safe). A **hideout** where he can regroup and plan his next move. If an astral domain becomes a stumbling block for a campaign, the game master can always compensate and modify the situation with an astral disaster, invasions by predators or hostile natives, an assault by the Nightlords or their minions, trouble with an unreasonable neighbor or rival Astral Lord, and other dangers that could seize the domain or humble a character.

Keep in mind that most effects, powers and abilities of the domain have no effect anywhere else in Astral Plane, and cannot exist on, or influence things on Earth or the **Nightlands**. Some Astral Lords or mages build near-impregnable strongholds and rarely, if ever, venture beyond them. Such behavior, however, is not appropriate for player characters.

Determining the Power Level of a Domain

If the Game Master is designing an astral domain, he can select the power level at will, or simply pick and choose the powers and characteristics desired for a particular realm. If one or more player characters are trying to create their own personal, secret astral domain, the size and points available are determined by the amount of P.P.E. "invested" in the creation process. As the characters grow in power and experience, they can increase the amount of P.P.E. sacrificed into the realm, making it grow in size or power even as they grow in **power/levels**.

The P.P.E. sacrificed must come at least in part from an Astral Lord or Astral Mage; these two mystics are the only people with the power to actually reshape ectoplasm into permanent forms. More than one psychic or mage can pool their P.P.E. and collaborate to create one common, shared domain. While this is a quick way for a group of characters to build a large domain, it means all of the co-creators are given equal access to every aspect of the domain: all the secrets, hiding places, special powers, and even those that are added afterwards, will be automatically known to anybody who contributed their energy to its creation. **Nightbanes**, other magical or psychic O.C.C.s, and supernatural creatures can also *participate*, and get an equal say in regard to the elements of the domain, but an Astral Lord or Mage is necessary to do the actual mental construction, and all permanently lose some measure of their P.P.E. Although combining one's re-

sources with others can build a larger and more powerful domain, it is rare for more than 3-5 lords to collaborate in such creations. Betrayals between co-creators are very common, as jealousy and fear of betrayal often leads to a falling out between the partners. **Note:** The P.P.E. released from a blood sacrifice cannot be used to create or add to a domain. The P.P.E. must be given up willingly from a living being. Remember, all contributors of P.P.E. used to create a domain have complete access to that domain and are immune to all its defenses.

Size & Creation Points

The first thing to do when building a domain is to decide upon its size. The bigger the astral domain the more P.P.E. is needed. However, the bigger the domain the more *creation points* are available to add special features and powers. All of the following can be selected as often as desired, provided P.P.E. are permanently expended.

1. Tiny Domain: This is the smallest possible astral domain, typically the size of a large room, a single bedroom apartment, or a small cabin. The domain is unlikely to be very well protected or defended, and its resources and capabilities are minimal. Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 20; Available Creation Points: 50

2. Small Domain: A slightly larger and more complex domain, or a tiny domain with a lot more elements and defenses built into it. It is typically a single tower, average-sized house or other modest dwelling. Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 40; Available Creation Points: 100

3. Average Domain: A common domain, usually the creation of a small group of psychics, or one powerful lord, or hermit. These domains are usually well-protected and have a number of special abilities, including a complex landscape (forest, pasture, etc.) covering an area of one city block, and with one or more large buildings (like an entire castle with several towers and courtyard; or it could be a skyscraper, temple, small amusement park, etc.). Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 80; Available Creation Points: 300

4. Large Domain: A powerful place, large enough to contain a small town and typically filled with buildings, and/or one large impressive castle, cathedral, skyscraper or other structure, plus a complex landscape, unique physical laws or defenses, and other qualities. Usually, only a group of psychics can afford the energy cost involved in creating these domains. Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 200; Available Creation Points: 500

5. Greater Domain: This domain is a large and powerful creation that can span miles. Such a creation will usually have a rich and complex environment with one to a dozen different areas of landscapes, and dozens to a few thousand inhabitants. The defenses of such domains will be strong and complex, so it will be difficult to invade or destroy. Only the most powerful bands of lords and mages can create such a place. Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 500; Available Creation Points: 800

6. Minor Astral Kingdom: A full-fledged astral kingdom is beyond the reach of even the most powerful astral lords or mages. Only powerful **transdimensional** entities can harness the power needed to create domains of that size. However, domains that are considered minor astral kingdoms range in size from that of a large city to a small country, and have populations in the thousands or tens of thousands! A domain of this size might have enough inhabitants to require a government, or it could be

huge but largely uninhabited. Permanent P.P.E. Cost: 2000; Available Creation Points: 1200



Note: Developing Domains After Creation: Adding defenses and other special features to the domain can be done at any time, but is extremely expensive. For example, a small group of lords want to improve their domain from tiny to small; they spend 20 permanent P.P.E. and get an additional 50 Creation Points to use as they will. Likewise, the characters can pump-in points later to purchase special features. Each P.P.E. point can be converted into *one creation point*.

Characteristics and Features of a Domain

Many of these characteristics require only one purchase. Others have different elements that the domain builder can purchase several times or choose to combine with other features, provided the required total amount of Creation Points/P.P.E. are spent.

A. Accessibility

How easy the realm is to reach from the Astral Plane? This applies to both friends and allies of the creator(s), as well as to enemies, invaders or thieves.

1. Free: Easy to find and completely out in the open. Visitors can just walk in and out, and travelers may accidentally wander into the domain. Creation Point Cost: None.

2. Hidden: There are some ectoplasmic defenses that conceal the domain, making it hard to detect. Astral beings in the vicinity must make a moderate perception roll (challenging if the hidden feature is purchased twice, difficult if taken three times) once per four hours of searching to find the place (most would-be intruders will give up after one or two attempts). Creation Point Cost: 5/10/15 points respectively.

3. Ectoplasmic Barriers: The domain is surrounded by a bubble of solid ectoplasm with 200 S.D.C. per 10 square foot (0.9 sq. m) section. The bubble regenerates damage at a rate of 10 S.D.C. per melee round. Only people the creator specifies can cross the barrier without problems. The domain is also concealed in ectoplasmic mist and clouds. Creation Point Cost: 15 points.

4. Restricted: Travelers must find a portal to enter the realm; there is no way to enter the domain from the astral plane other than portals or **teleport** spells and powers. The portals are hidden (requires a difficult perception roll per four hours of searching). Creation Point Cost: 25 points, plus at least one portal must be purchased (see listing "C").

5. Controlled: As above in number four, but the portals will not allow strangers through without the willing consent of an "approved" person living in (or creator of) the domain. Only a mage or psychic with the power *to force* a portal open can do so (see the *New Spells and New Psychic Powers sections*). Creation Point Cost: 40 points.

6. Forbidding: As above in number five, but anybody trying to use magic or psionics to open a portal in or out of the realm is at -30% (-60% if number six is taken twice) to do so. Creation Point Cost: 60 points (can be taken twice).

B. Size

The area covered by the domain is given in cubic feet; the creator(s) can decide exactly what the *three dimensions* of the realm will be like (domains cannot be made two-dimensional).

The same size can be purchased more than once to make the domain bigger.

1. Tiny: 100 cubic feet (2.8 cu.m). Creation Point Cost: 0 Points.

2. Small: 300 cubic feet (8.4 cu.m). Creation Point Cost: 5 points.

3. Average: 1000 feet (28 cu.m). Creation Point Cost: 10 points.

4. Big: One cubic mile (1.6 km) Creation Point Cost: 20 points.

5. Large: 10 cubic miles (16 km). Creation Point Cost: 35 points.

6. Huge: 100 cubic miles (160 km). Creation Point Cost: 50 points.

C. Portals or Gateways

Portals or gateways are dimensional conduits that allow people to enter and exit the domain without having to travel through the astral plane. These options can be purchased several times; it would be possible for an Astral Lord to have an *astral portal*, two *fixed Earth portals*, and a *movable portal* all at the same time, if he spent the points to get them. Most domains will have more than one way in (and out).

1. None: To reach this domain, the character must travel through the plane, and use the *astral navigation* psychic power to locate it. Creation Point Cost: 0 Points.

2. Astral Portal: Whenever the creator is in the same region of the Astral Plane (either the Outer Layer or the Inner Plane), he can open a Portal leading into his domain (the process takes 1D4 melee rounds of concentration). Other astral travelers who know of the domain's existence may also open the portal (same length of concentration, but costs 8 I.S.P. or P.P.E.), unless the portal's access is restricted. Creation Point Cost: 10 points.

3. Physical World Portals: These dimensional portals are located in fixed locations on Earth or the Nightlands. So, for example, an astral lord could have a portal in his home in Connecticut, and another portal in a hidden crevice in the New York Subway system, both leading to his world. Activating the Portal costs nothing for its creator(s), but 10 I.S.P. or P.P.E. for all others. Unless the Portal's access is restricted, psychics and magicians can detect it (using the appropriate spells or psychic powers) and can activate it. Creation Point Cost: 15 points per portal.

4. Movable Portal: Same as number 3 above, but the creator(s) has built a portable device that allows him to travel to his domain. The device must be big enough to allow a person to enter it in some way. Some typical movable portals include carpets and tapestries (which are unrolled and activated, becoming doorways into the domain), large trunks and closets, mirrors and magician's "disappearing boxes." These movable portals have an A.R. of 2D6 and 1D4×100 S.D.C.; if the device is destroyed, the portal is too. Creation Point Cost: 25 points per portal.

5. Automatic Transportation: The character can teleport into his domain at will. This ability has a base chance for success of 35% +3% per level of experience of the main creator. It takes five minutes of concentration and only those who created the domain can use this ability (costs no P.P.E. to perform). Creation Point Cost: 60 points.

6. Near-instant Transportation: Same as number 5, above, but only takes one melee round of concentration. Creation Point Cost: 100 points.

D. Landscape

This is the most flexible domain characteristic. In theory, a domain can look like anything its creator or creators wish. Whether or not its appearance is based on real life (at least realistic), or fantasy will depend on the tastes of the designer(s) and the amount of energy spent in shaping it.

1. Featureless: The domain is shaped like the surrounding area, typically a flat section of ground covered in a light mist with wisps of ectoplasm floating around. Creation Point Cost: 0 points.

2. Building with a Rocky Landscape: Part or all of the domain resembles a building of some sort. It can be as crude as a large cavern or as sophisticated as the character's imagination can make it. Common shapes include a house, manor, tower or a bunker. The dwelling can have a maximum of six rooms, divided in any way the creator decides, and limited only by size. The size of the building is limited only by the size of the domain; the entire domain could be filled by a single structure floating in limbo, or a building surrounded by an area of rocky ground and mist. The building will have the same S.D.C. as similar Earth structures.

The landscape of this domain can look like a desert, rocky landscape, mountain peak or hilly area, devoid of trees and vegetation. Or the aspects described can be combined; i.e. a simple but large domain could be shaped like a hill or several low hills with a small house or tower on top of one. Or the dwelling could sit atop a rocky outcropping surrounded by a desert or hilly area. Creation Point Cost: 10 points.

3. Multiple Buildings: Same as number two above, but there is no limit to the number of buildings and rooms the creator can have in his domain. Some common domain buildings include a castle, complete with a surrounding wall, moat, one or more towers, a central citadel, or a city block with several buildings of various sizes and designs, surrounded by a small area of desert, hills or rocky landscape, all covered in a light mist. Creation Point Cost: 20 points.

4. Lifelike: The ectoplasm in the realm is shaped to resemble a forest, jungle or similar living habitat. This is little more than a solid illusion, however. Although the sights and sounds of a forest can be "created," neither the plants nor the sounds will belong to real living creatures. The trees and plants are fakes made out of ectoplasm, however they will have the same appearance, texture and S.D.C. as their counterparts on the physical world. For a *true living landscape*, see "G," The Living Conditions category, below. Multiple buildings can be added to the landscape as per #3, above. Creation Point Cost: 30 points.

5. Complex: Same as the lifelike landscape in number four, but with much greater detail. Illusions of clouds and a normal Earth sky (or any alien landscape the character can imagine) can be created to make the domain seem like a real fragment from another reality. Creation Point Cost: 35 points.

6. Highly Complex: Multiple habitats can be created along with a sky. The domain could have a forest in one section, jungle for a third, and a desert or hills for the rest. A castle on top of a hill overlooks the entire domain. The size of the realm and

imagination of the creator are the only limiting factors. Furthermore, all the constructs will have three times more S.D.C. as normal Earth structures (this is only if the astral lord wants it so). Creation Point Cost: 50 points.

E. Special Defenses

Defenses are meant to deal with any enemies or intruders who may somehow manage to enter the domain, in spite of other impediments or cloaking measures provided from the *accessibility characteristics*. Defense features confront interlopers who have managed to get inside the domain. Each can be selected as often as desired, provided the creator(s) have sufficient P.P.E. to burn.

1. None: Intruders are in no danger from the domain itself. Likewise, the portals leading into the domain (if any) can be crossed by anybody without restriction. Creation Point Cost: 0 points

2. Alarms: If anybody except the creator(s) enters the domain, the creator is alerted by a mental alarm. This alarm will alert the creator anywhere in the Megaverse that his domain has been invaded. Creation Point Cost: 5 points (+5 points to allow the astral lord to mentally "designate" guests who will not set off the alarm. Numerous alarms can be set at key places. For example: One alarm will tell that an intruder has entered the domain, another that the intruder has entered the Astral Lord's dwelling and a third that the interloper has entered a different "alarmed" building or area. Each alarm costs 5 creation points.

3. Astral Restraints: Up to six ectoplasmic restraints form like tentacles from the ground, walls or vegetation to grapple and entangle intruders and keep them immobilized until they can break free or the Astral Lord wishes to release them! The restraints can look like anything the creator desires, from tentacles rising from the ground to chains, rope or fibers flying from walls or tree limbs, roots or vines coming alive and grabbing the intruders. Each of the six restraints has 120 S.D.C. and a supernatural P.S. of 20.

This characteristic can be purchased multiple times by paying the base cost; each additional purchase allows for an additional six restraints or increases the S.D.C. of existing restraints by 60 and their P.S. by +5. Creation Point Cost: 15 points. (+5 points per each set of restraints to allow the astral lord to mentally "designate" guests who are not to be attacked).

4. Astral Blasts/Explosions: Intruders are attacked by psychic energy blasts as soon as they enter the domain. The actual form the damage takes is determined by the creator (it may look like flames, falling objects, explosions, energy beams, etc.). No save is allowed but a dodge roll of 14 or higher will enable intended targets to avoid that particular attack (roll for each).

Creation Point Cost: 25 points (+5 points to allow the Astral Lord to mentally "designate" guests who are not to be attacked).

Duration of Attack: 10 melee rounds.

Number of Attacks Per Melee Round: Four; *all* four can be directed at one target or divided to strike as many as four different intruders.

Damage: 4D6 S.D.C. per each blast.

Limitations: After 10 melee rounds, the energy defense system is temporarily exhausted, at which point the attacks will cease for one hour — and then start over.

Note: This characteristic can be purchased multiple times by paying the base cost. Each additional purchase does ONE of the following: +2D6 to damage, or +2 attacks per melee round, or +10 melee rounds before exhausting its energy.

5. Traps: Any trap the creator(s) can envision can be "built" into the domain. Intruders with skills like detect ambush and detect concealment may notice such traps; for all others, a successful *challenging perception* roll may allow them to avoid the traps. The maximum damage a trap can do is 1D4x10S.D.C. Creation Point Cost: 25 per trap (+5 points to allow the astral lord to mentally "designate" guests who are not to be attacked).

6. Portal Traps: These are specialized dimensional portals that simply "shove" the invaders out of the domain. The actual destination of the portals is determined randomly; roll percentiles:

01-25% The target(s) are teleported to the Outer Layer of the Astral Plane.

26-50% Teleported to the Inner Plane.

51-70% Teleported to the Void.

71-90% Teleported to Earth.

91-100% Teleported to the **Nightlands** or anywhere the Game Master finds appropriate.

As many as six intruders can be teleported away at once! Afterwards, it becomes inactive until a new group of intruders enters the domain. This characteristic can be purchased multiple times by paying the base cost. Each additional purchase increases the number of people teleported by four. Creation Point Cost: 40 points (+5 points to allow the astral lord to mentally "designate" guests who are not to be attacked).

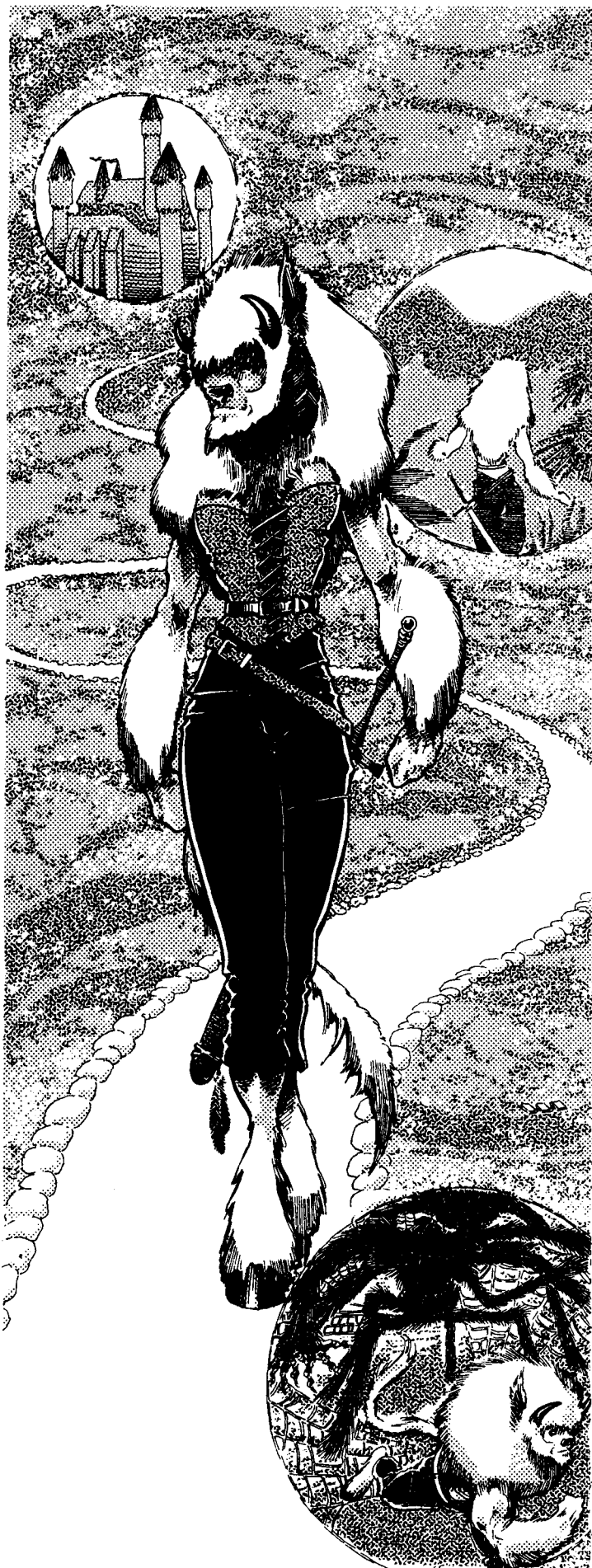
F. Physical Laws

Astral lords and mages have the power to remake the physical laws of their domain. This is seldom done, both because such modifications are extremely expensive in terms of power investiture, and because most Astral Lords would find such changes unsettling, dangerous and stressful (causes insanity) if the laws of physics are too different than what they are used to. Beyond the changes listed below, some imaginative players may want to make their own changes in the "reality" of their domain. Game Masters should use the examples given below as guidelines.

1. Same as the Astral Plane: The domain's laws are exactly like those of the rest of the Astral Plane. Astral travelers continue to look vaguely translucent, and, if the domain is in the Outer Layer, they can fly about. Creation Point Cost: 0 points.

2. Same as Earth: The physical laws of the domain are changed to closely resemble Earth's or the **Nightlands'**. Astral travelers who enter the domain are temporarily "transformed" into their flesh and blood equivalents.

This characteristic must be **purchased** if the Astral Lord(s) wishes to transplant Earth plants and animals into his domain. Likewise, any objects brought through portals into the Earth-like environment can exist here without having to be reconfigured (see the **Astral Lord P.C.C.** for more information). This enables the character to bring tools, pieces of furniture and even appliances into his domain! The major problem with this characteristic is that people in the domain will need food and water to survive. Creation Point Cost: 20 points.



3. Any surface is Down: This characteristic allows people to walk on walls or ceilings. The landscape can be made to look like an Escher painting, with staircases going in all directions. This twisting of gravity will be very confusing to those who are not used to it; most enemies, except flying creatures, will be -2 on all combat **moves/bonuses** when fighting the creator(s) of the domain, or any inhabitant or visitor who knows how to use the situation to their advantage (no modifiers if both sides are equally disoriented). Furthermore, characters with the skills navigation, land navigation, and tracking suffer a skill penalty of -30%. Creation Point Cost: 20 points.

4. No Explosives or Guns: No explosive reactions (including those used for guns) can occur in the domain, even if the weapon has been modified to work in the Astral Plane! Creation Point Cost: 25 points. Note: If incorporated in a science-fiction campaign, energy weapons such as lasers, ion and particle beams, etc., can be cancelled as another category option; they just don't work. Also costs 25 points.

5. No Magic/Psionics/Talents: Each time this characteristic is purchased, the creator can prevent one form of reality alteration from affecting the realm. This restriction affects him as well as everybody else. The only special abilities possible under the circumstances are the activation of portals. Creation Point Cost: 60 points per supernatural category canceled. Categories include: magic, psionics, Nightbane talents, superpowers, and supernatural P.S.). The powers of the **Ba'al** count as a fourth category, and it costs 100 points to neutralize them!

6. Power Control: The creator(s) of the domain is unaffected by any of the restrictions purchased. Thus, he can, for example, use guns even if nobody else can, or use his magic and psionic powers despite the domain's restriction on others. This gives the Astral Lord the upper hand in almost every conflict in his domain. Creation Point Cost: 100 points.

7. Others: Other changes to physical laws are certainly possible. Creation Point Cost: P.P.E. costs should range between 20 and 100 points, depending on how powerful or far-reaching they are.

G. Living Conditions

Modern-minded Astral Lords refer to this characteristic as "life support." In essence, it allows the creator to reshape ectoplasm to support Earth life, or to draw more power from the Astral Plane; power that can be used in a multitude of ways.

1. None: The domain is just like the outer Astral Layer; Earth creatures and visitors can breathe here, but there is no way to support life without bringing food and water from Earth. Creation Point Cost: 0 points

2. Soil Nutrients and Water: Some ectoplasm is converted into self-renewing soil that can support most Earth plant life. Water is obtained in the form of "rain" or mist. Even at this level, an entire ecosystem is possible (i.e., with some animals eating the plants and other animals preying on the plant eaters, etc.), but this requires skill rolls in biology and botany at -30% to make sure the environment is done right, plus the character must be able to obtain all the animals and plants required. Creation Point Cost: 15 points.

3. Food and Water: Same as number two, above, but edible organic material is created out of ectoplasm! This material will not feed anybody outside the Astral Plane (it disappears without

a trace in the "real" world), but will keep people alive as long as they stay in the Astral Plane. This feature can produce a low cost edible material that is a grayish, tasteless, odorless substance (you can live on it, but it tastes like crap), or food that appears and tastes like whatever the character imagines. A cooking skill roll (and first-hand knowledge/experience with the food desired) must be made to produce the exact look, taste, smell, and texture of the food. A failed roll or no such skill means the food is fairly good but something about its appearance, taste and/or texture is wrong. Creation Point Cost: 20 points for the gray substance, 30 for the tasty stuff.

4. Energy: Ambient P.P.E. is tapped and converted into electricity in the realm, enough to power up electrical appliances such as refrigerators, lamps, stereos, and the like. The domain must be built near a ley line/Dragon Road to get enough P.P.E. Also, the domain must have been modified to be Earth-like (see *the Physical Laws section*). Creation Point Cost: 40 points to supply enough power for one house; 60 for the equivalent of a city block; add +20 per additional city block equivalent.

H. Special Abilities

These characteristics cover any special powers the domain grants to its creator(s). Many Astral Lords build relatively small domains, but they modify them so they become nearly-omnipotent beings within their borders.

1. P.P.E. Source: The creators of the domain can tap into a pool of self-renewing P.P.E. energy to power magical spells, Nightbane Talents and similar abilities. This energy pool is renewed every 24 hours, and the creation point cost varies with the number of P.P.E. available from it. The pool can be used by anybody who helped create the domain. Creation Point Cost: 1 per 2 P.P.E. points spent to create the energy source.

2. I.S.P. Source: Same as number one, above, except for I.S.P. Creation Point Cost: 1 per 2 I.S.P. points in the pool.

3. Magic Protection: The creator of the domain is resistant to magical and other magic attacks as long as he is there. Creation Point Cost: 3 points per +1 to save versus magic.

4. Psychic Protection: As above, but applies to psionic powers. Creation Point Cost: 3 points per +1 to save versus psionics and/or +1 to save vs horror factor.

5. Enhanced Attributes: The Astral Lord is more physically powerful in his domain. This characteristic only affects physical attributes (including Physical Strength, Prowess, Endurance, Beauty and Speed); the character cannot become smarter by being in his domain! These characteristics are granted automatically whenever the creator or creators enter the domain and last until he/she leaves. Creation Point Cost: 5 points provides +1 to any one physical attribute or +5 to S.D.C. All attributes other than P.S. cannot be increased beyond 30; P.S. can be increased to 60! Physical S.D.C. up to 200!

6. Tap Ley Lines: This characteristic can only be used if the domain is built on, or near a ley line or nexus point, and it "opens up" the line so that everybody in the domain enjoys the effects of being near a ley line or nexus point (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 123). Creation Point Cost: 60 points.

7. Magical Abilities: The creator(s) endows himself with the ability to "cast" a magical spell at no P.P.E. cost, even if he does not have any natural magic powers! The Astral Lord must know about the spell desired. Creation Point Cost: Equal to FIVE

TIMES the cost to cast the spell. For example, the Invisibility: Simple spell costs 6 P.P.E., so it would cost 30 creation points to make it an element of the domain. The spell is cast at 5th level strength and can be cast as often as twice per melee round. As many as 15 spells can be purchased but each spell must be purchased separately (and is cost prohibitive). Remember, each creator who helped to build the domain can access these powers.

8. Psychic Abilities: Same as number seven, above, but it applies to psionic powers, including the Master Psionic abilities. Creation Point Cost: Equal to FIVE TIMES the cost to activate the psionic power at will.

I. Inhabitants

This category does not cover normal visitors or "immigrants" who came from somewhere else, but beings intimately linked to the domain itself. Some Astral Lords will reshape ectoplasm and create *ecto-constructs* — artificial life forms with no true minds of their own, but which will follow simple instructions, somewhat like the golems of legend. Some psychics go further and create *psychic avatars* — a psychic construct whose mind and personality are reflections of their creator! Creating a psychic avatar is very difficult and extremely dangerous, because the creature has the same personality and memories of the original, and may plot to seize the domain for itself! This is especially true if the creator has a selfish or evil alignment.

Constructs and avatars are used as servants, guardians or playthings, depending on the **temperament** of the creator(s). Neither can exist outside the domain; if they leave their boundaries they lose 2D6 S.D.C. per minute until destroyed.

An alternative to making an actual construct is to summon an astral entity. These energy beings live in the Astral Plane and sometimes visit the Earth (see the *Dwellers of the Plane* section). The Astral Lord can either convince the entity to stay (usually by an "allowance" of P.P.E. that feeds the creature), or can bind it to the domain by force. In the second case, the entity will be a reluctant slave, often eager to betray, or escape from its master. It is perfectly possible for a powerful Astral Lord to have more than one type of construct, entity or any combination of the two at his service.

1. None: Creation Point Cost: 0 points.

2. Mindless Constructs: Creates astral constructs with the following base attributes (can be increased by spending more creation points): All physical attributes 10, all mental attributes 6, knows four skills (no skill bonuses) from the domestic, technical (languages only) or weapon categories. Has 30 S.D.C. points and two attacks per melee round; the creature regenerates 1D6 S.D.C. per minute (4 melee rounds). Its strength is considered to be supernatural. Skills are all at the first level of proficiency. Creation Point Cost: 15 per each construct. Increasing the attributes and abilities adds the following **costs:** +1 creation point per +1 to a physical attribute (to a maximum attribute value of 24), +2 creation points per +5 to S.D.C. (to a maximum S.D.C. of 200), and +5 creation points per additional attack per melee (maximum six attacks total). Additional skills or level of experience (maximum level is 8th) also cost 5 points.

3. Psychic Avatars: This is a construct endowed with its creator's personality as well as some memories and skills. The physical attributes of the creature are equal to the construct, described above. Its mental attributes are identical to its creator's,

and it will automatically know 10 skills at the level equal to its creator at the moment of its creation (i.e. if the creator is a 6th level character the avatar's skill proficiency is at 6th level. If at first level the creature's skills are first level). The avatar's skills are permanently frozen at that initial level and never increase. The avatar will also know six spells or possess six psychic powers that are known to its creator. Remember, only Astral Lords and Astral Mages can create psychic avatars. Creation Point Cost: 30 points per avatar. Raising attributes or skills is the same as the construct, at the same cost.

4. Astral Entities: The creator has summoned an astral entity and "hired" it to serve his domain. The entity will be "fed" a steady trickle of P.P.E. in return for its services. Most entities will be moderately loyal, although they will rarely fight to the death for their master. Role-playing the interaction between an entity and its summoner can be fun, and it may also lead to more loyalty. Creation Point Cost: 10 for a lesser astral entity, 20 for a common entity, and 40 for a greater entity.

5. Bound Astral Entity: In this case, the creature is summoned and then magically or psychically bound to the domain. The enslaved entity cannot leave the area, and must obey the instructions of its new master to the letter. Astral Lords who bind an entity must be very careful with their words, for many entities will try to twist the meaning of their commands for their own benefit. Creation Point Cost: 20 for a lesser entity, 30 for a common entity, and 50 for a greater entity.

J. Location

Where exactly in the Astral Plane the domain is located will affect its accessibility and some of the possible powers and abilities at its disposal. Many Astral Lords try to build their domains near a Dragon Road, thus ensuring a steady supply of potential psychic energy.

1. Outer Layer: The Outer Layer is closest to Earth and therefore, the easiest region to reach for humans. It is a very stable and accessible part of the Astral Plane, which also means, unless special precautions are taken, it is the most likely to be visited by travelers and potential invaders. Astral travelers can walk or fly in any direction at their normal speed, unless prevented by the domain's physical laws. Creation Point Cost: 5 points.

2. Edge of the Void: The void offers an automatic defense, because everybody outside the domain suffers the usual damage and P.E./P.P.E. drain that occurs in the Void. Only those in the magical domain are unaffected, although 1D4 times every month **there** is a 1-15% chance of Void "spillover"; a flare or surge of entropic energies that does 4D6 points of damage to any living thing in the domain and causes the domain to tremble as if being rocked by an earthquake (1D4 on the Richter Scale). The spillover will also temporarily slam portals closed for 1D4 minutes. Furthermore, this dangerous region of the Astral Plane has the advantage of being in a comparatively uninhabited region avoided by most beings, and the occasional visitor or scavenger doesn't stay very long. Consequently, the domain is difficult to find floating in this hostile and uninviting environment.

In the Void, astral travelers can fly at their normal speed rate, unless the domain's physical laws prevent it. Creation Point Cost: 5 points.

3. Inner Plane: This region is where most astral domains are built. In this case, the domain is too far from the Dragon Roads to gain any benefits from them, but the Inner Plane is much less accessible to the outside world. When visiting a domain, astral travelers are restricted by gravity the same as on Earth, unless they have natural flying abilities or the domain's physical laws allow it. Creation Point Cost: 10 points.

4. Inner Plane (Dragon Road): Same as number three, above, but the domain is near or on a Dragon Road/ley line which may be tapped for psychic energies and enhance the magic power of its inhabitants. Creation Point Cost: 20 points.

5. Inner Plane (Nexus Point): Same as number four, above, but the domain is on top of a Dragon Crossroads (nexus point), rich in potential psychic energy. Creation Point Cost: 30 points.



Dwellers of the Astral Plane

By C.J. Carella with additional material by Kevin Siembieda

The Astral Plane is home for hundreds of different species; many psychic and supernatural beings wander in its mist-covered reaches, from mere travelers to dangerous predators. Humans, **Nightbanes** and minions of the Nightlords are but a few of the myriad strange beings that prowl the Plane. Future **Nightbane** supplements will add more entities and creatures to the list.

Creatures from Beyond the Supernatural (BTST[™]), Rifts[®], & the Palladium Fantasy RPG[®] in the Astral Plane

These Palladium RPG books have a host of monsters and creatures, many of which can be found in the Astral Plane or inhabiting a specific astral domain. Some notes on their abilities and rarity are given below.

Garkain: These hideous bat-like predators can cross over into the Astral Plane, where they often haunt the Outer Layer or

the Inner Plane, looking for victims. The creature's physical S.D.C. and hit points are doubled when in astral form. The **Garkain** is described in the *Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG*.

Elementals: Many elemental beings exist in the Astral Plane. The creatures described in the *Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG* and *Rifts® Conversion Book: One* are the greatest elemental beings, and highly dangerous when encountered. Future **Nightbane sourcebooks** on the Astral Plane will give more information about these creatures.

Entities: In addition to the astral entities described under the section entitled "Astral Entities," other entities of pure psychic energy that can be found in the regions of the Plane, include the poltergeist, syphon, and haunting, tectonic and possessing entities. See the *Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG* and *Rifts® Conversion Book: One* for more information.

Demons and Devils: These supernatural creatures are said to inhabit strange astral domains, or they may come from completely alien dimensions. They seem to delight in tempting or tormenting humans. See the *Palladium Fantasy RPG*, *Rifts® Conversion Books 1 & 2*.

Astral Entities

All entities are beings of pure psychic energy who feed on the energies of other beings. When traveling in the physical world, entities are invisible to the naked eye, although most psychics and supernatural beings will be able to sense their presence. In the Astral Plane, most entities can have almost any shape they wish; some prefer **humanoid** forms, while others look utterly alien. This can be especially confusing to the inexperienced traveler, **because** the entity's shape in no way reflects the creature's powers and abilities; other than the fact that the more powerful among them tend to be larger. Their goals, desires and attitudes are just as varied; although all entities are psychic vampires in one way or another, not all of them are malicious or evil, and a few are actually benign, never feeding on unwilling victims and preferring to trade services for energy instead of merely taking what they need.

Not all astral entities are created equal. Depending on their sheer power, these creatures are classified as Lesser, Common and Greater astral entities. Lesser entities are little more than pests or a source of amusement for astral travelers, although they can be dangerous in large numbers. Common astral entities can be dangerous depending on their actual abilities and disposition, and greater entities must be treated with caution, for they can hurt or even kill a human even if they do not mean to!

Astral entities can be found mostly in the Outer Layer of the plane, and they sometimes venture to Earth or the **Nightlands** seeking nourishment. Entities in the Inner Plane sometimes try to invade domains, especially those where a Dragon Road has been tapped for energy. For the most part, astral entities will not attack unless provoked or hungry. Powerful individuals and groups are rarely molested even then, unless the creatures believe (rightly or wrongly) that they can overpower the prospective victims. Astral Entities respect and fear members of the Millek race (see the **Millek R.C.C.**, described in this section), but have no qualms about feeding on humans, **Tarantuloids** and

other beings. Most also tend to avoid **Necrophim** and other **Nightlordminions**, due to the savage reprisals such attacks bring about.

Lesser, Common & Greater Astral Entities:

Note: Entities are not meant to be used as player characters.

Alignment: Any; most are selfish, with a few evil and good ones.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D4, M.E. 3D4, M.A. 3D4, P.S. 3D4, P.P. 3D6, P.E. 3D6, P.B. varies with shape, Spd. 1D4×10.

Attribute Modifiers: The attributes above are for common astral entities. To determine the attributes of lesser entities, subtract 2 from all attributes. Greater astral entities get 2D6 added to all attributes.

Size: Varies with shape. Typically human size to 1D4 times larger.

Hit Points (no S.D.C.): 1D4×10 (lesser), 2D4×10 (common), 4D6×10 +20 (greater)

Horror Factor: 1D4+4 lesser, 1D4+6 common, and 1D4+8 for greater.

P.P.E.: 1D6 for lesser, 2D6 common, and 5D6 for greater.

Natural Abilities: In the physical plane, entities are invisible (to anybody but psychics, young children and some animals), they can fly to up 100 mph (160 kmph), and can pass through walls. In the astral plane, they lose these abilities and take on a ghostly form, human or monstrous, as previously described. In the Astral Plane all entities can fly (have normals speed), understand and speak all languages (due to their psionic nature) and have the equivalent to the *astral navigation* power at no I.S.P. cost. Also see psionic powers.

Psychic Vampirism: Astral entities can draw on the I.S.P. or P.P.E. of other creatures to fuel their psionic powers. Drawing energy from unwilling victims aware of their attack is resisted by a save versus psionic attack. Most astral travelers will be aware and unwilling, but most normal people on Earth will not be. Up to 10 points per level of the monster's experience can be drained every melee round; P.P.E. can be converted into usable I.S.P. by the entity at the conversion rate of four P.P.E. equals one I.S.P. point.

Combat: In the physical world, the entity can only attack using psionic powers; two per melee round. In the Astral Plane, where the creature has physical form, it can attack with psionics and/or physical hand to hand; total of two attacks per melee round. Add one additional attack (psionic or physical) per melee round at levels three, six and eight.

Damage: Supernatural P.S. damage in the astral plane, or by psionics.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry, and dodge, +2 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +1 to pull punch, +2 save vs magic, +3 to save vs psionics, and +15 to save vs horror factor! Add +1 to strike at levels three, six and ten, +1 to parry and dodge at levels two, five and nine.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: Lesser entities get to select four powers from any two categories (except master psionics); common entities get eight powers from any of the three lesser categories, and greater entities get ten powers from the three lesser categories, and four from the master category.

Average Life Span: Apparently endless.

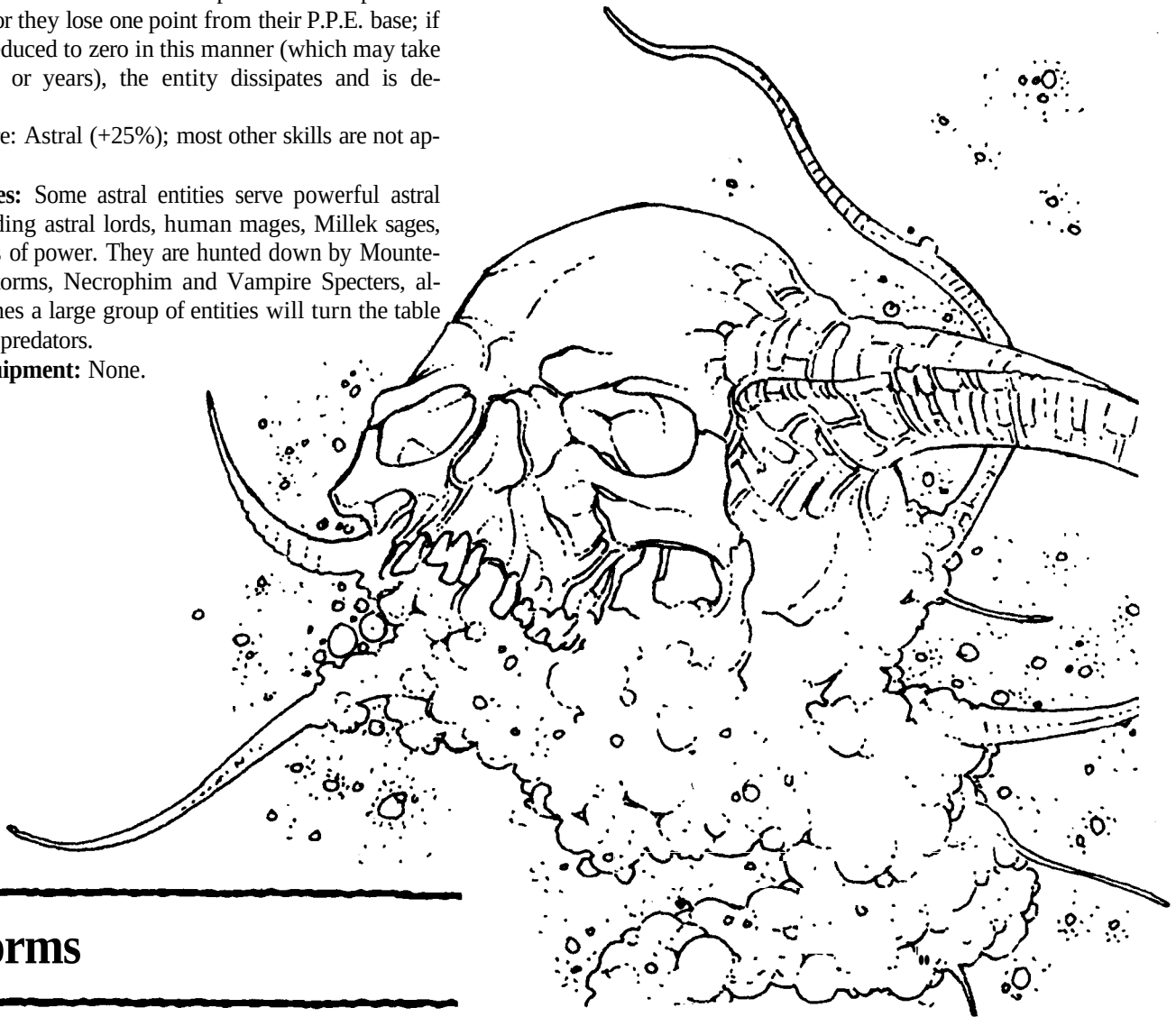
Experience Level: Lesser: 1-2nd level; Common: 1D4+1;
Greater: 2D4+3

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: P.P.E. dependency: The entities must feed on at least two P.P.E. or I.S.P. per level of experience **once** a month, or they lose one point from their P.P.E. base; if their P.P.E. is reduced to zero in this manner (which may take several months or years), the entity dissipates and is destroyed.

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Astral (+25%); most other skills are not applicable.

Allies and Enemies: Some astral entities serve powerful astral dwellers, including astral lords, human mages, Millek sages, and other beings of power. They are hunted down by Mountebanks, Rage Storms, Necrophim and Vampire Specters, although sometimes a large group of entities will turn the table on one of these predators.

Weapons and Equipment: None.



Rage Storms

Most authorities on the Astral Plane, even the sages of the Gray Ghost Society, are still unsure whether these Rage Storms are actual living things or some sort of psychic manifestation of ectoplasm. One theory claims that they are the embodiments' of the anger, fear and negative emotions of the people of Earth (or other worlds). Others believe this is a real living creature, perhaps a highly territorial being who attacks anything and anybody it considers to be an intruder. In either case, the Rage Storms are incredibly powerful beings, huge entities that at first glance appear to be dark grey, purple or red swirling clouds, sometimes taking on the shape of a tornado or whirlwind, others appear as a less threatening, dark, rolling cloud. Sometimes they have vaguely **humanoid** faces, always contorted in rage. The smallest Rage Storms are at least 30 feet (9.1 m) high and wide, and perhaps twice as long. Some of the largest ones (thankfully, very rare) are the size of skyscrapers!

Rage Storms batter and buffet any living thing in their path with hurricane-force winds, able to destroy an astral form with a few well-placed blows. Furthermore, they can engulf victims, temporarily draining their energies. For the most part, the best tactic when encountering a Rage Storm is to flee and hide. Their

presence can always be felt before it can be seen. Even non-psychics will feel the Rage Storm's fury and hatred as it approaches.

Doing battle with these entities is usually a suicidal proposition. Nightbanes, Guardians and the most powerful psychics can, and do, defeat these raging storms by dispersing their ectoplasm "bodies," but such undertakings are extremely dangerous. The furious force is almost impossible to destroy.

Alignment: Unknown; presumably diabolic!

Attributes: Not applicable.

Length: 1D6×10 feet (3.0 to 18.3 m) long; one in five hundred will be 1D6×20 feet larger!

S.D.C.: 4D6×10+60; add +20 for every 10 feet (3.0 m) in length beyond the first 10.

Hit Points: 1D4×100

Horror Factor: 14 (18 for truly gigantic ones)

P.P.E.: 10

Natural Abilities: See the invisible, regenerate 4D6 S.D.C. or hit points per minute (4 melee rounds), navigate the astral plane, and fly at a speed of 1D6×10+100mph.

Engulf (Special Attack): To have full effect against other living creatures, the Rage Storm will sweep over its intended

victims and engulf them. Inside the swirling mass of ectoplasmic clouds, the characters are spun around as if caught in a tornado or knocked around by blasts of wind/force (up and down; sideways, backwards, etc.). This constant bombardment does minimal damage, 1D6 S.D.C./hitpoints, but during the entire time the character is engulfed, he is completely disoriented and cannot tell up from down, where he is, what direction the storm has carried him (or how far), nor can the victim use most skills and no combat bonuses apply. Note: The character's number of attacks per melee round remains unchanged and it's virtually impossible not to hit the swirling mass that has engulfed him/them.

The only way to escape is to roll a dodge **once(!)** every melee round (15 seconds) in an attempt to fly or lunge out of the swirling ectoplasmic monstrosity! Once out, the Rage Storm continues to swirl along its path of anger, rarely turning back to attack the same person again, unless attacked by him first.

Those engulfed will be carried 1D4x100 yards/meters from the point of encounter every melee round they remain engulfed.

The Rage Storm can "spit" or expel one to all of those it has engulfed at any time it desires. Thankfully, it often expels its victims when they have been beaten senseless (stunned for 1D6 minutes) or into unconsciousness (in both cases when all S.D.C. are gone and 10 or less hit points remain). Furthermore, they rarely fight to the death or even to dissipation, and will expel its captives and thunder away when 90% of its S.D.C. has been depleted.

Energy Drain (Special Attack): Every character engulfed by a Rage Storm must save versus psionics (a mind block will not stop the draining, but will add +6 to the save roll) or lose 1D6 P.P.E. or I.S.P. (whichever he has more of). The draining effect does no damage other than weakening the character. Many spells and psionic abilities will have no effect on the creature, especially those that try to control or affect the mind.

Buffet (Special Attack): This is a directed burst of force that strikes one specific target. Damage: 4D6 S.D.C. +1 to damage for every 10 feet (3 m) of length. Range: 200 feet. Can be directed at those outside its swirling body or **within!**

Combat: A Rage Storm has the equivalent of two hand to hand attacks per melee, +1 attack for every 10 feet (3.0 m) of length after the first 10.

Damage: See natural abilities

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +4 to strike, +3 to save versus magic and psionics, immune to horror factor; -1 to dodge and cannot parry.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None other than the ability to sense the presence of living beings within a radius of 1000 feet (305 m).

Average Life Span: Unknown.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: 1. The Rage Storm is composed of ectoplasm and suffers damage from magic, psionic and even physical attacks, however its vast amount of S.D.C. and hit points, coupled with its regenerative powers, makes these horrors difficult to destroy! When all of the creature's S.D.C. is destroyed, it is "dispersed" or dissipated into fragments of tiny swirling wisps of ectoplasm. Eliminating its hit points completely destroys it. 48 hours are required to completely restore itself after being dispersed.

2. Cannot invade domains.

3. Cannot speak, although they do make a growling, rumbling or roaring noise when they charge to attack. Psychics with empathy or telepathy will only sense an unreasoning rage, nothing more.

4. Has a short attention span, so it will not hide in wait among the clouds or at any one place for more than 2D4x10 minutes; they are usually on the go constantly, although some do stay in one particular area or zone (typically encompassing 1D6x10,000 square miles). And some do seem to have it out for particular groups or individuals, attacking whenever they see them.

R.C.C. Skills: None.

Alliances and Allies: None; even the minions of the Ba'al will avoid or destroy these creatures.

Weapons and Equipment: None.

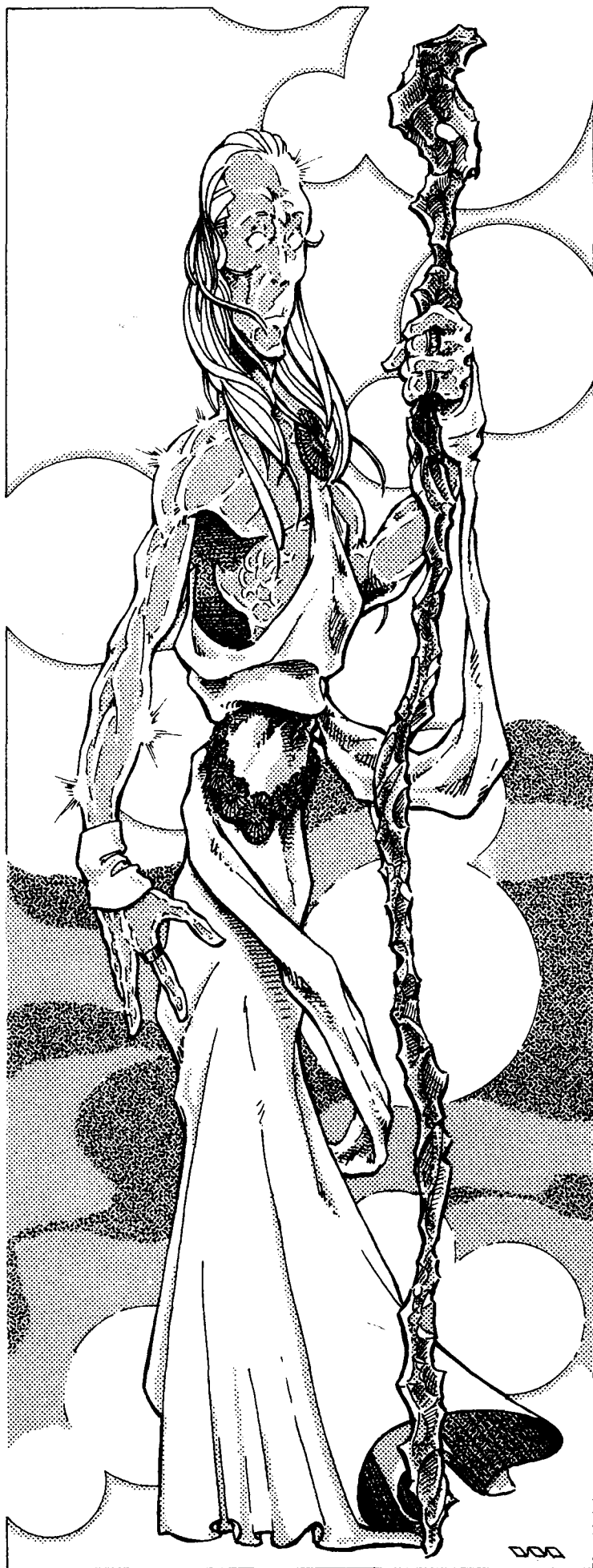
The Millek R.C.C.

The Millek are tall, spindly **humanoids** with long, slender limbs who serve as guides and explorers of the Astral Plane. Their heads and faces look almost like funhouse mirror images of humans. Their skins are a faint gray, and they seem to shine with their own inner light. They all carry long staves that seem to be made out of a crystalline substance. Most of them dress in robes and tunics, although a few have adopted more modern human styles. They can usually be found wandering the Dragon Roads on the Inner Plane.

Legend has it that the Millek are natives of the Astral Plane, and that they established a flourishing astral kingdom before the rise of human civilization. Millek culture was based on utter loyalty to one's tribe, nation or culture. The Millek developed a cult of obedience somewhat similar to the samurai codes of feudal Japan, but even stronger. Only a small group of malcontents and rebels refused to accept this blind loyalty, and were banished for it.

The problem with such a system of obedience is that the nation was only as good as its leaders. Flushed with power and ambition, the rulers of the Millek eventually turned against each other. An entire generation followed orders to go to war, regardless of the consequences. Thus, their entire civilization collapsed after a long and brutal civil war. These Millek fought to the last man; all perished.

Only the banished rebels who refused to obey nonsensical and suicidal orders survived. The new Millek culture was a complete reversal of the old order. They are not pacifists; on the contrary, they are all accomplished warriors who believe they can only rely on themselves for protection. Almost every Millek is an anarchist, in the sense that they believe all forms of government are evil. The largest organization they will join would be a "tribe" or "band" of under a dozen individuals. They prefer groups of only two or three people, where they can each be a travelling companion, learning and sharing with each other, but avoiding becoming or following a leader. The only "rank" the Millek respect is that of *teacher*, and they will only abandon their hatred of following (or leading) others or joining a large group when it comes to teaching and learning. Most Millek prefer a life of contemplation and study, or travel, observation and contemplation. Most are



fascinated by the endless variety of the Astral Plane and the people in it. Accomplished psychics, Millek can create domains like an astral lord, although their personal realms tend to be small and unpretentious.

The life of a Millek is dominated by its training and emphasizes self-reliance. Very few Milleks are born each year, due mostly to the fact that members of the race do not enjoy each other's company very much. Youngsters are placed under the care of a teacher almost as soon as they know how to walk. The instructors will teach the child a number of psychic disciplines, martial arts, and a great deal of knowledge about the Astral Plane. At the age of 16, the young Millek is sent on a long trip to another teacher's domain; these trips are fairly dangerous, and are a test to see if the child deserves any more teaching, as well as a tool to develop independence and toughness. The survivors of this journey receive an additional **five** years of training, and then are finally sent out to make their own destinies.

The entire species has a reputation for being excellent teachers and guides, and many a human astral lord has learned everything he knows from a Millek instructor. Although members of that race cannot materialize on Earth, many have visited it and the **Nightlands** via astral projection. Both places amaze and appall the Millek, especially the Nightlands, where the **Ba'alis** rule is anathema to everything the freedom-loving Millek stand for. Several Milleks have devoted themselves to the destruction of the **Nightlords**, although their reluctance to ally themselves with large groups makes them less effective than they should be.

Alignment: Any good or selfish; evil Milleks are almost unheard of.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6+10, M.E. 2D6+13, M.A. 2D4+12, P.S. 3D6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 3D6, P.B. 3D4, Spd. 3D6

Size: 6 to 7 feet tall (1.8 to 2.1 m).

S.D.C.: 1D6×10 plus those gained from physical skills.

Hit Points: Standard; P.E. plus 1D6 per level of experience.

Horror Factor: 6 (for those who do not know the creatures)

P.P.E.: 1D6×10 plus P.E. attribute; add 2D4 per level of experience.

Natural Abilities: All Milleks have the equivalent of the astral navigation psychic ability, except it works automatically and costs no I.S.P.

Create Astral Domain: This power is identical to the Astral Lord power of the same name; since Millek have less available P.P.E., however, their domains tend to be small. Many a Millek has joined forces with one or two humans (rarely with another Millek, and seldom with more than three people total) and built a more elaborate common domain.

Combat: All Millek have the equivalent of Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S. or weapon.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +1 on perception, +2 to parry and dodge, +3 to save vs magic and psionics, and +5 to save vs horror factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: Milleks get to select eight sensitive powers, plus they get to select one power from any category (including master psionics) every level after the first.

I.S.P.: M.E.+6D6 plus 3D6 per level of experience.

Average Life Span: 500 years.

Experience Level: Varies. Player characters typically play young Millek (there are very few of them) who start at the

first or second level of experience. Sages are typically 4-7 level (**1D4+3**) and Old Sages are very high level (1D6+9).

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: P.P.E. Dependency: Milleks do not eat, but derive nourishment from the ambient P.P.E. of the Astral Plane. When traveling outside the Plane, they must stay within three miles (4.8 km) of a ley line or nexus point. Every day spent outside this range, the Millek will lose 1D6 P.P.E. and **1D4** hit points. If either P.P.E. or hit points are reduced to zero, the character will fall into a coma and will die if not taken to a P.P.E. rich area within 24 hours.

Also, Milleks without *astral projection* or *astral transference* cannot leave the Astral Plane and enter such physical worlds as Earth or the **Nightlands**. The Millek can only *visit* the material world in astral form, they cannot materialize in the physical world. Thus, they have the same advantages and limitations of any ghost-like astral traveler.

R.C.C. Skills:

Language: Millek (98%)
Languages: Three of Choice (+20%)
Acrobatics (+10%)
Detect Ambush (+10%)
Lore: Psychic (+15%)
Lore: Astral (+25%)
Prowl (+10%)
Lore: Demon and Monster (+15%)
W.P. Staff
Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

R.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills. Plus select a new skill at levels three, five, eight and eleven. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: None
Domestic: Any (+5%)
Electrical: None
Espionage: Detect concealment only (+5%)
Mechanical: Only
Medical: Holistic medicine only (+10%)
Military: None
Physical: Any (+5% if applicable)
Pilot: Horsemanship and boating only.
Pilot Related: Navigation only.
Rogue: Any non-technological.
Science: None
Technical: Any (+10%)
W.P.: Any archaic W.P.
Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Alliances and Allies: Some Millek often collaborate with human or **Nightbane** astral travelers, and act as teachers for any worthy pupil. Some Millek have one or two astral entities who act as their servants or bodyguards (low level and players' characters do not get these allies to start with).

Enemies: Millek often clash with **Necrophim** in the astral realm, and have very little tolerance for them. As defenders of freedom, they bear nothing but hatred for the tyrannical Nightlords and their minions.

Weapons and Equipment: Psionically attuned staff: 2D6 damage to most astral beings, double damage against entities and Necrophim; a tunic, a bag with scrolls, maps and other sources of knowledge. Millek do not need food to survive; they gain nourishment from P.P.E. (see above).



Mountebank R.C.C.

Conrad never saw them until they sprang from both sides of the road. His first impression was of comically small, squat dwarves. The kind of thing one would expect in a Lucas or Spielberg fantasy movie. Then he saw the daggers and swords, and the wide-barreled arquebuses they were carrying, and any cuteness the creatures might have held had vanished.

"Y'r money 'r y'r life!" the largest one growled, raising a battle-ax. The other six hooted in agreement.

"We *don't* have time for this!" Sara Li shouted back. Her **Morphus**, intimidating as it was, had no apparent effect on the strange dwarves. Her stepping forward and ripping the *leader's* throat before he could react, did. Howling in fear, the little monsters melted back into the ectoplasm. But they *weren't* through. The thunder of a gunshot shattered the air around her, and Conrad screamed in pain. The bastards had aimed for his silver cord!

"Go, go, go!" Sara Li yelled, firing a shadow blast into the swirling whiteness. A crossbow bolt flew by, missing her head by inches. They ran. Conrad *didn't* think the monsters would have quit, but then the Hounds he and Sara Li had been running away from started closing in. The little trolls tried taking the Hunters on, and the psychic and his Nightbane friend left them to a savage fight with no quarter asked or given.

These short, hunched creatures resemble mythological dwarves in size, with abnormally short legs, wide hips, and bearded faces. Mountebanks appear to be astral travelers, and are not natives to the Astral Plane. They are the scourge of astral space and countless domains and kingdoms. They live only to steal and cause trouble. The creatures can sometimes cross into the physical world, but their intolerance to sunlight makes them prefer the **Nightlands** to Earth. This means marauding bands of Mountebanks can be found in the **Nightlands'** Waste, robbing and murdering anybody they encounter.

In the Astral Plane, the creatures travel in small groups of 6-12 **individuals**, searching for prey. They love to steal weapons of all kinds, and they are frequently encountered carrying all manner of melee weapons, including handguns and other modern items. Like the Astral Lords, Mountebanks can psychically infuse weapons and other items with psionic energy, allowing the items to travel into the astral plane with them. This enables the demonic dwarves to make use of the things they steal from Earth (on the rare nights where they venture there) and other worlds. Most of their raids and incursions are into *astral domains* and *kingdoms*, because they find these places closer and easier pickings than travelling to other worlds. The creatures have an uncanny ability to avoid the traps and defenses of these realms.

Although the Mountebanks are not extremely strong or powerful, their murderous nature and their ability to blend into the environment, somewhat like a chameleon, makes them very dangerous. They are fond of setting up ambush sites and have learned to operate in gangs where their numbers and teamwork work to their advantage. They are as worrisome danger as any an astral traveler may encounter.

Alignment: Any evil.

Attributes: **I.Q.** 3D4+2, **M.E.** 3D4, **M.A.** 2D6, **P.S.** 2D6+6, **P.P.** 3D6+3, **P.E.** 3D6, **P.B.** 2D6, **Spd.** 3D6

Size: Average 4 feet tall (1.2 m)

S.D.C.: 30 (60 in the astral plane)

Hit Points: P.E. plus 1D6 per level of experience (doubled in the Astral Plane).

Horror Factor: 7 (10 for a group).

P.P.E.: 2D6

Natural Abilities: See the invisible, sense the presence of ley lines, nexus points, astral domains and kingdoms up to one mile (1.6 km) away.

Chameleon Power: Allows the creature to blend with the environment. Noticing a motionless Mountebank requires a difficult perception roll (add +3 to the roll if the Mountebank is moving).

Sense/Disarm Traps, Locks or Defenses: A "sixth sense" that allows the creatures to locate and disarm any trap, lock or defense system, magical or technological. Even the defenses of an astral domain may be penetrated by these creatures. Using this ability costs 15 **I.S.P.** and takes one minute; chance of success is 40% plus 3% per level of experience. Up to 5 Mountebanks can work on the same defense; use the highest ability score of the group, and add +2% per additional helper, to a maximum bonus of +8%.

Dimensional Travel: Mountebanks can enter or leave regions of the Astral Plane at will. This ability costs no **I.S.P.** but takes one hour to perform, and it carries the Mountebank and anything it was carrying to a random area on Earth, the

Nightlands or the Astral Plane. This ability cannot take the creature to a specific locale, and when transporting to Earth, the creature risks exposing itself to damaging sunlight.

Astral Reconfiguration (Objects): The Mountebank can infuse items with **I.S.P.** energy. This process makes the objects "astrally sensitive"; not only can the items be taken into the Astral Plane, but they can be used against astral beings both in the material world and on the Astral Plane. The main drawback is the permanent expenditure of **I.S.P.** required to charge the items. **I.S.P. Cost (Permanent):** One point per pound (0.45 kg) of weight or fraction thereof.

Combat: Equal to Hand to Hand: Assassin, with an additional attack per melee round.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S. or weapon.

Bonuses: +3 on perception rolls, +3 to save vs horror factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: Can choose three physical powers.

I.S.P.: M.E. plus 1D4×10, plus 2D4 per level of experience.

Average Life Span: Unknown.

Experience Level: 1D4 average; leaders average 1D6+2.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Mountebanks are extremely sensitive to sunlight and suffer 1D6 points of damage every melee round they are exposed to it. Hiding in the shade will stop the damage, but even in the shade the creature is at -4 to all actions and loses half its hand to hand attacks per melee.

R.C.C. Skills:

Native language (98%)

Four languages of choice (+10%)

Prowl (+15%)

Pick Locks (+15%)

Lore: Astral (+15%)

Two W.P.s of choice

Hand to Hand: Assassin

R.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven other skills.

Communications: None

Domestic: Any

Electrical: None

Espionage: Detect ambush, detect concealment and wilderness survival only

Mechanical: None

Medical: None

Military: None

Physical: Any

Pilot: None

Pilot Related: None

Rogue: Any (+10%)

Science: None

Technical: Languages and Lores only.

W.P.: Any

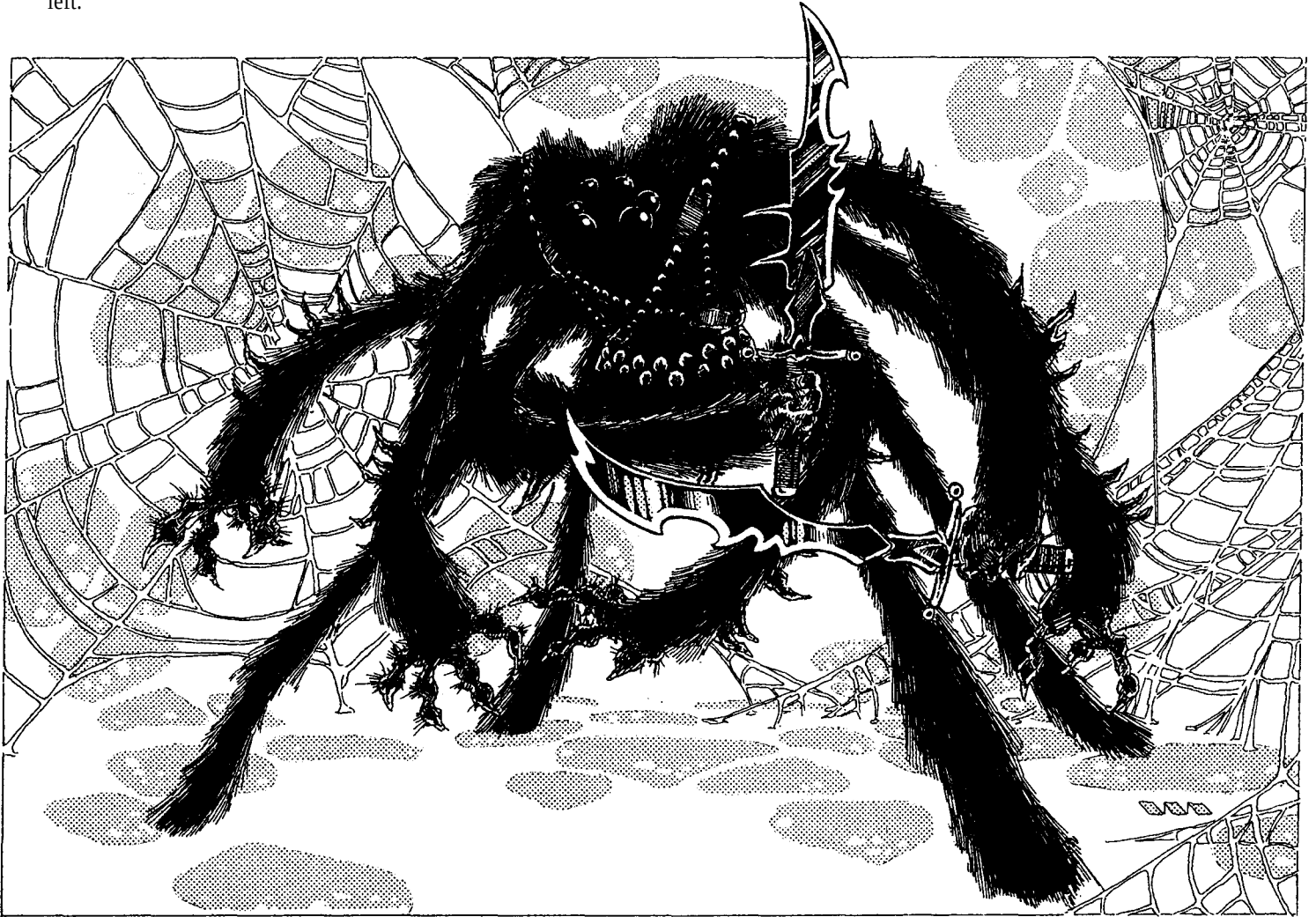
Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Alliances and Allies: None; do not work with members of any other race.

Weapons and Equipment: Totally random booty (the luck of the draw); typically the character will have 1D4 modern weapons, 1D4 ancient weapons (sword, knife, club, cross

bow, etc.), body armor from any time period, hat or helmet, utility belt, sack, backpack, 1D4×1000 in gold and jewels/jewelry and a handful of personal items. Leaders often have a magic item or weapon. Modern weapons are usually in poor repair and will have only a few rounds of ammunition left.



Tarantuloid R.C.C.

The worst of it was, I hated bugs.

Five, maybe six of them. Hard to tell, really, considering *they've* got more arms and legs than *what's* good for them, and they are so dark and furry they almost blend into each other. Had the wickedest-looking swords and spears *I've* ever seen, and they held '*em* like they knew how to use '*em*. I figured I *wouldn't* do anything to earn a demonstration.

Why *couldn't* my Morphus be more spider-like?

I tentatively raised my hand, open palm up. "Uh, I come in peace," I said lamely. Shoulda watched more Star Trek shows, I guess.

The spiders chattered among themselves for a second. One of them stepped forward. "English?" it said, although it looked like it had to work hard to get its mandibles around our words.

"Uh, American. I mean, yes, I speak English." Did I mention I do not get wittier under pressure?

"Do. Not. Look. Human." Their spokesperson pointed an accusatory paw in my direction. *Fortunately* for both of us, *I'm* no longer sensitive about the fact that *I* look like an *anime* cyborg with *ram's* horns.

"*I'm*human. Well, at least, I come from Earth."

"Earth. Mad. World. We. Visit. Do. Not. Like."

"Everybody's a critic," *I* muttered under my breath. Out loud, I went on, "Sorry you *weren't* happy there. But how about I go on my way and you go on yours?"

The spiders went back to their own chattering language. I was starting to get antsy.

"You. Warrior?" asked the spokesperson.

"Yes I am," *I* replied glibly.

"Then. Fight. With. Us." the talking spider pointed behind me and to my left. Just coming out of the fog was a band of winged black shapes. Necrophim or Hunters, probably both. Not my day.

"*Let's*do it, then," *I* hissed. The tarantula gang stood by my side and we took on the *Nightlord's* critters.

I still *don't*like bugs, but *I'm* getting better.

One of the most prolific species of the Astral Plane is a race of fur-covered **humanoids** with four arms, four legs, and six bulbous eyes. These creatures were nicknamed the "**Tarantuloids**"

by human astral explorers, although they are not true arachnids, or related to any Earth species except in their general appearance. **Tarantuloids** are one of the dominant races of the astral realms; hundreds of large domains and at least half a dozen astral kingdoms are entirely populated by them.

Like humans, Tarantuloids can be good, evil or indifferent. Many are fearful and suspicious of others, and do not like humans or Millek (both commonly referred to as **Morr'ken**, which roughly translates to "the crippled, hairless ones" due to their lack of arms and legs). Some few will actually try to capture astral travelers, be they humans, **Nightbanes** or others, and use them as slaves, while others are bandits or opportunists. However, the vast majority are just concerned with their own affairs, and may befriend strangers. Most of the time, Tarantuloids may be encountered in the Inner Plane, traveling in small groups of less than ten individuals. These *wandering parties* are either slavers or warriors; the former are looking for victims, but the warriors patrol the Dragon Roads to guard their domains and kingdoms from intruders. Their main concern at this point are the **Ba'al**; even the slavers have no dealings with the Nightlords or their minions. Warrior parties may help astral travelers who seem harmless, but frequently join forces with or assist those who are apparently enemies of the Nightlords. They are particularly receptive to Nightbanes and many have become friends to the Tarantuloids.

Most Tarantuloids are warriors, craftsmen or farmers. Their craftsmen have learned to shape ectoplasm into a metallic alloy they call greysteel; they forge tools, weapons and armor out of it. The farmers grow a strange species of moss the creatures use for sustenance. The most respected class among the Tarantuloids are the Sorcerer-Priests, magicians who act as leaders, judges and advisers. Warriors, defenders of the land and people, are the next most respected and admired.

GM's Note: Tarantuloids are meant to be non-player characters (villains or allies), however, if a campaign is centered around the Astral Plane, with most of the action taking place in that realm, it might be reasonable to allow **Tarantuloid** players. In that case, use the Mystic's experience table for advancement of warriors and craftsmen, and the **Nightbane** table for Tarantuloid sorcerer-priests.

Alignment: Any. Sorcerer-priests must be principled or aberrant.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6+3, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 3D6+6, P.P. 3D4+8, P.E. 3D6+8, P.B. 2D4, Spd. 5D6

Size: Six to ten feet tall (1.8 to 3 m).

S.D.C.: 2D4x10 plus any skill bonuses.

Hit Points: P.E.+12 plus 1D6 per level of experience.

Horror Factor: 13

P.P.E.: Varies with O.C.C.

Natural Abilities: See the invisible and natural astral creatures, so all have all the powers and **abilities-listed** under the astral projection and astral navigation powers.

Ectoplasmic Webs (Special): Tarantuloids can manipulate ambient ectoplasm to spin webs. These webs are used to snare victims, block passageways, and for climbing. The webs are very sticky and have 80 S.D.C. per strand; spinning a strand counts as one melee **attack/action**, and the creatures can shoot them as far as 50 feet (15.2 m) away.

Combat: As per hand to hand skills, plus they get an additional two hand to hand attacks per melee round.

Damage: As per supernatural strength, or by weapon.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +2 to parry, +2 to pull punch, and +3 to save vs horror factor (also see combat for extra melee attacks).

Magic Powers: Only the Tarantuloid sorcerer-priests have magical abilities. Those characters get to select six spells from levels 1-4, and mystically learn one additional spell per level.

Psionic Powers: All Tarantuloids have the following psionic abilities: mind block, empathy and presence sense.

I.S.P.: 4D6 plus M.E. attribute; add 1D6 per level of experience.

Average Life Span: 200 years.

Experience Level: Typical warriors or slavers: 1D6 average. Sorcerer-priests: 1D6+2 average.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Tarantuloids cannot materialize on the physical world. As astral creatures, they can travel invisibly and intangibly on Earth or the **Nightlands**, although for the most part they do not so.

R.C.C. Skills: Select ten skills (+10%); five skills at +5%, 1D4 additional languages, and six secondary skills. Tarantuloids have a medieval level of technology, so skill selection should match their low technology. Thanks to their astral abilities, they have visited Earth and the Nightlands, and a few of them have learned a number of languages from those worlds (typically 2-4).

Allies and Enemies: For the most part, Tarantuloids stick to themselves, and form few formal alliances with other peoples. Some tribes, wandering warriors, rogues and city-states will work with Nightbanes and other Earth champions to fight the Nightlords in the Astral Plane. The Ba'al and their minions are deadly enemies of the Tarantuloids.

Weapons and Equipment: Common weapons include heavy scimitars (2D6 damage plus supernatural P.S. damage), heavy spears (2D8 plus P.S. damage), and other archaic weapons (swords, axes, etc.). Warriors often wear specially designed chain mail (A.R. 13, S.D.C. 90) or scale armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 100).

Shadow Mantis

"This story was told to me by a being who was ancient when I was born. It was told to him by one who witnessed it first-hand, a thousand years before he who told me came into being.

"It came to pass that a plague was unleashed into the land. They were called the Locust Horde, and they did not come to conquer or rule. They ate. And they ate the living and the inanimate; they ate fire and stone, home and land, and all who walked the land. They would have devoured all of the Astral Plane if left unchecked. Armies were raised. Ancient enemies standing side by side to face the Locust Horde. These same armies were shattered, and the Horde fed on the dead and on their weapons, armor and the flesh and bone beneath.

*"And then the Powers of the Plane, the ones who Made the Worlds — the Masters of the **Magicks** and the Kings of the Mind, came together in the eleventh hour, after one-third of the Worlds Within Worlds had been devoured by the Horde. And, to save what remained, they destroyed one-third of what was left, and even the Locust Horde was consumed in the primordial flames.*



And those who survived were changed, so that they could not venture into the Plane without being destroyed. And those few now prowl the Void, where they thrive while all other things die. There they hunt the living and feed on their flesh."

— From the Wanderer Diaries

The Shadow Mantis, also known as the Shadow Locust or Void Hunters, are believed to be the survivors of an invading force that threatened the Astral Plane sometime in the distant past. Legends like the one above appear to refer to these deadly creatures, and those who have faced a Shadow Mantis, and survived, can confirm the fact that an army of these monsters might have devastated the Astral Plane.

Fortunately, only a few **handfuls** of these creatures survived, and they are somehow prevented from leaving the Void. The bad news is that the Shadow Mantis are immune to the **entropic** forces of that region, and attack any other creature they see, giving no quarter and asking for none. These monsters travel alone or in pairs, but even a lone Shadow Mantis can threaten all but the strongest groups of astral travelers.

Incredibly tough, able to regenerate as fast as a **Nightbane**, and immune to most forms of energy, a Shadow Mantis will fight until destroyed or until its target has fled or been destroyed. Sometimes the death of one victim will save the rest, as the single-minded predator will proceed to feed on it while the others flee the scene. Students of astral mythology believe the war against the creatures is what created the Void, and some fear that ~~one day the Locust Horde will escape and try once again to destroy~~ all life.

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: Meaningless for the most part.

Size: 10 feet (3.0 m) long; wingspan 9 feet (2.7 m).

S.D.C.: 1D4×100+200

Hit Points: 2D6×10+100

Horror Factor: 14 for those who know of its power; 11 otherwise.

P.P.E.: 2D4

Natural Abilities: Supernatural strength and endurance, see the invisible and the entire light spectrum, and can pierce any illusion, disguise or camouflage. Regenerates 10 S.D.C. or hit points per melee round and can fly in the Void at up to 100 mph (160 kmph).

Invulnerable to all forms of energy, including lasers, plasma, electricity, Nightbane talents, psionic powers, and all spell effects! Magic weapons do half damage. **Physical/kinetic** attacks, including punches, bullets and explosions, all do normal damage.

Combat: Five hand to hand attacks per melee round.

Damage: Bite inflicts 4D6+6 S.D.C., claw attack does 1D4×10+10 S.D.C., and grapple does 3D6 plus victim is at -6 to defend versus bite attacks.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +5 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to roll with impact, immune to magic, psionics, talents, illusion, and the horror factor.

Magic Powers: None

Psionic Powers: None

Average Life Span: Unknown; may be immortal.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Currently, the creatures are unable to leave the Void and can be hurt by physical attacks.

Vampire Specters

Astral Undead

A mysterious group of beings who call themselves the Dark Immortals, and which everyone else refers to as the *Vampire Specters*, or astral vampires, is on the prowl in the Astral Plane. From the waist up, these strange beings appear like normal humans; from the waist down, blood-red, liquid tendrils dangle and undulate, ready to ensnare unfortunates who come too close. When entering combat, the Vampire Specters' fingers stretch into sharp, dagger-like talons, and their mouths conceal inhumanly long fangs.

Encountering these creatures is almost always catastrophic. Sometimes, the vampires will try to mentally control their victims, using them as slaves. More often, they simply charge and try to devour them body and soul. The few astral dwellers who have communicated with these monsters say that the Dark Immortals claim to be the rulers of a vast astral kingdom known as the Abode, where the damned souls of destroyed vampires are reborn as astral predators. While these stories may be mere fantasies, rumors of an enormous city controlled by these **vampiric** entities have multiplied in the past few years. The rumors have attracted the interest of the Nightlords — Hounds, Necrophim and other minions have been sent to search for this city. ~~Whenever Vampire Specters encounter the servants of the Ba'al, the two groups will attack each other savagely.~~

Besides being dangerous astral hunters, these beings can travel to Earth, although they remain in energy form, and rarely venture into the physical world in great numbers. Vampire Specters can possess humans, and drain their P.P.E. in a matter of hours while driving their victims to commit savage crimes. For the most part, however, these beings prefer to destroy and devour astral creatures.

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+12, M.E. 2D6+10, M.A. 2D4+14, P.S. 3D6+12, P.P. 3D6+6, P.E. 3D6+6, P.B. 2D6, Spd. 1D4×10

Size: 6 to 7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 m).

S.D.C.: 3D6×10+20 S.D.C. No Hit Points.

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 3D4

Natural Abilities: Have all the astral projection abilities (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 70), plus they regenerate damage at the rate of 3D6 points per melee round.

Super-Hypnotic Mind Suggestion: As per *Nightbane RPG*, page 185, at fifth level in power.

Possession: This ability only works in the physical plane (Earth or the Nightlands). The vampire specter can take over the body of a human victim (the target may resist by making a successful save versus psionic attack). While possessed, the victim has no control over his or her actions, and has +4 to P.S. (becomes supernatural), and +50 S.D.C. When the possession is over, any damage inflicted on those 50 S.D.C. is transferred to the body of the unfortunate, which often kills the victim. While possessing a human, the vampire specter will go on a murderous rampage, either luring victims to their doom one by one, or trying to kill as many as possible in a



single mass murder. Exorcism will work against this type of possession, and will banish the creature from the physical plane for 1D6 years.

Combat: Five hand to hand or psionic attacks.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S.; talons do an additional 2D6. Their blood tendrils can entangle or ensnare victims, or strike, doing 2D4 damage. Their bite does 3D6 points of damage and drains astral travelers of 1D6 P.P.E. or I.S.P. (starting with the largest energy pool first).

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 on perception roll, +3 to strike, parry and dodge, 44 to roll with impact, +3 to pull punch, +5 to save vs magic and psionics, and +10 to save vs horror factor. This is all in addition to any attribute bonuses.

Magic Powers: None

Psionic Powers: Mind block, empathy, telepathy and presence sense.

Average Life Span: Unknown; presumed to be centuries.

Experience Level: Not applicable; all their psychic powers work at 5th level proficiency.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: None; as astral beings, they cannot be harmed by normal weapons while visiting the physical plane. In the Astral Plane, they can be harmed and destroyed by any psionic, magic or physical attacks. Remember, these are not true vampires, so silver, wooden stakes, crosses and garlic don't have any negative effects on them.

Astral Minions of the Nightlords

The Ba'al have a number of minions in the Astral Plane and are slowly expanding their influence there. Among them are *Astral Hounds* and *Hunters* with the same abilities as their physical world counterparts. These creatures hunt in the Inner Plane, and also serve as guards in the **Nightlords'** astral domains. A few evil Astral Lords or Astral Mages have also sold their services to the Ba'al to gain even more power; these treacherous men and women combine their powers over the Astral Plane with the magic granted to them by Night Priests (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 177). Other important minions are described as follows.

Night Avatars

Astral Avatars of the Nightlords

The Nightlords have the ability to separate a fragment of their essence and send it into the Astral Plane, as well as the Dream-stream. These astral avatars, or "Night Avatars," act as the rulers of the Ba'al domains and the leaders of all astral minions. The **Nightlords'** powers over matter and energy are mimicked by these avatars, affecting ectoplasm in the same way their creators affect physical matter. Furthermore, Night Avatars have the power to build domains.

Few enemies of the Nightlords have been able to learn about their inner politics and live to tell about it. Those few who have, indicate that some astral avatars seem to be more independent than their physical counterparts. In fact, there are rumors of



Night Avatars defying the commands of their creators, or at least twisting the letter of those commands to serve their own ends. Possible explanations for this behavior include the fact that Night Avatars are often allowed to exist for decades, and even **centuriés**, which gives them a greater sense of "self and independence. Another is that Nightlords have no direct access to the Astral Plane, so their astral avatars are removed from their direct influence and ire, which makes the avatar "the" power in the Astral Plane, and may lead to delusions of grandeur and megalomania. A more **sinister** explanation could be that some Night Avatars have made contact with powerful astral entities that have given them power in return for their service. The mysterious *Necrophim* (described further on) may be involved in this sort of corruption and betrayal.

For the most part, avatars can only be found in the **Ba'al** domains, where they are well protected by a small army of supernatural bodyguards, or leading a true army of Hounds, Hunters and Necrophim. On a few occasions, a Night Avatar will travel alone or with only a handful of minions, usually on a secret mission for its master, whoever it may be.

Alignment: Any evil, but most are diabolic.

Attributes: **I.Q.** 3D6+12, **M.E.** 3D6+12, **M.A.** 3D6+12, **P.S.** 3D6+20, **P.P.** 2D6+16, **P.E.** 3D6+12, **P.B.** 3D6+6, **Spd.** 1D6×10
Size: Varies, typically **humanoid**.

S.D.C.: 1D4×100+100

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number plus 1D6×10.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 1D6×100 plus 20 per level of experience.

Natural Abilities: Regenerate 2D6 S.D.C. or hit points per melee round and all astral powers as per *Nightbane RPG*, page 70, plus can see the invisible, see through any illusions, and perfect nightvision (2000 **feet/610m**).

Life Force Vampirism (special): Same as Nightlords (see *Nightbane RPG*, **pages** 173-174).

Matter and Energy Control: As per *Nightbane RPG*, page 174, but affecting ectoplasmic matter and energy, instead of physical matter. This power also works in the **Dreamstream**.

Create Astral Domain: As per the Astral Lord power; most Night Avatars enslave Astral Lords and mages and use up their P.P.E. reserves to create a domain, and then have the unfortunate co-creators executed!

Dreamstream Powers: Night Avatars can enter the Dreamstream and defend themselves against dream manipulation powers. Avatars are at +4 in all forms of dream combat, plus M.E. bonuses.

Combat: Typically hand to hand: martial arts or assassin.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S.

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +5 on all perception rolls, +1 to parry and dodge, +4 to roll with impact, **+3** to pull punch, 44 save vs magic and psionics, and **+10** to save vs horror factor. This is in addition to possible attribute bonuses.

Magic Powers: None; rely on their natural control over matter and energy.

Psionic Powers: None, other than their astral abilities.

Average Life Span: Until its master absorbs its essence once again. Some astral avatars may have made deals with powerful supernatural creatures to extend this life or to become truly independent from their creator.

Experience Level: Half the level of its creator (typically 1D4+3).

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Even in astral form, Night Avatars take triple damage from attacks by Nightbanes and double damage from all supernatural creatures and magic weapons (not from magic spells).

R.C.C. Skills: Same as its creator, plus has Lore: Astral at +25%.

Alliances and Allies: Night Avatars typically have 10-60 Hounds and Hunters, 5-30 **Torturians** and 2-12 Necrophim and/or other astral servants. Some avatars may conspire with other evil forces in the Astral Plane.

Necrophim R.C.C.

The Necrophim are also known as the Angels of Death and the Dark Angels. They are supernatural beings who appear to live in the Astral Plane and sometimes venture into the physical world and the Dreamstream. These mysterious entities are sometimes found in the service of the Nightlords and their Night Avatars, but experienced astral travelers have found evidence that the Necrophim may be actually serving their own interests. It appears that these diabolic beings may be *allies* of convenience rather than minions or slaves of the Ba'al. Even Night Princes often show some deference to these bizarre, winged creatures.

At first glance, the Necrophim could be mistaken for a Nightbane. Their skin is jet black, and black-feathered or bat-like wings grow out of their backs. Long, flowing, black hair frames their menacing face with its glowing red or yellow eyes and stern expression. Their mode of dress varies, from black tunics to bizarre leather suits of body armor. Long chains are attached to their wrists which they use as a whip to strike and entangle opponents. Some rumors claim that the Necrophim were imprisoned in some hellish astral kingdom until the Nightlords liberated them. They wear the chains as a reminder of those grim times and as a symbol of their defiant will which can never be enslaved.

Necrophim and Guardians are implacable enemies. The dark angels have been known to go out of their way to destroy the light-wielding creatures. Many occultists believe that the Necrophim were created to fight the Guardians, or vice versa. Apparently the two groups of supernatural beings have been fighting each other for centuries or millennia. Elder Guardians and renegade Necrophim sometimes mention an ancient war that spanned several dimensions. For some reason, vampires, both astral and their Earth-bound cousins, are also attacked on sight by the Necrophim. Even renegades do not speak of the reasons behind this enmity, except to point out that vampires are the enemies of all life. Perhaps the masters of the Necrophim are enemies or competitors of vampire intelligences.

Although they seem to be native to the Astral Plane, the creatures have the power to transfer to the physical world and the Dreamstream. On Earth and in the **Nightlands**, the Necrophim can change their shape to pass as normal humans for short periods of time. A number of them have been involved in the secret take-over of Earth's governments, *most* under the direct orders of the Nightlords, but not all. On occasion, Nightbanes, Spook



Squad and other freedom fighters have witnessed battles between Necrophim and minions of the Nightlords! Whether these are acts of disobedience, inner conflicts among the Nightlords, or something even more sinister, nobody (except the Necrophim) seems to know the answer.

A few Necrophim appear to have genuinely turned against their own kind as well as fight the **Ba'al**. These renegades claim they "switched sides" in the **Wars of Light and Darkness**. This mythical conflict is said to have raged throughout the Megaverse, and involved hundreds or thousands of powerful monsters, alien intelligences and other evil entities on one side, and humans, supernatural creatures of good alignment, and the so-called gods of light on the other. According to the renegade Necrophim, their kind was on the losing side of one such war, and now most of them serve the Nightlords and a mysterious being known only as the *One Who Sleeps*. These stories are received with varying degrees of disbelief among the enemies of the Nightlords. Maybe these "renegades" are spinning a wild tale with the hopes of being able to infiltrate and then destroy the resistance movements on Earth and the Astral Plane. Still, several renegades have willingly given their lives to protect innocent people or their tentative allies, so they might be telling the truth. It is said that some members of the Nocturnes are Necrophim.

The Necrophim are most active in the Astral Plane; perhaps ten times as many dark angels prowl the rolling whiteness of the Plane than walk the Earth or even the **Nightlands**. Patrols of 1-4 Necrophim, sometimes accompanied by 1-6 **Torturians**, Hounds or Hunters, may be encountered in the Outer Layer or Inner Plane, although a Necrophim lone scout or traveler is also a relatively common encounter. Other Necrophim act as bodyguards or assistants to Night Princes, Nightlord Avatars or **Ashmedai**, both on Earth and the Nightlands. There are rumors of an *astral world* guarded by these beings, a place much worse than even the foulest Nightlord domain.

In the **Dreamstream**, Necrophim use their magic and-psionic powers to influence the dreams of humans, although they lack the ability to manipulate "dream matter" the way dream psychics and Dreamstream natives can (see the *Dreamstream* section for more information.)

Note: Necrophim *can* be used as player characters with Game Master approval. These creatures may be servants of a power even more dangerous and evil than the Nightlords, however, and their reputation is such that many "good" supernatural beings, including Guardians, **Nightbanes** and humans (especially Spook Squad) will be likely to attack them on sight. Furthermore, other Necrophim will do everything in their power to hunt down and destroy these renegades, especially those who fight on the side of good.

Alignment: Diabolic or aberrant. Some renegades are anarchist, unprincipled or scrupulous (no **Necrophim** can be principled).

Attributes: **I.Q.** 2D6+10, **M.E.** 3D6+6, **M.A.** 3D6+6, **P.S.** 2D6+20, **P.P.** 2D6+12, **P.E.** 3D6+12, **P.B.** 3D6+6, **Spd.** 4D6, 3D4x10 flying when material.

Size: Human; roughly six feet (1.8 m) tall.

S.D.C.: They have no S.D.C. points in the astral plane. When they materialize on **Earth/the Nightlands** they have P.E.x2 S.D.C. plus 2D4 per level of experience.

Hit Points: On the Astral Plane, their astral hit points are P.E.x5 plus 2D6 per level of experience. Hit points on the material

world are 1D4x10+80. In the Dreamstream, astral hit points, P.E.x5 plus 2D6 per level of experience, are dream S.D.C.

Horror Factor: 13 when their true shapes are revealed.

P.P.E.: 6D6+6 plus P.E. attribute. Add 3D6 P.P.E. per level.

Natural Abilities: See the astral form on all plane of existence, nightvision 200 feet (61 m), fly, plus the following special abilities (also see magic and psionics).

1. Astral Form: The Necrophim are astral creatures of pure psychic energy. In their natural state, they share many of the traits and vulnerabilities of astral travelers. In the Astral Plane, the character can run or float/glide at his attribute speed. When traveling on Earth or the Nightlands as an energy being, they are invisible to the average person, only psychics, young children under the age of 13, and most supernatural creatures (including **Nightbane**) can see them. Outside the astral plane, the Necrophim can fly at up to 670 **mph** (1072 **kmph**), go through walls and physical barriers, and can only be harmed by magic, psionics and supernatural attacks. All of these abilities stop functioning if the character materializes.

2. Materialization: By spending 10 P.P.E., Necrophim can temporarily manifest themselves as physical beings. However, their shape is that of the winged Necrophim; to look human requires shape shifting and costs an additional 15 P.P.E. A Necrophim can *materialize* on Earth and the Nightlands. The process lasts one hour per level of experience, and costs 10 P.P.E. While in physical form, the winged Necrophim can fly at the sluggish speed indicated under its attributes, and can still use most of its supernatural, psionic and magic powers. However, it can no longer go through walls or fly at incredible speed.

3. Shape Shifting: Necrophim can temporarily alter their shape to look completely human or like a Nightbane. While in human form, they cannot fly, and all their magical abilities work at half power (i.e., treat them as if the Necrophim was half its normal experience level). This power costs 15 P.P.E. per use, and lasts 10 minutes per level of experience.

4. Dreamstream Powers: Necrophim can enter the Dreamstream as per the power **Dreamdance**: Superior (see *Psionic Powers* for more information). They can use this power both in the astral plane or while materialized on Earth. When in the Dreamstream, Necrophim have the same S.D.C. and form as they have in the Astral Plane. The entities can also resist dream manipulation attacks; at first level they get a +2 bonus and they get an additional +1 at levels 4, 7, 10 and 13. All other powers and abilities work as described in the Dream Combat section of the Dreamstream chapter.

Combat: Equal to hand to hand: martial arts and entangle beginning at first level.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S.

Plus their chains inflict an additional 2D6 and can be used to entangle.

Bonuses: +1 attack per melee round, +2 on initiative, +1 on perception, +2 to dodge when flying, +3 to roll with impact or fall, +3 to pull punch, +2 save vs magic, +5 to save vs horror factor. All are in addition to attribute and skill bonuses.

Magic Powers: Select two spells each from levels one to four, for a total of eight. Every level after the first, the character mystically gains a new spell of his experience level or below. Necrophim cannot learn or purchase spells.

Psionic Powers: Mind block, presence sense, see aura, see invisible and astral navigation.

I.S.P.: M.E. plus 4D6, plus 1D6 per level of experience.

Average Life Span: Unknown, but at least several centuries.

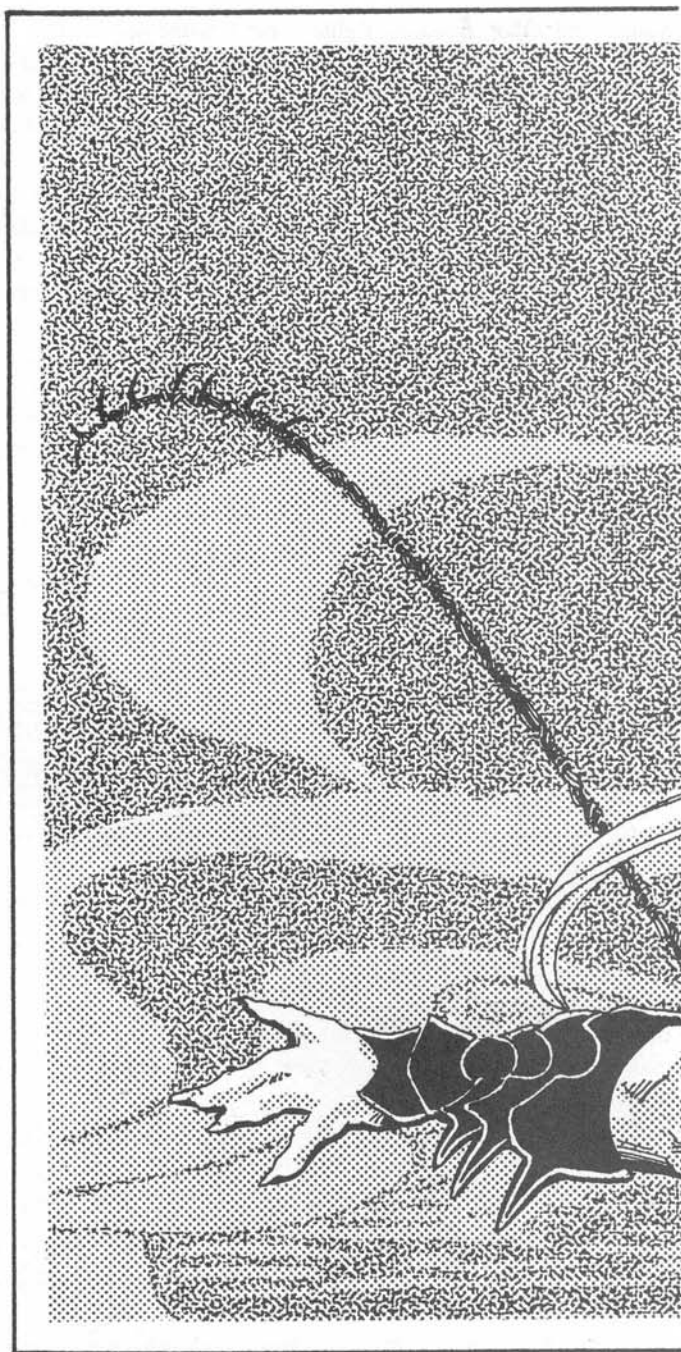
Experience Level: Average 2D4; player characters start at first level of experience.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: None, per se.

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Astral (+15%), Lore: Dreamstream (+10%) and Lore: Nightlands (+10%); and W.P. Chain and W.P. Sword. Necrophim magically understand and speak all languages spoken in their presence, and will be able to read this language after 4 hours of exposure to one or more literate people. Plus select 8 other skills at +5%; most Necrophim know very little of technology or human society, so most skills will be physical, weapon skills, technical, or rogue.

Alliances and Allies: Necrophim in the service of the Nightlords work side by side with all the minions of the Ba'al. Torturians are often placed under their command, although the two groups despise each other. Renegades sometimes work with human psychics and mystics, Nightbanes and even the occasional Guardian, although more often than not, suspicion and paranoia makes these pairings tentative alliances at best.

Weapons and Equipment: Chains: These chains may have once been restraints used against the Necrophim, but now they are weapons to ensnare and kill their victims. Used as whips, the chains inflict 2D6 points of damage plus P.S. bonuses. They can also entangle or ensnare targets up to 60 feet (18.3 m) away.



Torturian R.C.C.

Gordon sat up with a start, drenched with cold sweat. "I made it," he whispered to himself. "I made it," he repeated for reassurance.

He'd been a damn fool, he realized that now. Astral projection had seemed like a foolproof way to eavesdrop on Senator O'Malley. Gordon had become one of the top investigative reporters in the country by using that power — nobody knew how he could get so much dirt on so many people. His psychic abilities had allowed him to see a great deal of the private lives of the rich and powerful. Of late, his research, both mundane and astral, was pointing to the biggest story of all — if he lived long enough to file it.

Somebody had taken over the U.S. government. Senator O'Malley's strange voting record in the past few months was but



one piece of a terrifying puzzle. Gordon had followed the Senator to learn more. Once he had determined the Senator was meeting with somebody in a posh Washington hotel, the reporter checked into a much cheaper hotel and then sent his astral self forth to find out more.

Gordon shivered, remembering the horror he had experienced only a few minutes earlier. The *Senator* had been talking to some ... thing, a giant bug that had climbed into a human-shaped shell. It was only after the shell got up that Gordon realized that it was *O'Malley's* new chauffeur and *bodyguard*—and that it was looking straight at *Gordon's* supposedly invisible astral form. Gordon had escaped as fast as he could, returning to his body. For a few panicky moments, *he'd* had the feeling that he had been followed. He shook his head. "*It's* okay," he said to himself.

"Not really," a mocking voice said behind him. To his left, somebody else tittered. Gordon leaped off the bed and turned *around*.

Three translucent figures were floating around him, a male and two females. They were dressed in leather, one in what looked to be body armor, the others in stylish catsuits decorated with chains and shiny studs. Their faces looked horribly withered, and their eyes shone with cruel amusement. Astral *projections*, *Gordon's* mind spoke dully through his mounting panic. Except these astral *projections* had no visible silver cords.

"You really shouldn't have been snooping," said the male figure.

"*Gordy's* been bad," one woman said. A whip with a barbed tip appeared in her hand. "I think we have to punish him."

The reporter bolted for the door, but his hand never reached the doorknob.

Agonizing pain stabbed his back. He felt himself yanked up even as he collapsed. He screamed.

*Gordon looked down at his body laying limply on the floor. With a shock that burned through the pain, the reporter realized the barbed whip had torn his astral self out of his body. The woman tugged the whip, sending new waves of agony through his astral form. The whip was buried in his back, just below his silver cord. Whenever she moved it even slightly, it *felt* as if it was tearing him apart. "This will do," she said. "Let's go. We've got what we came here for."*

The trio flew through the wall, pulling the reporter along. Gordon got one last tear-filled glimpse of his body before he was taken away.

One of the worst fates that can befall a careless astral traveler is to be captured by the Nightlords. **Nightbanes** can always expect an agonizing death. Humans can look forward to **mind-wrecking torture followed by a lifetime** of servitude. **Torturians** are former human psychics with the abilities of astral projection or astral transference. Captured by the minions of the **Ba'al**, they spend years undergoing constant torment and degradation, carefully designed to break the spirit of the strongest person. The link to the victim's human body (if he was astral projecting) is severed, but the astral form is kept alive magically. What is left when the Torturians are done is an astral being who only knows two things: displeasing one's masters only brings pain, and inflicting pain on others is good and enjoyable. Torturians are the ultimate sadists, gaining what little pleasures they can from the suffering of others.

These malignant beings look like humans clad in leather armor, often accented by metal studs, spines, and chains. Their bodies, at least the parts covered by their bizarre leather suits, look athletic, and even attractive, but their faces are horribly withered and skeletal but still have hair and skin. They wield whips, hooked swords, and all kinds of instruments of torture. Torturians are pure astral beings and cannot affect the physical world. However, their whips and chains can reach into the body of any psychic, mage or **Nightbane** with the ability to astral project or transfer, and then yank the victim's astral form out. This is one of the ways Torturians get new "recruits" to raise their ranks; the monsters love the chance to remake their victims in their twisted image.

This sadism is often a drawback, because the Torturians rarely fight to kill. Instead, they prefer to subdue, capture and torment their quarry. Even Nightbanes and Guardians, whom they are ordered to kill, are preferred to be taken alive and killed slowly over a period of several (2D4) days. This has often given their victims a chance to escape or to destroy the creatures. Often, Torturians are placed under the command of a Necrophim or another more level-headed and trustworthy minion. Torturians hate to restrain their base instincts, but they fear the penalties of disobedience even more, so they will do as they are told, even if the orders are to kill on sight, as long as they have proper supervision. If the orders are not a hundred percent clear on the subject, or the **non-Torturian** superior is not present to make certain orders are followed, many of the more depraved Torturians will "interpret" orders in the most favorable manner possible.

Torturians can be found in the astral domains of the Ba'al, where they act as prison guards, interrogators, slave masters and assassins. They are sometimes sent into the physical world to hunt down astral projecting psychics, sorcerers or supernatural creatures. A few are used as watchers in the **Nightlands**, where they can spy invisibly on some intruders and protect against assassins.

Note: Never available as a player character!

Alignment: Diabolic

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6+2, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 3D6+10, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 2D6+3, Spd. 4D6

Size: Human; roughly 6 feet (1.8 m).

S.D.C./Hit Points: P.E.x5+1D4x10 astral S.D.C. Add 5 points per additional level of experience; has no physical form.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 3D6

Natural Abilities: See the invisible, nightvision 2000 feet (610 m) and astral navigation. Also see psionic powers.

Astral Forms (special): Torturians are astral beings that cannot materialize in the physical world. When traveling on Earth or the Nightlands, they are astral energy beings invisible to anybody but psychics, other astral travelers, young children under the age of 13, Nightbane, and most supernatural creatures. In the Astral Plane, the character can run or float at his attribute speed. Outside the astral plane, the Torturians can fly at up to 670 mph (1072 kmph), go through walls and physical barriers, and can only be harmed by magic, psionics and supernatural attacks.

Sense Pain (special): Torturians are empathically attuned to pain in all its forms. They can sense the pain and suffering of any living being within a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius. This can be the pain from a physical wound or ailment, and emotional pain, like the emotional agony of losing a loved one (sometimes the Torturians **will** execute or hurt a prisoner to see if any of his friends are around!) and similar forms of anguish. This is an automatic ability that costs no **I.S.P.** points.

Combat: Equal to hand to hand: assassin.

Damage: Varies with supernatural P.S. or weapon.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +2 to roll with impact, +4 to pull punch, +2 save vs magic, +6 to save vs horror factor except when they face (or believe they face) Nightlords or high-ranking minions of the Nightlords; in that case they have a -6 to save versus horror factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: All Torturians have the following psionic powers: telepathy, empathy, see aura and mind block. No other powers are ever acquired. **I.S.P.:** M.E.x3 plus 2D4 per level of experience.

Average Life Span: Unknown. May be ageless.

Experience Level: 1D6+1 average. Some old and powerful Torturians can average 1D4+7 levels.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Terrified of being captured and tortured, although they are not afraid to engage in combat and suffer injury when they are free to fight back. Captured Torturians must make a save versus insanity (phobia: torture) or they collapse even under the threat of torture. If they make the save, however, only pain worse than what they've already suffered (and only diabolic beings would match that) will break their will after 1D4x100 hours of torture.

R.C.C. Skills: Minimal skills; most knowledge was eradicated by the severe traumas of torture. Native language at 98%, lore: astral (+15%), lore: **Nightlands** (+10%), interrogation (+10%), W.P. whip and W.P. sword. Up to four additional skills can be remembered at +5%; any category that reflects the character's past occupation.

Alliances and Allies: Occasionally placed under the command of one or more Necrophim, but the two creatures hate each other passionately. Necrophim love to torment and terrorize the **Torturians**, and on a few occasions, they have provoked them into actually attacking them, regardless of the consequences. Sometimes work with Hounds and Hunters, especially when these two minions are on the Astral Plane.

Weapons: Can use any, but the following are the most typical:

Whip: Whips with barbed points are the favorite weapons of the Torturians. These weapons have the power to force people out of their bodies. Damage is 4D6 S.D.C., and the barb sinks into the victim's astral body, producing constant agony (-2 on all attacks/actions, bonuses and -25% on all skills). The whips can also be used to entangle.

Swords: These blades are used when the Torturians are trying to kill rather than capture their victims. They inflict 2D6 damage in addition to the creature's supernatural P.S. damage.

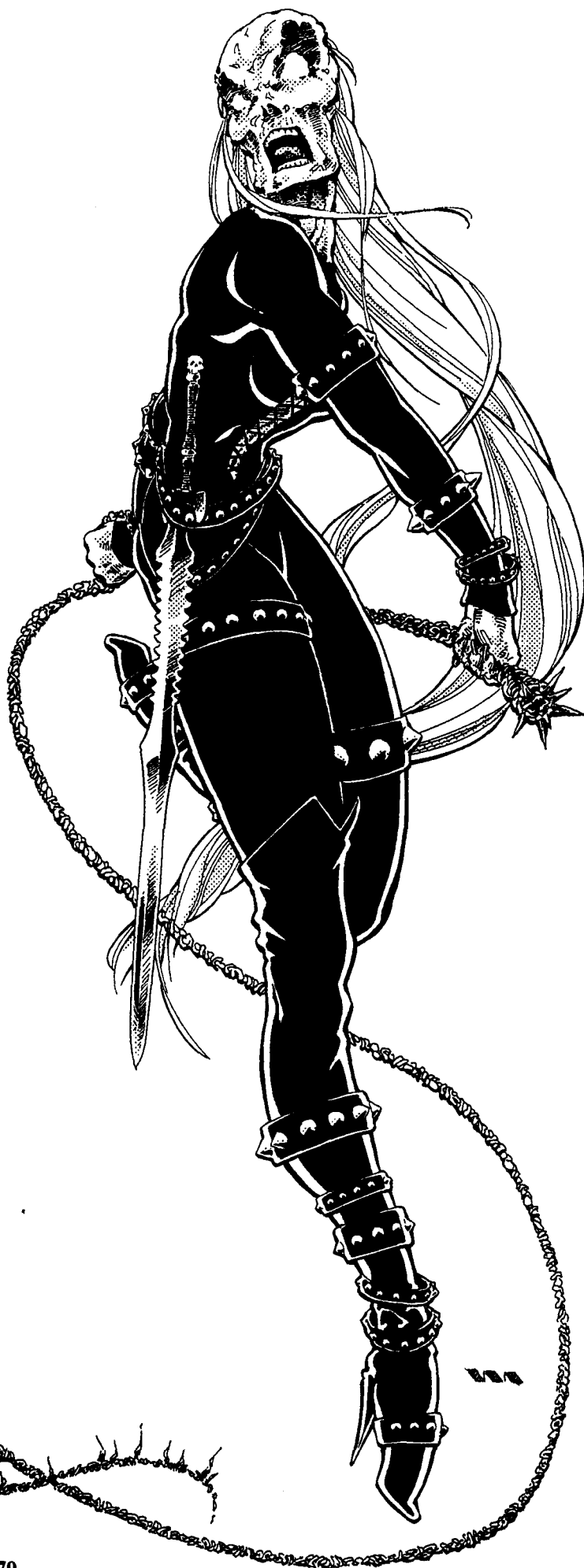
Restraints: All Torturians usually carry one of these three weapons. Most restraints look like a hand-held disk which magically creates bindings that will immobilize most astral creatures while at the same time, inflicting pain on them.

Straps: Causes the victim to be tightly wrapped in leather-like straps like a mummy, and inflicts 1D6 points of damage/pain every time the victim struggles or tries to get free. The victim will be immobilized; a P.S. of 24 or better is needed to break free. Escape artist skill rolls are at -20%.

Barbed Wire: This disk binds the victim with barbed wire, causing tremendous pain to the astral form, as well as 3D6 points of damage at the moment one is ensnared (and every time one tries to move or escape). Breaking free requires a P.S. of 24 or better, and doing so will inflict an additional 4D6 points of damage! Escape artist skill rolls to free oneself from the barbed wire are at -40%.

Fishing Net: A net with scores of fishing hooks that stab into the astral form to better entangle the victim. The net will do 2D6 damage when it hits, as well as every time one tries to **move/break** free or escape. Breaking free requires a P.S. of 25 or better, and will inflict an additional 3D6 damage. Escape artist skill rolls are at -35%.

Body Armor: None; their leather armor is a part of their bodies.



The Dreamstream™

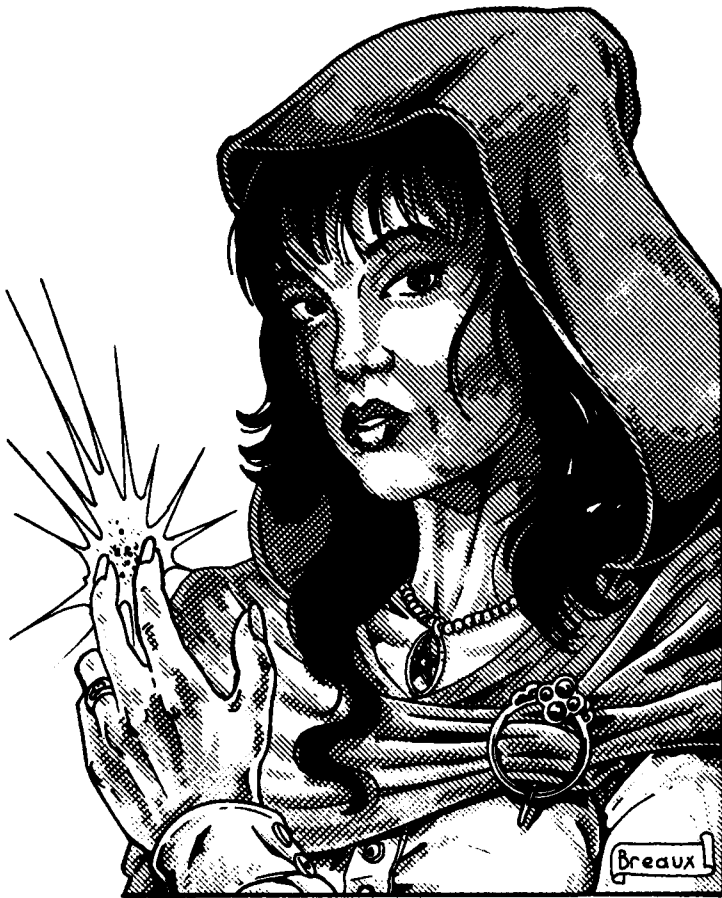




I open my eyes, and I'm standing on top of a hill—no, it's a mountain, and down below is a city—a house, actually, my old house from when I was a child, and I am a child, everything looks small, and wait, there's Rover, the neighbor's dog, only it's not really Rover, it's huge, and its teeth are made of metal and blood is dripping from them, and it's coming after me, I try to run but cannot move and then a Shadow Blast knocks Rover down and Burger-Face is shaking me, "Deal with it, *damnit!* You're Dream Blind, you fool" and I try to think, to make sense of it all ...

I shook my head. The ever-changing panorama was still disorienting, but I was awake once again. The Dreamstream will do that to you. "I'm okay now, Burger-Face," I told my friend. "Let's get moving."

Perhaps the most chaotic place in the Megaverse, the **Dreamscape** appears to be a place (a separate dimension? a world? Nobody knows.) where the dreams of every sentient person on Earth come to life. Most humans only touch this vast world in an indirect and harmless way, but even dreaming can be dangerous after the Dark Day invasion. The **Nightlords** are infiltrating and corrupting this realm of dreams, using their minions to break the wills of thousands of victims, and kidnapping or killing hundreds more.



The Dreaming Worlds

At first sight, it would appear that the Dreamstream is part of the Astral Plane. This mistake has cost many psychics their lives. The Astral Plane is an actual place or dimension, separated from the physical or "real" world. The Dreamstream is connected to the mind of every sentient being on Earth. One of the best analo-

gies for the Dreamstream is to think of it as a river, fed by billions of tiny streams. Each person, each human, and animal who dreams, is one of these streams, adding to the overall size, current and flow of the river. There are no Dragon Roads or ley lines in the Dreamstream. In fact, the entire place may be inside our collective minds, totally unreal, a collective figment of human imagination, and yet able to affect reality in very direct ways.

There are many ways to enter the Dreamstream. The most common one, of course, is through dreaming (see the *Dream Pools* section). Portals from the Astral Plane can sometimes lead to the Dreamstream as well. Psychic powers, magic spells and **Nightbane** talents all grant the ability to either project a person's conscious mind into the Dreamstream or to send the person's body and soul into this strange world. Each option has its own dangers and advantages. Visitors in the Dreamstream appear like their own selves, in full color, and dressed with their most common or favorite set of clothes. Only *Dream Makers* and some magicians can alter their appearance in the Dreamstream. Nightbanes assume their **morphus** form automatically, and can only change back into their facades for brief instants before being forced once more into their "true" (morphus) shapes.

Travelers who enter the Dreamstream find themselves in a confusing maelstrom of strangeness. The characters will find themselves suspended in the air, surrounded by globes of light or other shifting structures (see the *Dream Pools*); the panorama around them is dazzling, with random colors and images flashing in the background. The images are as likely as not to come from the traveler's mind, and can be extremely dazzling for the inexperienced.

Those who fail to make a save vs psionics (12 or higher) the first time they enter the Dreamstream will become *Dream Blind*, a condition not too different from actual dreaming. While dream blind, the victim's perceptions are completely overcome by images of their subconscious mind. Travelers around the stricken characters will be able to see those images swirling around the victim. Meanwhile, the person who is Dream Blinded floats in a trance, oblivious to things around him as his mind participates in a fanciful dream that can be a pleasant experience or become a nightmare. The effect can be broken by shaking, slapping or otherwise *awakening* the person. Otherwise, the Dream Blind will stay entranced for 5D6 minutes (subtract the character's Mental Endurance from this, but the minimum length of time is one minute). Dream Blindness is resisted at a +1 after the first visit to the Dreamstream and another +1 after above 50 and then 150 visits.

Distance is completely warped in the Dreamstream. The major points of reference are Dream Pools, which mark the *position* of each dreaming person. The distance between the pools is determined solely by *emotions*, not physical location. The stronger one feels towards somebody, the closer one will be to his/her Dream Pool! The emotions can be negative or positive. Those one intensely loves, hates or fears are also close in the Dreamstream, for good or ill. For example, a dream traveler would appear closest to his friends, loved ones, and worst enemies' Dream Pools, further away from acquaintances, and farthest from strangers.

There is no "silver cord" linking dreamers with their bodies. The connection is actually more solid and immediate than that.

Again, "distance" traveled is meaningless, because the emotional connection between a person and **his/her** body is the strongest one in the **Dreamstream**. Dream travelers can instantly "snap back" to their bodies, although some entities have the ability to block such attempts, trapping their victims in the Dreamstream until they are done with them.

Time is an ever-shifting variable in this world. Both the future and past can be glimpsed in the Dreamstream. Prophetic dreams are one of the results of this temporal distortion, as are visions of the past, often confused as proof of reincarnation. Travelers who bring their physical bodies into the Dreamstream never age. Some Dream Makers who have dwelt in their dream domains have **lived** for hundreds or even thousands of **years!** However, most humans who live that long in the Dreamstream go insane; the chaotic nature of this world can weaken the strongest human mind over time.

Whenever a dream traveler spends more than an hour in the dream worlds, the game master may roll on the following table (or he may pick a result that will be appropriate for the current scenario or story line):

01-30% Concurrent Time: The characters neither loses nor gains time.

31-60% Slow Time: Every hour in the Dreamstream counts as three hours in the real world.

61-90% Fast Time: Every hour in the Dreamstream counts as ten minutes in the real world.

91-00% Very Fast Time: Every hour in the Dreamstream only counts as one minute in the real world.

Dream Pools

In some ways, the Dreamstream is another dimension or aspect of the "real" world. Just like the Earth is a place where billions of people dwell, the Dreamstream houses some of the minds and emotions of those people. Each human being, and many animals (anybody and anything that dreams), has his own Dream Pool. One can think of each Dream Pool as a conduit between the person and the Dreamstream. Or, as some believe, each pool may be a representation of the subconscious mind of every person, floating in the collective unconscious.

The appearance of a Dream Pool is as variable and unpredictable as the rest of this realm. Most of them appear as globes suspended in the air. Sometimes, they look like actual pools on the "ground," swirling in different colors. Others have the sphere or pool shape, but images of the person's thoughts and dreams flash in them like changing channels of a T.V. set. Pools can also appear as caverns and even man-made structures like houses (the house where the dreamer grew **up** is a common shape), or the location of a recurring dream. More importantly, Dream Pools can change shape in a matter of minutes, erratically shifting back and forth between several different forms as the dream shifts. Dream travelers can make a perception roll to recognize a **specific** Dream Pool; the less well-known the dreamer is, the harder the perception roll becomes (a close friend, lover or relative would be an easy 4 or higher roll, a total stranger a nearly impossible 20 or **higher!**).

Dream Pools are self-contained and partially isolated from the rest of the stream. The pools are surrounded by a psychic barrier known as the *membrane*. The membrane acts more like a filter than a true barrier, however. Random images, glimpses of the past and possible futures, and other psychic "overflow" can sometimes get past the membrane and enter the Dream Pool of an individual. In the same way, the images and thoughts of people's dreams also flow out of their pool and into the Dreamstream at large. Still, such intervention or influences by travelers, other people's dreams, temporal aberrations (such as true pre-cognitive visions) and other elements of the stream rarely manage to get past the membrane.

When a person is awake, the membrane darkens, thickens and becomes almost completely "impermeable" to the Dreamstream. This effect is easily perceived by dream travelers who will realize the person's dream pool is not available because he or she is awake —**the** pool will appear to be surrounded by dark gray ice, or the "entrance" to the dream dwelling will be blocked in some way. At these times, entering or interfering with a person's subconscious becomes extremely difficult. Very rarely, a person will "daydream" and catch a glimpse of the stream. It appears that chemical unbalances, some drugs and psychological trauma can cause a person's membrane to weaken, allowing random dream images to be seen even while awake. These unfortunate people usually can't tell what's real and what's a dream, they are also susceptible to the influences of Dream Dancers and other travelers in the Dreamstream. This blending of other times and dream realities often makes such people go insane, or they are diagnosed as insane due to the "hallucinations" they see and hear.

While asleep, a person's membrane becomes more flexible and easily penetrated. Dream Dancers, Dream Makers and other dwellers or prowlers in the Dreamstream have a better chance of entering a person's Dream Pool while he or she sleeps. These invasions are dangerous for both the intruder and the dreamer. For the most part, sleepers are fairly safe from harm; a dream intruder may scare the person or cause a nightmare, but it is very difficult (but not impossible) to actually harm a dreamer. On the other hand, dream travelers can be injured or killed inside a sleeper's Dream Pool.

Inside each Dream Pool is a smaller, more personal version of the Dreamstream itself. Its elements are the memories, emotions, anxieties, desires and personality of the individual, come to life in dreams and nightmares. A visitor may arrive to the middle of an unfolding dream, nightmare, or may see a chaotic jumble of disparate images. Furthermore, each Dream Pool has creatures living in it. The dreamer himself is usually a minor figure, rarely capable of affecting the course of his dreams, but still able to defend himself to a small degree; only the most depraved and fragmented aspects of the dreamer will plot with outsiders to harm him.

On the other hand, embodiments of his fears, anxieties, memories and aspects of his personality have a great deal of independence, and can be very dangerous to intruders. The memory of a high school bully, charged with psychic fear, will gladly attack and maybe even kill a dream traveler. Most "living" elements of the Dream Pool will react with hostility towards invaders/newcomers.

While in the Dream Pool, intruders can influence events and affect the outcome of dreams or nightmares, pass on messages, and even harm the dreamer physically, depending on the psychic or supernatural powers being used (see the *Psychic Powers section*, *New Spells section*, and the *Dream Maker and Dream Dancer P.C.C.'s* for more information about specific Dreamstream powers). A powerful enough intruder inside a person's Dream Pool can also feed on the victim's P.P.E., harm or destroy the victim's mind, or even drag the dreamer's very physical body into the Dream Pool and kill his flesh and soul. However, most intruders must content themselves with scaring their victims.

Entering and Leaving a Dream Pool

Although the membrane surrounding each Dream Pool is not an "airtight" barrier, it will still prevent most outsiders from entering. Some dream travelers have compared it to a grille in a sewer, letting water through but stopping solid objects from leaving or entering. To get past this barrier, it is necessary to force an entrance.

This "breaking and entering" is treated like Dream Combat (fully described in its own section). The intruder rolls an attack, adding the appropriate bonuses and penalties, and the membrane rolls its own defense. The membranes of most Dream Pools have no bonuses to defend against attack, except when the person is awake; in that case, the "hardened" barrier gets a +8 to save versus intrusion. Psychics, supernatural creatures and other people and beings of power get their normal bonuses to save versus psionic **attack/mind** control to resist the invasion of their dreams.

Getting out is a little bit easier, but not much; dream travelers trying to leave get a +2 to their rolls. On the other hand, the dreamer or some of the manifestations of his or her dream may (wittingly or not) try to interfere with the intruder's escape. This is explained in more detail in the *Dream Combat section*. If the person wakes up suddenly, however, intruders will be expelled from the Dream Pool (no save). Only Dream Makers and a few supernatural beings have the ability to prevent a dreamer from waking up.

Affecting the Course of a Dream

Once somebody enters a sleeper's Dream Pool, he can alter the course of a dream. Dream manipulators, like the Dream Maker and some **Dreamstream** creatures, can completely alter the flow of a dream, changing a pleasant fantasy into a nightmare with ease. Other psychics, magicians and **Nightbane** can do so using their spells, talents and abilities, or by intervening physically. For example, if in a dream they see somebody (the dreamer himself, maybe) about to be hit by a car, they can pull the would-be victim out of the way, or destroy the car with a spell or talent, or otherwise prevent the accident. The dreamer may or may not remember the actual dream, but the intervention will have an impact on him in some way. Maybe, instead of waking up worried and scared (from the dream in which he saw himself being hit by a car), the dreamer now feels calm and relaxed, and more willing to be nice to people.

Not all dream interventions are benign, of course. Having a Nightbane appear in full **morphus** form can be terrifying for most people. If the visitor attacks the sleeper in his dreams, he will probably awaken him in fright. Most such attacks will not really harm the dreamer; only a few psychics and supernatural

creatures can hurt sleepers through their nightmares. Nightmares are likely to cause the victim to lose rest and to wake up with feelings of anxiety, fear or annoyance. If an invader does this over several nights in a row, he can cause insomnia, some emotional and psychological trauma, and with time and repetition, even insanity, depending on how disturbing the dream events are.

Inhabitants of the Dreamstream™

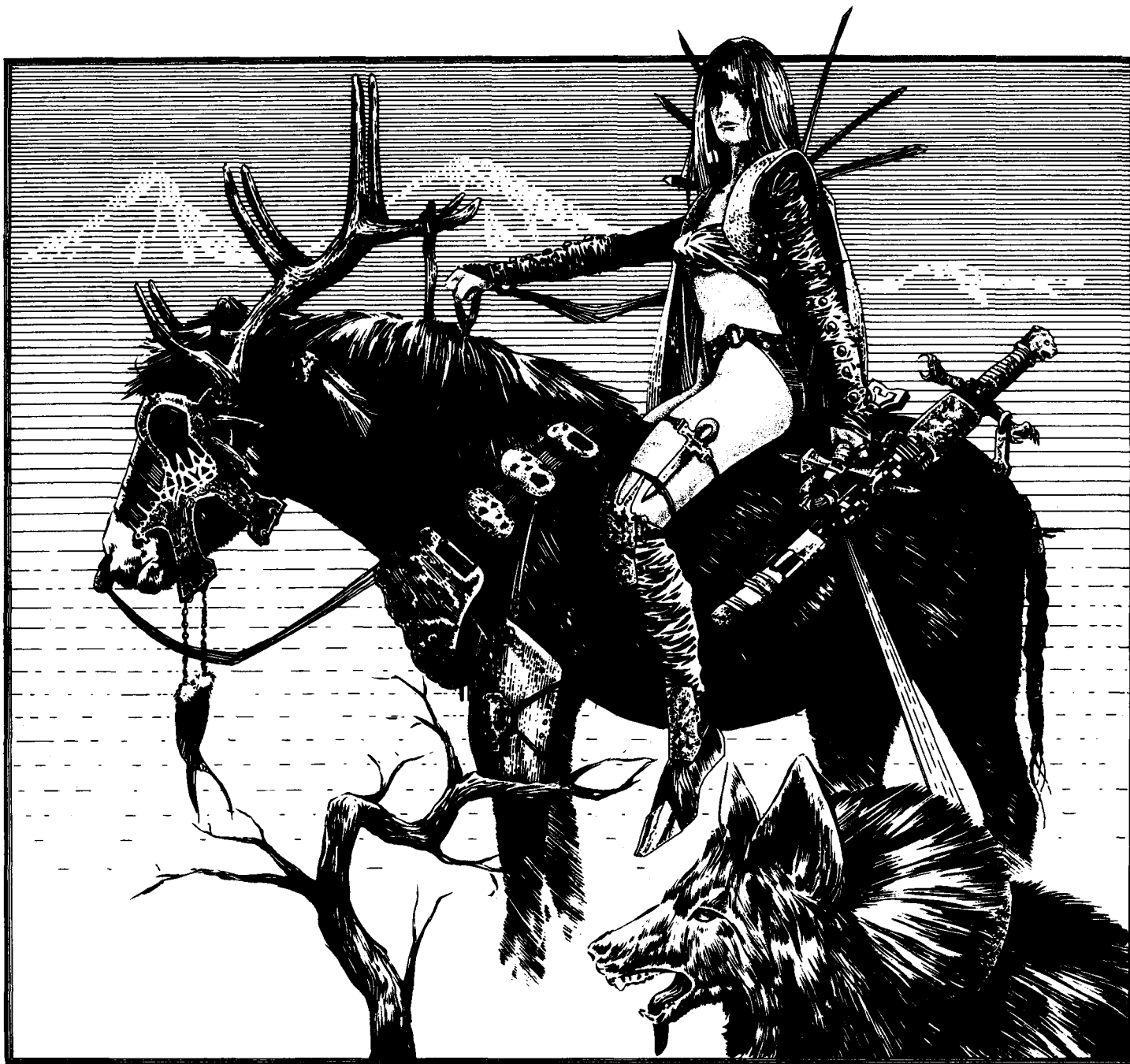
There are two kinds of creatures living in the Dreaming Worlds. The first, and more numerous, are "living" manifestations of the memories and thoughts of dreamers. These beings are known as the *Dream Personas* — from the old word used for "cast of characters." Dream personas can be people from a dreamer's childhood, **co-workers**, shadowy representations of fears, and buried psychological traumas, or purely imaginary beings. They are not "real" people in the sense that they are fragments of the dreamer's personality and memories, or entirely figments of his imagination, but some of them, especially those who appear in recurring dreams, eventually start developing a personality of their own. Most dreamers only have one or two of these independent personas; a few, especially people who have suffered devastating traumas (child abuse, accident, or racked by a guilty conscience), often "give life" to several of these beings. Dream travelers often debate hotly as to whether or not these personas are real living entities or simple imaginary, artificial constructs. There is evidence to support both sides of the argument.

The second type of dream dweller includes all entities who are not linked to a dream pool. These true independent creatures wander the Dreamstream itself, and only occasionally enter Dream Pools. They include strange creatures who seem to feed on the emotions that "leak" into the Dreamstream, beings like the *Dream Furies*, who may be collective embodiments of rage, or the *Guilt Eaters* who move from dream to dream, attracted by feelings of shame or self-contempt. Some of these beings can be a danger for dream travelers, but may also become sources of information or even allies and friends.

The distinction between the two groups of dream dwellers is not clear cut. It has been argued that every being in the Dreamstream with the exception of actual visitors from other plane of existence were originally a dream construct that somehow became independent. The fact that a few personas have actually managed to leave the Dream Pool of their "birth" and outlive the dreamer who created them seems to support this point.

Dream Domains

The most powerful human visitors to the Dreamstream are psychics who can manipulate and reshape sections of the stream to suit their purposes. *Dream Dancers* can create clothing, weapons and tools out of nowhere. *Dream Makers* go beyond even that, and are capable of turning their Dream Pools into self-contained dream domains. However, the Dreamstream cannot be reshaped to conform to somebody's will, like in the Astral Plane.



Even the most powerful Dream Makers cannot determine exactly what elements will be present in their domains. **Randomness** and chaos exist in even the most structured dream domain.

The biggest difference between astral and dream domains is the basic fabric of each reality. Ectoplasm is a real element that can be reshaped by the will of magicians and psychics, but it has no "will" or volition of its own. The so-called *dream matter* is nothing but the psychic energies of all the dreamers of the world. Even dream domains are part of their creator's subconscious mind, and elements from the collective subconscious will appear whether they are willed into existence by the Dream Maker or not. Every dream domain is "haunted" by constructs that reflect memories, fears and desires of the creator or creators. This strangeness is what drives many dream travelers insane after they spend a long time in this realm.

Domains can be connected to the physical world via dimensional portals; permanent windows into the world of dreams. A

few are also connected to astral domains or kingdoms. So-called "mixed domains" are astral and dream domains that are linked, usually the result of collaboration between an Astral Lord and a Dream Maker. These very rare mixed domains are extremely bizarre and hold a number of dangers for the unwary; a false step and a victim can be sent into the **Dreamstream**, never to return.

Dream Storms

These freak occurrences have been described as "the screams of the collective unconscious." Dream storms are triggered when a large number of human dreamers are experiencing nightmares. Times of war, famine and massacre are often accompanied by dream storms, as thousands of people share similar dreams of fear, anger and despair. The storms are extremely dangerous for

travelers and inhabitants in the **Dreamstream**. The unwary can be swept by a flood of nightmarish visions, or attacked by a swarm of dream creatures. The psychic energies released by these storms are often enough to animate Dream Personas (see *Denizens of the Dreamstream*) and allow them to escape the Dream Pool where they were created. During the most harrowing times for humankind (the Black Plague, both World Wars, and Dark Day), some of these Dream Personae have had enough power to materialize in the physical world for short periods of time. A few of these beings have actually become permanently embodied on Earth, becoming unaging beings who can come in and out of the Dreamstream at will, or as powerful as a Dream Maker (see the section called *Living Nightmares*).

Dream storms are first sensed in the Dreamstream as a rumbling sound that drowns out all other noises. The sound is followed by dark clouds that blot out much of the **dreamscape**. These clouds are typically black or dark gray, and are preceded by hurricane-strength winds. Those caught in the open are buffeted by these savage winds which function as both psychic and physical attacks. Survivors speak of feeling horrible pain from a multitude of sources, from burning pain or cuts, to emotional pain such as the loss of one's friends and relatives. Everyone caught in the storm suffers 2D6 to 12D6 points of damage (roll 2D6 to determine how many dice of damage are taken). This damage is endured once per melee round (four times per minute); most storms will pass through an area in 1D6 minutes, leaving chaos behind as they move through the Dreamstream. A save versus psionic **attack/insanity** means that the character takes half damage, but if a character is reduced to zero or below, but manages to survive, he will suffer permanent mental trauma (see the insanity rules in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 44).

Even a Dream Pool or a dream domain can be ravaged by these storms. There is a 1-50% chance of any such structure in the path of the storm being struck by it. All dream constructs and visitors inside will suffer the same effects described above. Dream Makers can reduce this chance by channeling I.S.P. into the membrane surrounding a pool or domain; every 10 I.S.P. used in this manner reduces the chance of the storm breaking in by 1% (so, for example, a psychic who spent 100 I.S.P. points would reduce the chance of the storm piercing the membrane by 10%; from a 50% chance to 40%).

Nightmare Day

Among the people of the Dreamstream, *Dark Day* is known as Nightmare Day; a time of chaos and confusion. For the first time in the memories of most dream dwellers, thousands, perhaps millions of people were so terrified that their Dream Pools started "leaking" their emotions even while they were awake. The result was terrible Dream Storms that shattered more than one domain and killed many Dream Makers and natives of the land of dreams. At the same time, a horde of **Morpheomoth** and Necrophim, monstrous beings serving the Nightlords, swept down and took over a large section of the Dreamstream! Since the horrors of Dark Day, nightmares have become much more frequent and vivid. Millions of people actually fear going to sleep. Many dream travelers suspect that the Nightlords are at least partially responsible.

Organizations and Factions

A small but growing group of psychics, **Nightbanes** and sorcerers has discovered the link between the disturbances in the Dreamstream and the Nightlords. This war includes members of several factions, including two groups who have been dealing with the Dreamstream long before the Dark Day invasion.

Nightbanes & the Dreamstream

Nightbanes can enter the Dreamstream in many ways. Like humans, they dream and thus their subconscious minds create dream pools. A number of Nightbane talents and magical abilities allow these characters to enter the Dreamstream physically, just like a Dream Maker. See the *Talents* section for more information.

Over the centuries, many Nightbanes have ventured into the Dreamstream. A group of members from the *Underground Railroad* tried to build a dream domain where dozens or hundreds of Nightbanes could live in peace, away from the human world. The project failed tragically during the 1940's, when a powerful dream storm triggered by the carnage of World War II ripped through the Dreamstream and smashed their domain, killing nine Nightbane and injuring many more. Since then, only courageous individuals venture into these chaotic worlds.

With the Dark Day invasion, some members of *The Resistance* have discovered the Nightlords are using the Dreamstream as another way to attack humankind. The group has assigned a number of Nightbanes with the ability to enter the Dreamstream to investigate and counter this danger.

Other Factions in the Dreamstream

Spook Squad: The PAB and the Pandora Project sponsored a number of investigations on the possibility that psychic powers could be linked to dreams and sleep disorders. These investigations led to the discovery that an alien "dream dimension" does indeed exist. For the most part, however, most Spook Squad psychics have little knowledge or access to the Dreamstream, and the organization is devoting its resources to dealing with the enemy in the "real world."

• **The Warlords:** A couple of Nightbanes associated with this gang have dream-oriented talents. They have used these powers to terrorize, bully and sometimes hurt or kill victims they cannot reach physically. For the most part, however, this faction has little contact with the Dreamstream.

The Nocturnes: It is rumored that three Living Nightmares (see the *Denizens of the Dreamstream* sections) hold important positions in this shadowy organization. These powerful dream entities are reputed to have changed their evil ways, or at least they have agreed not to prey on innocent humans, saving their brutality for the Nightlords and their minions. Other rumors indicate that a number of Nocturne safe-houses are connected via dimensional portals to dream domains, or mixed astral-dream domains.

The Seekers: The Seekers have only the barest knowledge that this strange realm exists, and most of their scholars still confuse the Dreamstream with the Astral Plane.

The Lightbringers: Many Guardians involved in this organization can travel into the Dreamstream, and are aware of the dangers and opportunities that can be found therein. These Guardians often interrupt their struggle on Earth to venture into this strange realm, often to protect human friends and loved ones from dream predators, or to fight the plots of the Ba'al.



Dream Factions

In addition to the factions mentioned previously and described in the *Nightbane RPG*, two large groups have a great deal of influence in, and knowledge of, the Dreamstream. These two societies may serve as allies in the coming struggles against the Nightlords.

The Order of Morpheus

Although there have never been many dream makers or dream dancers in the world, there were enough for them to notice one another. Since time or distance means little in the Dreamstream, it was inevitable that those few psychics would cross paths. Some decided that a loose alliance would serve everyone's interest, so a handful were established. The Order of Morpheus is the largest and most successful such alliance.

The origins of the Order of Morpheus are lost in the mists of history and myth. Some legends claim that the Greek God of Dreams, Morpheus, is the founder of this group of psychics and magicians. Historical records show that the group existed and was already quite old during the time of the Roman Empire. At that time, the order operated covertly, mostly because its members did not wish to share their power over dreams with others. The members of the group went into hiding during the Christian Era for fear of persecution, and their existence has remained a closely guarded secret for centuries.

The goals of the Order are few but none are clearly defined. First, it is a mutual protection society; members are pledged to help each other out. Secondly, it is meant to make sure members and outsiders do not endanger the Dreamstream. During its history, the Order of Morpheus has discovered that careless and power-hungry Dream Makers have sometimes started dream storms by terrorizing large numbers of people. There are no specific rules, but if enough members feel that the actions of a dream psychic are endangering the stability of the Dreamstream, the Order will intervene. Finally, the group is supposed to share its collective knowledge among all members, who in turn, are expected to turn over all new discoveries to the society. This rule is often broken by greedy members who decide some information is too valuable to just give away.

In the ensuing decades, the membership of the Order fluctuated from a few dozen to several hundred. Major dream storms, like the upheaval caused by World War II, decimated the organization's ranks on several occasions. Dark Day was the last such upheaval, and the harbinger of worse things to come. The Order had been aware of the Nightlords for some time, but knew little about them. The Ba'al were powerful entities who lived in another world, and whose agents sometimes intruded into the dreams of humans. They had no reason to expect the horrors brought about by Dark Day and the subsequent invasion of both Earth and the Dreamstream.

At this point, the order is divided. About half of its members believe they must oppose the Ba'al with all their might. This faction has already destroyed hundreds of minions. Of the rest, some want to mind their own business and be left alone, fearing reprisals from Nightlords, while another faction is actually thinking about making a deal with the Nightlords. These traitors work in secret, and pretend to stand for neutrality while they prepare to do whatever it takes to ensure their own survival.

The Dream Riders

I was falling. An endless fall, no escape until I hit the ground. I screamed in terror.

*And woke up, covered in sweat, clutching one of the bed posts. I **hadn't** had a dream like this since I was a kid. I blinked in the darkness.*

"Liked the trip?" said a voice next to my bed. I looked around wildly.

*There were three of them surrounding my bed. A guy and two girls. They all looked my age, or younger. The guy was wearing a leather jacket, and his hair was all shaved off, except for three locks of hair, each colored a different color — red, yellow, blue. One of the girls was pale, wearing heavy black eyeliner and lip-stick, so that she looked like a ghost, her clothing partially hidden by a black trench coat. The other girl was blonde, and — **get** this — she was dressed like a cheerleader.*

*"Hello, **Doug**," the three chorused as one.*

I blinked and said nothing. I realize I must have looked pretty stupid. The cheerleader giggled. "Hey, Doug," the guy said. "We're going crazy. Wanna come along?"

The black-haired girl cut in. "We know you, Doug. We've seen you in your dreams. We know about your stepfather, what he does to you. We know you are thinking of running away."

*"But, **how**...?"*

*"**We're** Dream Dancers," the Cheerleader announced. "Well, except for **Jazmin**." She gestured towards the black-haired girl. "**She's** a Dream Maker."*

*"What we are is not important," Jazmin said. "But we can take you with us. I can't promise **it's** gonna be perfect. Or safe. But you will be free."*

This had to be a dream, but, frankly, I didn't care. "I'm there," I said.

Jazmin took my hand. My bed, my room, the hated house, they all vanished, and I entered the Dreaming.

The Dream Rider faction was created during the 1920s by young Dream Dancers and Dream Makers from all over the world; Europe and the U.S. in particular. Most of these dreamers were in their early 20s, and were part of what is now called the "lost generation," people who had lost faith in the world after experiencing the horrors of World War One. They saw the Dreamstream as a way to escape the horrors of the "real world," and decided to help other young people escape their own problems and suffering.

As the original members grew old, died or left the group, new Riders refreshed its ranks. A few Dream Makers, eternally young in their domains, remained behind to provide some guidance and advice. Over the years, the 1920s' "lost generation" members were replaced by Beatniks and bike-riding "rebels without a cause" from the 1950s, hippies in the '60s, punks and metal-heads in the '70s and '80s, and Generation X'ers and Gothic youths in the last decades of the 20th century. There are rarely more than a hundred Dream Riders at any given time, and they are divided into groups of 3-6 members.

The Dream Riders reject tradition and formality. Most of them come from broken homes, poor nations, slums and other places where living conditions are so bad that their desire for something better triggered their psychic ability to enter the **Dreamstream**. Most groups search for possible new candidates — people whose vivid dreams indicate latent psychic abilities. The candidates must also be young, no older than 20, and must be in need of escape from his or her current life. Some (if only a few) of the runaways that disappeared from broken homes did not meet a tragic end, but were rescued and taken into the Dreamstream.

On Earth, the Dream Riders live in makeshift quarters, usually abandoned buildings or houses; they have very little in the way of money or possessions. In the Dreamstream, they remake themselves, living in weird dream domains while they search for others of their kind. Since the Dark Day invasion, their mission has become two-fold; to rescue other dreamers, and to fight the minions of the **Ba'al**. The Dream Riders do not share most humans' fear of the **Nightbane** and have frequently come to their aid in the dreamstream. Currently, over a dozen young Nightbane with dream-oriented talents are part of the group.

Ba'al in the Dreamstream

The Nightlords have a number of servants who can enter the Dreamstream, from their own astral avatars to Necrophim (see *Astral Minions of the Nightlords*), as well as dream dwellers like the Soul Leeches and the **Morpheomoth** (see the *Dwellers of the Dreamstream* section). The Nightlords themselves have Dream Pools; shining pits of blackness or near-exact replicas of their Gothic cities and towers from the **Nightlands**. These Dream Pools are guarded by their minions, and are used as bases from which attacks on the dreaming worlds are launched.

Two seemingly unrelated events are the consequence of these attacks on dreaming humans. Since Dark Day, the number of unexplained disappearances has skyrocketed. By 2005, as many as 30,000 people were disappearing without a trace every year in the U.S. alone. Almost one-third of these disappearances are actually dream murders committed by the **Morpheomoth**, who drag their victims into their own Dream Pools and then devour them body and soul. The second trend is the increase of unexplained "bedside deaths." Tens of thousands of people are being found dead in their beds; common explanations offered include carbon monoxide poisoning, heart attacks, and strokes, despite the fact that later autopsies and investigations cannot confirm those explanations. These deaths are the work of Soul Leeches, a **transdi-**mensional species of psychic vampires that can kill people through the Dreamstream. Many people in the know, now believe that these killings are part of the Ba'al campaign to eventually exterminate all of humankind.

Would-be dream defenders have reacted by tracking down and killing all minions of the Nightlords they can find. Attempts to enter the **Nightlords'** dream domains have been largely unsuccessful, and those who have managed to go in often return insane — or do not return at all. Babbling of twisted nightmares coming to life, and monsters even more terrible than anything in the Nightlands are the only knowledge gained from those forays, so

far. It appears that the minds of the Ba'al's are so twisted and depraved that they can destroy most human beings who venture there.



Game Mastering the Dreamstream

Running adventures (or campaigns) centered around the Dreamstream can be a challenging but fun experience for Game Masters and players. Setting the mood is the key; the unexpected and strange must be combined with the familiar and commonplace in a unique blend that the players can follow.

One second, the dream travelers may find themselves in a perfectly normal setting: a city street, living room, park, or forest. Sometimes, little details change between eye-blinks. A wall painting may be missing the next time the characters look in that direction, or a flower seems to appear out of nowhere in the middle of a grassy patch. The scenery can **also** change suddenly and without warning; the living room may have different furniture, or may be in a different house, or may suddenly change into a busy street, with cars rushing down on the characters! Use your own memories of dreams and nightmares for inspiration.

Detailed background information about the player characters can also be very helpful. In the Dreamstream, their past can make an appearance without warning. The Game Master can also make up little elements of the characters' lives. For example, the former high school football coach of one of the charac-

ters might suddenly appear to give him a warning about an approaching danger. Or a long-dead relative or ex-boss might be called forth by a dweller in the Dreamstream to use against the character. Almost any element could have some hidden **meaning**, buried somewhere in the character's subconscious.

When the players enter somebody else's Dream Pool, they will have a unique chance to learn a great deal about that person. Say, for example, that the characters invade the dreams of a notorious Preserver Activist, someone they know has bullied and abused a number of people. Maybe the first thing they see is a little child, locked in a closet, while the loud screams of an argument can be heard outside. The closet looks much larger than normal; the Dream Pool's "reality" has been reshaped to **fit** the child's perspective. Suddenly, the closet doors open and a gigantic adult male (or female) reaches out to punish or scold the child. The child is the "**preevert**," reliving past abuses. Do the players take pity on the man, or do they decide to use this information against him? If they intervene in the dream and try to rescue the child, they face the danger of the abuser dream persona, who will be incredibly strong and powerful in this nightmare (again, from the child's perspective), and who will confront/attack those who challenge its authority/power. On the other hand, if they rescue the child, upon awakening the Preserver Activist may feel less anger and frustration against the world; if he runs into the players, he might feel friendly and trusting towards them, without really knowing why. Or he might feel unexplainably ashamed (he subconsciously knows they have discovered his dirty secrets) in their presence, which could result in a submissive, hostile, or aversion reaction. The role-playing and plot possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of the Game Master and players.

Dream Combat

Dream Travelers and creatures can fight each other on two separate levels. The first one is equivalent to "conventional" combat, relying on weapons and physical strength to carry the day. Dream Dancers and Dream Makers have bonuses to their strength and prowess thanks to their connection with the Dreamstream. The second level of dream combat involves manipulating the stuff of dreams themselves! Only Dream psychics (such as the Dancer and Maker), as well as some Dreamstream denizens, can exert their will over the dream **environment**, by reshaping "dream matter" around them, these characters can cause a variety of effects, from having pits suddenly appear under the feet of their enemies to making lightning bolts come out of their hands to stop or destroy their victims. The only limit to these effects are the degree of connection to the Dreamstream (determined by R.C.C. or P.C.C. bonuses and experience level) and the willpower (M.E.) of both the attacker and the victim.

Conventional dream combat works just as combat in the real world. Damage is taken from the "psychic S.D.C." of the characters or creatures. When reduced to negative S.D.C. (zero or below), the character can continue to function and take damage in an amount equal to the character's P.E. attribute points. **However**, if the damage exceeds the P.E. number the character dies! For example, if a character with a P.E. of 10 is reduced to 10 points below zero, he dies. Characters who are the psychic

constructs of the **dreamer's** subconscious are only destroyed for the moment and may be recreated the next time the sleeper dreams. However, such a death for dream-traveling humans, **Nightbanes**, Dream Dancers, Dream Makers and dream denizen means they die permanently.

If the dreamer's dream-self is "killed" in this manner he is not physically harmed most of the time, albeit the experience will be traumatic. Only a few psychics and supernatural beings have the power to slay a dreamer.

Note: Only weapons and equipment created from "dream stuff" work in the **Dreamstream**. Only a few rare artifacts and magical weapons are the exception. Magical and psychic abilities, as well as **Nightbane** talents, all work normally, with certain limitations described below.

Reality manipulation combat is conducted in a similar manner. The attacker (who must be a dream-controlling psychic or supernatural creature) tries to cause an effect to occur. The effect can be anything from setting a victim on fire to encasing him in ice; the *dream manipulator* is only limited by his imagination and his power level (fully described in the *Dreamstream P.C.C. section*). The attempt is resolved by rolling a D20 and adding any M.E. and P.C.C. or R.C.C. bonuses (see the individual classes and races for more information); a roll of 5 or higher is successful. The victim gets to counter the attack much like a parry or dodge; this "counter" is rolled by taking any M.E. bonuses, plus bonuses from psychic or Nightbane powers, if any.

If the attacking psychic wins, his attack succeeds and the target is injured. The amount of damage depends on the power of the dream psychic and NOT on the form of the attack. For example, a third level Dream Maker causes a giant boulder to land on top of a Necrophim; in the real world, such an attack might have inflicted hundreds of S.D.C. points of damage. In the Dreamstream, however, the maximum damage that a third level Dream Maker can inflict is 6D6, which is rolled against the monster. The same amount of damage would have been inflicted by a stream of molten lava, a lightning bolt, or a falling feather; all of them little more than special effects.

The **resistance roll** is the only defense against dream manipulation attacks. Some protective spells and psionic powers (like magic armor) will absorb damage inflicted, but the only way to avoid taking any damage is to successfully save against the dream attack. Normal parries or dodges are useless against dream manipulation, although they work fine against normal physical attacks, even in the Dreamstream.

Magic

Due to the ever-changing nature of the Dreamstream, a number of supernatural powers and abilities do not work exactly the same there. Also, the dream manipulation powers of several psychics and supernatural beings must be taken into account.

Magic: Most magic spells work normally in the Dreamstream. The main limitation is the ability of dream manipulating psychics or entities to negate magical effects at will. When a Dream Maker or Dream Dancer tries to neutralize a magical effect, the magician can try to "save" by using the bonuses listed below.

Magic Powers and Dream Combat: Magicians use their O.C.C. bonuses to save against magic and to resist dream manipulation powers, in addition to M.E. bonuses (do not, however, include P.E. bonuses, if any). So, for example, a 6th level Mystic with an average M.E. would be at +2 to counter dream manipulation attacks. If a dream manipulator tries to negate a magic effect, use the same bonuses to resist.

Example: Conrad is a 7th level sorcerer who has had the misfortune to enter the Dreamstream, where he is now facing a Living Nightmare. The Living Nightmare wins the initiative roll, and for its first attack, it tries to have a sudden bonfire appear around Conrad. The creature's Dream Manipulation bonus is +6; Conrad uses his +4 to save vs magic, plus he has a +1 from his high mental endurance, for a total bonus of +5. The Game Master and Conrad's player each roll a 20 sided die; the Living Nightmare's total is a 12; Conrad's is a 16 with bonuses. The bonfire flares up — and dies out an instant later, snuffed by Conrad's will. "You like fire, don't you?" Conrad hisses as he casts a spell against the monster. A fire ball leaps out of Conrad's hand and flies towards the Nightmare. This spell cannot be normally resisted (only dodged), but dream manipulators can try to negate the effect (this counts as one of the creature's attacks that round). The same rolls apply, and this time the Living Nightmare's roll is higher than Conrad's. The fire ball sputters and dies inches away from the creature's chest. "Crap," whispers the magician, and the battle rages on...

Spell Effects in the Dreamstream

Outlined below are some spell effects that have limitations or changes in the Dreamstream.

All Spells: Any and all spells can be countered by Dream Manipulators. Psychics and supernatural beings with this power have direct control over the "reality" of the Dreamstream, and can try to negate anything, from fire balls to magical healing! The attempts rely on the willpower (Mental Endurance) of the dream manipulator and the magician, P.C.C. or O.C.C. bonuses.

Spells whose duration is permanent (like healing) can only be negated while they are being cast, not after, but spells with a set duration can be negated at any time.

Only those who possess magic powers in the first place can cast magic in the realm of dreams, because they believe in magic and know they possess that power in the real world.

All Summoning and Banishing Rituals do not work in the Dreamstream, even those that summon Dream Entities.

Close Rift: The spell will close a *window* into the Dreamstream opened by a Dream Maker or dweller of the dream worlds.

Dimensional Portal: This spell can open a *window* into or out of the Dreamstream. The portal cannot lead into a specific Dream Pool or dream domain, but a magician inside either place can try to get out using it.



Psionic Powers & the Dreamstream

Most psionic powers work normally in the **Dreamstream**, except for the fact that *dream manipulators* like the Dream Maker can negate or resist *any* psychic effect, even those that cannot be normally resisted. To negate a psychic effect, however, the dream manipulator must defeat the willpower of the psionic character, as per the Dream Combat rules described previously.

Psionic Powers & Dream Combat

Characters with any kind of psionic powers have a +1 bonus to counter dream manipulation attacks that threaten them directly (see *Dream Combat*, above); add +1 at levels **five**, ten and fifteen. Characters who have the **Dreamdance** (Minor) psychic sensitive power get a +1 at first level and +1 at levels five, ten and fifteen. Those with Dreamdance (Superior) get a +1 at first level and +1 at levels three, five, eight, eleven and fourteen, if a Dream Makers or Dream Dancer P.C.C. use the bonuses listed under that character.

Mind Block: If a psionic character activates a mind block while in the Dreamstream, his dream-self will appear to be surrounded by an opaque energy field, usually dark red or blue. This shield protects with 100 S.D.C. plus 25 S.D.C. per level of the character, plus he gets a +1 bonus to resist any attacks using dream manipulation (cumulative with any other bonuses). The drawbacks are that the character becomes almost completely blind to his surroundings: automatically loses initiative, -8 to strike, parry and dodge, and cannot use any psionic powers or other abilities that require sensory input. The mind blocked character does not know where anything is, or where he is going if he moves, and cannot use dream manipulation or any non-physical ability in combat. Basically, by activating a mind block the character has isolated himself from the Dreamstream, which has both positive and negative effects.

Astral Projection/Astral Transference: Neither power can be activated while within the Dreamstream. Characters who arrived in the Dreamstream from the Astral Plane are temporarily transformed into dream entities, retaining their S.D.C. but losing their ability to fly and walk through walls.

Telepathy/Empathy: These powers can be used while looking at a Dream Pool from the outside. Telepathy will allow the psychic to "see" what dream is currently "playing" in the Dream Pool. Empathy just shows the emotions being evoked by the dream (sadness, fear, anger, love, etc.). If the person whose Dream Pool is being probed is awake, however, the membrane will act like a mind block. If the person wakes, the probe is instantly cut-off until the person falls back to sleep. These powers work normally on creatures encountered in the Dreamstream.

Presence Sense/See Aura: Both these powers will determine if a person or creature encountered in the Dreamstream is a mindless dream construct, a supernatural dweller of the dream worlds, or a human or supernatural visitor.

Nightbane Powers

Nightbanes in the Dreamstream must always assume their **morphus** form; if they try to change into their facades, the effect lasts only **a few** seconds before being "snapped" back into their morphus shape. Most of their talents work normally, except as noted below.

Talents and Dream Combat

Dream manipulators can affect the Nightbanes directly by creating magic-like effects (see the *Dream Maker P.C.C.* for more information). This can be resisted by the Nightbane as usual; use M.E. bonuses, plus the Nightbane gets a +1 to resist at levels 1, 5, 10 and 15.



Also, Dream Manipulators can negate any talent, even those that cannot be normally resisted! To do so, however, the dream psychic must overcome the willpower of the Nightbane; use the same bonuses listed to resist dream manipulation effects, above.

Talents in the Dreamstream

The Shroud can be easily pierced in this chaotic realm. Instead of making its user invisible, the shroud in the Dreamstream only requires a moderate perception roll (8 or better) to detect the Nightbane.

See Truth will reveal if a dream creature is an actual independent being or a mere reflection of a dream without true will or personality.

Soul Shield will work exactly like the psionic mind block power (see psychic abilities in the Dreamstream, which appeared previously), giving a great deal of protection but blinding and slowing down the character.

Dreamstream™ Character Classes



Dream Maker P.C.C.

The repetitive blaring of the alarm burned through his sleep. Grunting, **Karl** Morris reached towards his nightstand to turn it off. It sure *didn't* feel like morning.

His hand hit empty air. The nightstand *wasn't* there. The alarm continued blaring, but the sound seemed to be behind him, not to his left as it should have. Karl opened his eyes.

He wasn't in his room anymore. His bed was precariously balanced on the tip of some long pole. Karl glanced over the edge of the bed and wished he *hadn't*; the height was dizzying, terrifying.

"Karl, this is your wake-up call," said a female voice.

Karl turned around. Floating in the air was a young woman, dressed in black jeans, tank top and trench coat. Between the fear and disorientation, it took him a couple of seconds to recognize her. She was June, that young temp they had hired to answer the phone while the regular secretary was on vacation. June smiled. The alarm clock was in her hand, still blaring. With a casual gesture, she crushed the tough plastic between her fingers. Electronic guts fell from the smashed clock, falling into the abyss below.

Karl grabbed on to the bedposts, gripping them with strength increased by terror. The sudden movement made the bed sway on its precarious balance point. He screamed.

June started speaking calmly. "Last year, your company dumped tons of untreated chemical waste in the city sewer system. You endangered hundreds of lives by doing so. Now you are going to go to the authorities and confess your crimes or..."

The bed disappeared; for a second, he hung suspended in the air, *just* like June. And then he fell into the abyss, screaming all the way ...

... and woke up with a start, clutching sweat-dampened sheets. Even in the darkness he could recognize the familiar surroundings of his bedroom. A dream! All it had been was a dream. "Just a dream," he told himself.

"When I'm involved, mister, it's never just a dream," June said. She was sitting on his nightstand. The bed, his bedroom, and reality dissolved, and he could see the abyss gaping below him once more. "Remember, Karl. If you *don't* give yourself up, I'll be back!" Her last words followed him as he started falling once again ...

And woke up once again in his bed, crying like a child.

Karl Morris turned himself in that morning. In prison, he was treated for a number of sleep disorders. It was years before he had a good *night's* sleep again.

Dream Makers are the self-styled "rulers of the Dream Worlds." Like the Astral Lords, these psychics are very powerful and influential in one area, in this case, the Dreamstream. The unique psionic abilities of the Dream Makers allow them to manipulate the "reality" of the dream worlds, reshaping dreams at

will. With their powers, they can turn a pleasant dream into a nightmare, and vice versa. They can take other people with them into the **Dreamstream**, and reinforce their Dream Pools to create their own private domains.

Although Dream Makers come from all walks of life, they share a number of common origins. Many are people with little use for, or interest in, the "real" world, whether it's because they find it too drab or boring, or because their lives are beset with suffering, or lack meaning. From their earliest years, their dreams were particularly vivid and memorable, to the point that some of them found themselves unable to distinguish between dream **and** reality. Those who do not lose their minds slowly start discovering the fact that the Dreamstream is a world unto itself, and that they have enormous power in that world.

At first, these psychics can only enter the Dreamstream while they are asleep, in a manner similar to astral projection. After months or years of practice, Dream Makers discover they can actually enter into the Dreamstream physically, leaving no body behind. The length of time they can spend in the dreaming worlds is at first limited, but as they become more powerful they can finally stay there indefinitely. They also discover that they can reshape the reality of the Dreamstream almost at will, limited only by their personal energy reserves and by the willpower of other people or entities around them. They also have the unique ability to **Dreamkill**, destroying a person's dream persona and causing that death to affect his physical body as well.

Many Dream Makers choose to abandon the waking world for good, and spend the rest of their lives (which may be hundreds or thousands of years in the Dreamstream) living in their personal dream worlds. Unfortunately for those dreamers, such a choice exacts a price on their sanity. The ever-changing realm of dreams will take its toll, and eventually these dream hermits find themselves unable to distinguish between the creations of their mind and reality at large. Some of them end up believing that the entire universe is nothing but a figment of their imagination. These Mad Dreamers are some of the most dangerous beings to encounter in the stream, for they have no compunctions about killing anybody — why should they, since they don't think other people are real?

Most Dream Makers manage to walk the tightrope between power and madness, and do not lose touch with the waking world. They sometimes use their abilities to achieve their goals on Earth, whatever they may be. Some Dream Makers become thieves, spies, mercenaries or even assassins. Others act as crusaders or vigilantes, using their dream abilities to punish the guilty or to fight for a cause. Others become explorers of the human psyche, traveling from Dream Pool to Dream Pool, studying human nature, sharing emotions, and, from time to time, lending a hand. Since Dark Day and the invasion of the Dreamstream, many **Dream** Makers are now **spending** most of their efforts trying to stop the Nightlords.

Dream Maker P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Dream Travel: Dream Makers can enter the Dreamstream psychically or physically. In the first case, the characters leave their body in the real world, while in the second way they enter the Dreamstream bodies and soul.

The first method has the advantage of being comparatively safe, because if the Dream Maker's dream-self is injured or even

killed while his body is on Earth, he will wake up from a bad dream, but is likely to survive the experience. This is balanced against the fact that the physical body is helpless while the character's consciousness wanders the Dreamstream — the Dream Maker has no awareness of its condition. This power works exactly like the psionic power *Dreamdance* (*Minor*).

At second level experience, the character can convert his entire body into a dream construct and enter the Dreamstream, body and soul. This means that if the character is killed in the dream realm, he is destroyed! Of course, some dream creatures, including other Dream Makers, can kill both the physical body and the dream projection! This incredible transformation is exactly like the psionic power *of Dreamdance* (*Superior*).

Duration: In both cases, the psychic can stay in the Dreamstream up to 4 hours per level of experience per 24 hour period. These hours can be split in any way the character wants, but every time he enters the Dreamstream he "spends" ten minutes' worth of real time, even if he only stays for a few seconds. At sixth level and beyond, the psychic can stay in the Dreamstream indefinitely. **I.S.P. Cost:** None for this Psychic Character Class.

2. Dream Manipulation: This power enables the psychic to reshape the landscape of a dream, or of the immediate area of the Dreamstream. While inside a Dream Pool, the character can alter the course of a dream in any way he wants, as long as he can overcome the dreamer's will. This is done as per the *Dream Combat* rules described elsewhere; both the Dream Maker and the dreamer affected roll a D20, plus any applicable bonuses (most normal people only get to add in their M.E. bonuses, if any). If the psychic wins, he can make the dream look like anything he/she can envision. A frightening landscape will have a maximum horror factor of 8 plus the **character's** level (maximum 18; if the player's description of the dream shape is creative and imaginative enough, the Game Master may raise the H.F. by as much as +3). To actually harm the dreamer or other dream dwellers, see Dream Attacks, below. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 I.S.P. per minute.

3. Dream Attacks: By manipulating the reality of dreams, the character can inflict damage on other dream travelers or dwellers; this damage can be lethal and is one of the dangers of actually entering the Dreamstream. When attacking a dreamer, however, damage is mostly mental in nature. As a rule, "killing" a person in his dreams results in the imaginary death of his dream persona, causing him to wake up terrified (equal to a H.F. 17!), but otherwise unharmed. Only the powerful ability of *Dreamkill* (see #8) can actually harm a dreamer.

Normal dream attacks require a "roll to strike" using dream manipulation bonuses. This roll can be resisted or countered; see *Dream Combat* for more information. If the psychic overwhelms the victim's resistance, he can inflict 4D6 points of damage at level one, plus 1D6 per each additional level of experience. This damage can be manifested in any way the attacker desires. In the dream-state, the Dream Maker can cause a piece of furniture to fly and strike the victim (or actually charge and ram a foe), or cause the target to be engulfed in flames, call down lightning on the spot, or any effect he wishes. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 I.S.P. per attack.

4. Dream Manipulation/Combat Bonuses: +2 at level one, plus an additional +1 at levels two, four, seven, ten, thirteen and fifteen, in addition to M.E. bonuses. These bonuses are used to

attack dream entities, reshape dreams, and resist dream manipulation/attacks.

Also, Dream Makers can heal themselves in the Dreamstream, getting back 1D6 S.D.C. for every one **I.S.P.** spent; this healing counts as one melee action.

5. Create Dream Object: The Dream Maker can create objects from "thin air" at will. The only limitations are his imagination and ability to visualize the object. While weapons can be created, the amount of damage they can do is limited by the character's raw power (level of experience). **Size:** The object created can fill one cubic foot (0.03 **cu.m**) per level of the psychic. **S.D.C.:** The maximum S.D.C. of the object is three times the S.D.C. of a "real" equivalent object, or 20 S.D.C. per level of the psychic, whichever is less. **Damage:** A weapon does the equivalent damage of a real weapon, or up to 2D6 per level of the caster, whichever is more. Range is as per a real weapon; all guns/missile weapons have an inexhaustible supply of ammunition. **I.S.P. Cost:** 12 I.S.P. per two minutes.

6. Increase Attributes: The character can raise his *physical* attributes while in the **Dreamstream**. The actual increase is limited by the character's willpower (M.E.) and costs I.S.P. to maintain. P.S. and P.E. can be raised by +1 per M.E. point (i.e., a character with P.S. 8 in the real world and an M.E. of 15 could raise his P.S. to 23 while in the Dreamstream). P.P. can be increased by +1 per 4 points of M.E., rounded down (in the previous example, the character could add +3 to his P.P.). S.D.C. can be increased by M.E. x3 (+45 S.D.C. for an M.E. of 15, for example). **Duration:** Two minutes per level of experience. **I.S.P. Cost:** 5 per attribute (P.S., P.E., P.P. or S.D.C.) increased; each attribute must be "paid for" separately. Any one attribute can be raised individually, or all four can be increased for a total of 20 I.S.P.

7. Open Window to the Dreamstream: This is one of the most powerful and dangerous abilities of the Dream Maker. By spending I.S.P., the psychic can temporarily create a rip (or Rift) in the barrier separating the real world from the Dreamstream. Through this window, the Dream Maker can bring anybody into the Dreamstream; anybody (human or supernatural) who crosses through the window is temporarily transformed into a dream entity, with S.D.C. equal to their normal S.D.C. and hit points combined, and can use all their abilities and powers in the Dreamstream, with the limitations described in the *Dream Combat* section.

If a window is opened while the psychic is inside the Dream Pool of a slumbering person, he can also use it to enter the physical world anywhere within 100 feet (30.5 m) from the dreamer's actual location! This would allow the Dream Maker in the U.S. to, for example, enter the Dream Pool of a dreamer in France, and exit the Dream Pool in that part of **the world!** The one limitation is that the psychic must know somebody who is sleeping in France at that moment — entering a random Dream Pool can place the psychic anywhere in the world! It is always best to approach the Dream Pool people one knows.

The "window" phenomenon is clearly visible as a hole or tear in the air. As soon as it is opened, strange colored lights start flashing all around in a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius around the opening. People glancing into the window can often see visions from their own Dream Pools, and, if they fail a save vs psionics, they

are temporarily stunned for 1D4 rounds (lose initiative and one melee attack during those rounds).

More importantly, however, creatures from the Dreamstream can temporarily enter the real world! Every round that the window is open, there is a cumulative 20% chance that something or somebody will slip out. By the fifth melee round, there is a 100% chance that something will come out of the window. After the first creature comes through, the chances of an additional entity appearing drop back to a cumulative 20% per subsequent round (15 seconds). These denizens of the Dreamstream get all their usual powers and abilities, and can easily hurt or kill people, destroy property, and perform all kinds of mayhem. The entities can only exist within 300 feet (91.5 m) from the window, but they can do a lot of mischief or mayhem if left unchecked. If the window is closed the creatures instantly disappear. **Duration:** Two minutes per level of experience. The character who opened the window can close it any time he desires before the maximum duration time elapses. **I.S.P. Cost:** 60

8. Dreamkill: This is the most powerful ability of the Dream Maker — the power to actually kill a human while he sleeps. First, the psychic has to "kill" the victim's dream-self by destroying its S.D.C. (dream persona only has **S.D.C.**). Then, the psychic has to immediately spend 60 I.S.P. plus permanently sacrifice two I.S.P. to attempt to kill the dreamer's physical body! The intended victim gets a save versus psionic attack. If the save fails, the victim is automatically reduced to negative 2D6 points (-2 to -12 points). If this is greater than the victim's physical endurance (P.E.), he or she dies automatically. Otherwise, the victim slips into a coma, with the same chances of survival described in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 37. **I.S.P. Cost:** 60 I.S.P. plus 2 I.S.P. are permanently sacrificed.

9. Create Dream Domain: By manipulating *dreamstuff* and investing some of his own psychic energy, the character can strengthen his personal Dream Pool. Unlike astral domains, all the Dream Maker is achieving is protecting his "dream home" from intrusion and making it easier to travel to and from it.

By permanently sacrificing 5 I.S.P., the membrane of his domain will be nearly impossible to breach by dream creatures or psychics (gains the equivalent of a +15 to save versus dream manipulation attacks). A dimensional portal leading to a spot on Earth, the **Nightlands** or a specific region of the Astral Plane can be created at the cost of 15 permanent I.S.P. Activating this portal takes one minute (this can be reduced to one melee round at the cost of 10 more permanent I.S.P.). These portals are two-way, and can be used to travel to and from the Dream Domain. Portals can be made movable (i.e., linked to an item that can be moved, such as a mirror, a carpet or similar object) for an additional permanent 5 I.S.P., but if the object is destroyed, the portal is lost. That is the extent of the control the Dream Maker can exert over his Dream Pool. His dream personas are still independent, although a Dream Maker can usually intimidate and dominate all such constructs, and many will be eager to serve their creator. **I.S.P.:** Variable as described above.

10. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to his powers over dreams, the character has some minor psionic abilities. Select two powers from the sensitive category at level one and select an additional power from the sensitive category at levels three, six, nine and twelve.

11. I.S.P.: M.E. x5 plus 2D6 per level of experience.

12. Insanity: The Price of Power: The constant exposure to the ever-mutating environment of the **Dreamstream** will often take its toll on the character. Every time the character reaches a new level of experience (starting at second level), he must make a save versus insanity (use M.E. bonuses, if any). If the save failed, roll on the following table:

01-30% Short-Term Temporary Insanity: Roll on the second Random Insanity Table (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 45), but the effects only last 2D4 days.

31-60% Long-Term Temporary Insanity: As above, but the effects last 3D4 weeks.

61-80% Permanent Insanity! The effects of the Random Insanity roll are permanent unless the character undergoes therapy or other cure (see the *Nightbane RPG*, page 47).



81-90% Fear of Dream Monsters! The character develops a phobia about monsters in the Dreamstream. These include Nightlord minions as well as nightmarish personas and monsters that may exist in a Dream Pool. He or she functions fine, with all the powers of their P.C.C. until **confronted by** a monster. This long lasting phobia will plague the character for 3D4 months! If the character should get this insanity more than three times in his life, the phobia becomes permanent!

91-00% Fear of Dreaming: The character will be terrified of the Dreamstream, and will actively try to avoid dreaming (will resist sleep at all costs, even resorting to stimulants to stay awake). This temporary state will last 1D6 days; during which time the character will be unable to access the Dreamstream or any dream powers and loses all P.C.C. bonuses to resist dream

manipulation attacks. After missing sleep for over 24 hours, the character will be at -1 to all combat actions and -5% on all skills. This is increased by an additional -1 and -5% respectively every consecutive day. After 4 days, a save of 14 or higher is required to avoid collapsing from exhaustion.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 14 or higher; exclusive to humans.

P.C.C. Skills: The skills below reflect the fact that most dream makers do not spend a great deal of time or effort in the "real world." Some character backgrounds may allow for more skills or greater skill bonuses. Such changes are ultimately left to the game master to allow or not, but even then the range of skills will be limited.

Language and literacy: Native language (98%)

Lore: Dreamstream (+25%)

Two technical skills of choice (+10%)

Two domestic skills of choice (+10%)

Hand to hand: basic can be selected as an "other" skill, hand to hand: expert at the cost of two "other" skills, or martial arts (or assassin if an evil alignment) at the cost of three "other" skills.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, **five**, eight, eleven and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency. Skills should reflect the character's background. Game masters should feel free to disallow any skill that makes no sense given the character's history — or to allow a character to get a restricted skill if the player can come up with a good enough reason for it.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any (+10%)

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Wilderness survival only.

Mechanical: Any

Medical: First aid, paramedic or holistic medicine only.

Military: None

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+5%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+5%)

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Most Dream Makers have little interest in the waking world, and own very little there. Depending on the character's background, the game master can allow them to purchase up to 3D6x1000 dollars' worth of equipment and possessions, limited by legality and availability. Common possessions include a vehicle (a few Dream Makers are known to favor old vans, often painted in wild and garish colors) and such basics as clothing, shelter and food.

Money: 2D6x100 dollars in cash for most Dream Makers; this may be adjusted by the game master to reflect the player's background.

Dream Dancer P.C.C.

Explorers and travelers, Dream Dancers are psychics who can enter the Dreamstream at will, although they lack most of the powerful abilities of the Dream Maker. The Dancers have a great deal of control over their own dream-selves, and can reshape themselves, raise their attributes, and resist dream manipulation attacks. They cannot build Dream Domains, kill people in their dreams, or open windows into or out of the Dreamstream. On the other hand, they tend to have a wider variety of psychic powers in addition to their dream abilities. In some ways, their reduced ability to affect the reality of the Dreamstream is a blessing in disguise, as Dream Dancers are not prone to falling prey to insanity.

The distinction between Dream Dancers and Dream Makers is often lost to "outsiders," but there is an ongoing rivalry between the two groups. Dream Makers tend to look down on their less powerful brethren, while the Dancers often consider their counterparts to be half-insane, power-hungry psychotics. This rivalry is not actively hostile, however, and both the Order of Morpheus and the Dream Riders (see the *Dream Factions* section) include Dream Makers and Dancers.

Dream Dancer P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Dream Travel: Dream Dancers can enter the Dreamstream psychically or physically. In the first case, they leave their body in the real world, while in the second way they enter the Dreamstream body and soul. The two abilities work exactly like the psionic powers **Dreamdance** (Minor) and **Dreamdance** (Superior) respectively.

More importantly, Dream Dancers can leave the Dreamstream at the physical location they started from (as per the **Dreamdance** power), or they can also choose to leave within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the location of any sleeping person whose Dream Pool they have entered. This allows Dream Dancers to cover great distances on Earth by traveling from a dreamer's location to the next. However, the Dream Dancer is limited by the fact that entering a Dream Pool at random can take him anywhere in the world. The only sure way to get to a desired destination is to know the person whose Dream Pool one is entering, and to know where that person is sleeping at that time. **Example:** Roger, Dream Dancer extraordinaire, needs to get from Vancouver to Los Angeles in a hurry. His problem is, the only person he knows in California is an old girlfriend, an aspiring actress he has not seen in years. Roger decides to chance it anyway, enters the Dreamstream and searches for his ex-girlfriend's Dream Pool; it takes him a while (see the *Dreamdance* psionic power for more information), and then he has to wait until she falls asleep, but he finally gets into her Dream Pool. Unfortunately, she is having a nasty nightmare. Roger decides to be a pal, helps her out of the nightmare, gives her a good-bye kiss for old times' sake, and leaves the Dreamstream. As it turns out, his ex is spending the night in a Beverly Hills mansion; Roger materializes under her bed, and sneaks out of the house. If he had been less lucky, the woman might have moved to New York or anywhere in the world, so Roger's dream trip would have been a waste. **Duration:** Indefinite; Dream Dancers can stay in the

Dreamstream as long as they wish. **I.S.P. Cost:** None; automatic for this character.

2. Dream Manipulation: The Dream Dancer can alter the "reality" of the Dreamstream, but to a lesser degree than the Dream Maker. Most of the dancer's powers work only on himself, and have little effect over others. On the other hand, dream dancers are nearly immune to the dream manipulation powers of other entities and psychics in the dream worlds. See the *Reshape Self* and *Increase Attributes* powers, below. The character can resist any dream manipulation directed towards him; he can also counteract any spells, psionic powers or other supernatural abilities directed towards him, but not any ability affecting others, or the environment around him.

Dream Dancers can also heal themselves in the same manner as the Dream Maker, restoring 1D6 S.D.C. for every one **I.S.P.** spent; this healing counts as one melee action.

3. Reshape Self: The character can change his/her shape while in the Dreamstream. The shape can be as attractive or horrific as the character wishes. Additionally, the dream dancer can try to mimic the forms of actual people, such as famous personalities, people in a dreamer's memories, etc. **I.S.P. Cost:** Varies. The base cost is 5 points to alter one's shape; basic P.B. of the form is 10. By spending additional **I.S.P.**, the character can increase the attractiveness of the character or can give himself a horror factor. This costs one **I.S.P.** per +1 to P.B. (maximum 24 for 14 **I.S.P.**, 19 **I.S.P.** total), or +1 to horror factor (starts out at 0; maximum H.F. 17 for 17 points, 22 **I.S.P.** total).

Trying to simulate a real person requires a skill roll (30% +5% per level of experience, plus **I.Q.** bonuses, if any). If the person to be simulated is well known or is somebody the character has spent a great deal of time studying, the roll is at +5 to +15% (G.M.'s call). The attempt costs an additional 10 **I.S.P.** **Example:** Joanne, a 7th level Dream Dancer, has entered the Dream Pool of a Preserver activist she wishes to scare. She decides to take on the appearance of the character's mother, who has often appeared in the person's nightmares. She wishes to make her really terrifying, so Joanne enhances the impersonation with a horror factor of 15. The transformation costs 10 **I.S.P.**, plus the horror factor and base cost which raises the total to 30 **I.S.P.** Her base skill roll to take on the form of the victim's mother is 65%; she succeeds. The victim dreams that his abusive mother has come back from the grave, and is standing in front of him, covered in mold, pointing an accusatory finger at him. The game master rules that the way Joanne contrived her appearance raises the horror factor to 18! The character wakes up screaming and howling, and gets no more sleep that night.

4. Increase Attributes: The character can raise his physical attributes while in the Dreamstream. The actual increase is limited by the character's willpower (M.E.) and costs **I.S.P.** to maintain. P.S. and P.E. can be raised by +1 per each M.E. point (i.e., a character with P.S. 8 in the real world and an M.E. of 15 could raise his P.S. to 23 while in the Dreamstream). P.P. can be increased by +1 per 4 points of M.E., rounded down (in the previous example, the character could add +3 to his P.P.). S.D.C. can be increased by M.E. x3 (+45 S.D.C. for an M.E. of 15, for example). **Duration:** 2 minutes per level of experience. **I.S.P. Cost:** 5 per attribute (P.S., P.E., P.P. or S.D.C.) increased; each attribute must be "paid for" separately. Any one attribute can be raised individually, or all four can be increased for a total of 20 **I.S.P.**



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5. Dream Combat Bonuses: +2 at level one, +1 at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen, in addition to M.E. bonuses, if any.

6. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to his powers over dreams, the character has some minor psionic abilities. Select one power from each of the sensitive, healing and physical categories at level one, for a total of three psionic powers. Every level after the first, select one power from any of those three categories.

7. I.S.P.: M.E. x3 plus 2D6 per level of experience.

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 12 or higher.

P.C.C. Skills: Dream Dancers often spend so much time wandering the Dreamstream that they learn little about the ways of the world. Many of them, however, had harsh childhoods, often in the slums of cities or in poor Third World countries; the skill list below reflects this life. Modifications and additions based on the character's background may be made at the game master's discretion.

Language and literacy: Native language (98%)

Lore: Dreamstream (+20%)

Two technical skills of choice (+10%)

Two domestic skills of choice (+5%)

One rogue skill of choice (+10%)

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to hand: basic can be changed to hand to hand: expert at the cost of one "other" skill or to martial arts (or assassin if an evil alignment) at the cost of two "other" skills.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, five, eight, eleven and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency. Skills should reflect the character's background. Game masters should feel

free to disallow any skill that makes no sense given the character's history — or to allow a character to get a restricted skill if the player can come up with a good enough reason for it.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Wilderness survival only.

Mechanical: Any

Medical: First aid, paramedic or holistic medicine only.

Military: None

Physical: Any

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+5%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+5%)

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Most Dream Dancers spend most of their time in the dream worlds, and own very little beyond the clothes on their back. Some use their dream travel ability to commit crimes to further their finances, but most of them do not see the need for this. Starts out with 1D6×100 dollars in equipment.

Money: Typically 1D4×100 dollars in cash.

Denizens of the Dreamstream

Dream Ghouls

They are the monsters under the bed, the bogey-men in the closet, the mischievous little things that follow you in your dreams, the ones you are so afraid to see if you turn around. They are the Dream Ghouls. Fear for your children, for sometimes the Ghouls can slip through the cracks between realities, and make their worst fears come true.

— *J'inn Al Kadhim, Dream Maker*

These strange denizens of the Dreamstream are small creatures, rarely taller than four feet (1.2 m) in height. Beyond that generality, their individual looks have little in common, except they are embodiments of the fears and nightmares suffered by small children. Some look like disfigured goblins, while others have animal features, or look like malicious animated dolls and toys. These creatures are the monsters that haunt the dark domains under the bed, under the stairs, closets, and imaginations of most childhoods. In the Dreamstream they sometimes travel in small packs, and may attack a lone dream traveler, bringing him down and consuming his psychic body for nourishment.

They often make their homes in the Dream Pools of young children, and may attack intruders from ambush.

Unlike most dwellers of the dream worlds, dream ghouls can sometimes materialize in the physical world without the need of portals or other supernatural means. Very imaginative children (who also tend to have the most potential psychic energy) sometimes release enough energy through their dreams to allow the little monsters to slip through. Once in the real world, the dream ghouls have a physical body and can be extremely dangerous. For the most part, they hide in the shadows and under furniture. Some reshape themselves to look like a favorite toy (which they smash to bits and then hide under carpets or beds); usually a doll or stuffed animal. Then they start draining the energy of the child who brought them into the real world, slowly feeding on the victim's life force and psychic energy (P.P.E.).

Children victimized by a dream ghouls are sickly and weak, often suffering from the symptoms of asthma. Where they once were creative and vivacious, the drained victim will be listless, morose and uncommunicative. Left unchecked, the ghouls has a 10% chance of eventually killing the child! Many such deaths are attributed to "crib death" (in the case of infants) or other "ra-

tional" maladies. Most of the time, however, the ghoul stores enough energy to suit its purposes, and then enters the victim's Dream Pool, becoming a regular inhabitant there and haunting the unfortunate child for years to come. Some dream ghouls remain in their victims' Dream Pools even after they reach adulthood. Some torment the person until the day he dies. Others move on to better (younger) victims. A small percentage of these monsters, especially those who kill the child they are linked to, actually remain on the material world, preying on small animals and other children. A few hide in parks, forests and backyards; the fairy tales of "trolls under the bridge" may originate with these creatures.

In the **Dreamstream**, wandering groups of 2D4 dream ghouls will attack seemingly weak prey. The most daring of these creatures will face lone **Nightbane** or groups of 2-3 human Dream Dancers, but they will flee from Dream Makers, more than one Nightbane, or large bands of dream travelers. The creatures fight with claws and teeth, and sometimes with small hand weapons (knives, scissors, razors, ice picks, short swords and hand axes are common among them).

In the Dream Pool of an individual, there are rarely more than one or two of these beings; dream ghouls are very territorial about their "dream dens." Anybody who enters the pool may be attacked, usually from behind. Dream pool ghouls have the ability to shape and twist the dream environment to create nightmarish events and images. These powers are similar to, but less powerful than, Dream Maker abilities, but they make the ghoul a dangerous adversary.

Some dream ghouls will form alliances with evil Dream Personas, minions of the Nightlords (rare), and other dream monsters (also a rarity). The most common ally of these ghouls is the Night Terror, described below. The worst enemies of these creatures are the Mountebanks (see the *Astral Dweller* section) who sometimes make their way into the Dreamstream; the two groups of predators and scavengers will attack each other on sight.

Note: Dream Ghouls are monster **NPCs**, not meant to be used as player characters.

Alignment: Usually miscreant or diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D4, M.E. 3D4, M.A. 3D4, P.S. 4D6, **P.P. 4D6**, P.E. 5D6, P.B. 2D4, Spd. 4D6. Supernatural attributes.

Size: 1-4 feet tall (0.3-1.2 m). **Weight:** 5-80 lbs. (2.25-36 kg)

S.D.C./Hit Points: No hit points (psychic energy beings).

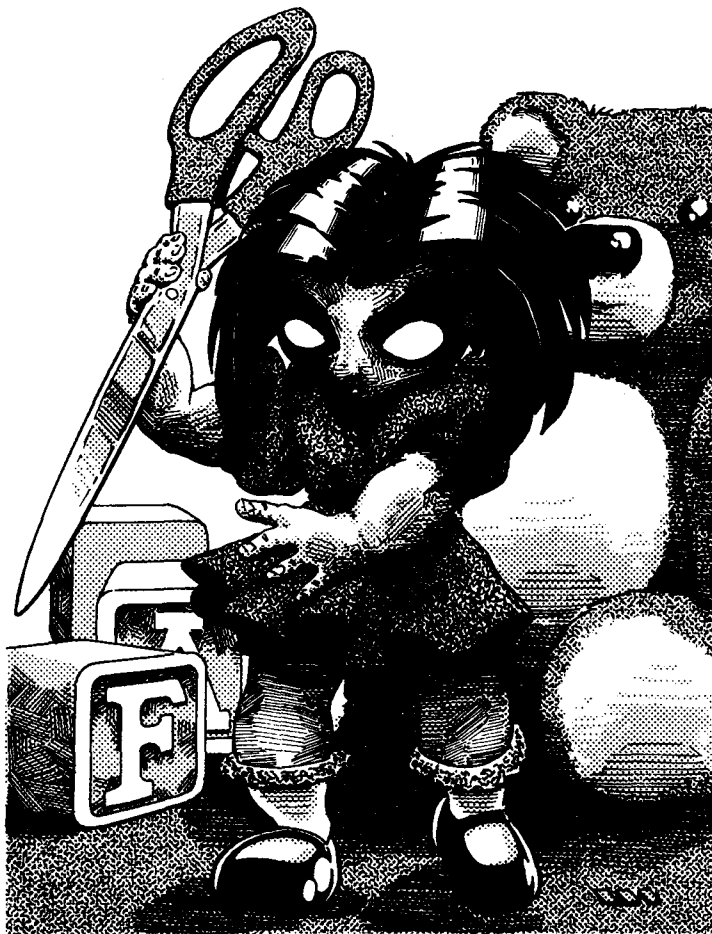
S.D.C.: 1D6x10 plus P.E. attribute, both on Earth and the Dreamstream.

Horror Factor: 1D4+10

P.P.E.: 1D6+2

Natural Abilities:

1. Dream Manipulation: The creatures can manipulate Dreamstuff to produce terrifying **images**, but unlike more powerful dream psychics they cannot actually cause damage, create solid objects or weapons, or raise their own attributes. The creations of dream ghouls are flimsy illusions with only one S.D.C. point per cubic foot (0.03 cu.m) of size. The illusions can have a horror factor of 10, +1 per level of the ghoul (maximum H.F. 18); adults and teenagers (anybody over twelve) are at +4 to save versus this horror factor. A perception roll (with the same difficulty as the horror factor) can determine that the shape is only an illusion. Add any bonuses to resist dream manipulation to the



perception roll (see Dream Combat for more information). This ability costs no I.S.P. or P.P.E. to activate.

2. Psychic Vampirism: The creatures can feed on the fear they cause in their victims. Every time a dreamer fails to save against the horror factor of one of the ghoul's creations, he temporarily loses half of his P.P.E., which the ghoul uses to sustain itself. The dream ghoul can feed in this manner up to three times each night. Every time, half of the victim's remaining P.P.E. is absorbed. Some children, especially young ones, have a lot more P.P.E. than a normal adult (3D6 to 4D6 P.P.E., versus 1D6 for most normal teenagers or adults); if a dream ghoul manages to absorb 15 or more P.P.E. from a single victim, it may be able to materialize in the waking world (see #3, below).

3. Enter Physical World: If a Dream Ghoul manages to absorb over 15 P.P.E. in one night, it has a 20% chance of materializing in the physical world. Each subsequent night it manages to absorb 15 or more points, this chance is increased by another 20%; five such nights will guarantee success. Once the dream ghoul enters the real world, it will go into hiding and continue to drain its victim's P.P.E. This draining is more serious than the one done through the Dream Pool. Unlike the former case, the drain is long-lasting, and the child cannot regain P.P.E. by just resting (the only way is to exorcise or otherwise find and destroy the dream ghoul, or be able to get the child away from it for a long vacation).

When a child loses over half of his/her P.P.E., he or she will become weak, tired and listless. Infants will be unusually quiet, and older children will be sleepy and depressed. If the child is reduced to 2 P.P.E. or less, they will look pale, and their skin will feel cold and clammy. A child reduced to zero P.P.E. has a 1-



10% chance of dying. If the victim survives the ordeal, his Physical Endurance and P.P.E. will be permanently reduced by one point each. Most dream ghouls will turn to another victim at that point, although a few will actually keep on feeding until the victim's death.

The absorbed P.P.E. is stored by the ghoul as an energy reserve that it can use to heal itself (see healing powers), or convert it to I.S.P. to perform its psychic powers. Some occultists believe that a Dream Ghoul that absorbs enough P.P.E. will become a larger, more powerful creature. If the game master chooses to allow this option, a ghoul who absorbs over 100 P.P.E. will get a +5 to all attributes, double its S.D.C., and grow 1D4 feet (0.3 to 1.2 m) in size! At this point the creature will be a threat to adults as well as children.

Dream Ghouls in the physical world can reenter the Dreamstream, but doing so will cause all unused P.P.E. to be lost, and they will have to start from scratch to return. The same will happen if the creature is successfully exorcised or otherwise expelled from the waking world.

4. Partial Invisibility: Dream Ghouls in the physical world are nearly invisible to the average person. Adults with less than 5 P.P.E. and no psychic abilities can only see the fiend if the creature attracts attention to itself and then stands motionless in an open, clear area (something the monsters would almost never do). Adults with more than 5 P.P.E. will be able to sense the presence of the Dream Ghouls, usually as an unexplained feeling of anxiety or nervousness, and will be able to see the creature if it attracts attention to itself (as long as it remains even partially hidden, however, the human will not "see" it). Psychics, animals (especially dogs and cats), children and teenagers under the age of seventeen will be able to both sense the creature's presence and will see the Dream Ghoul, but only if it fails a prowl roll, doesn't try to hide/prowl, or if it does not have a good hiding place. Cameras, motion detectors and other mechanical and electronic sensors will only register blurs of light, the equivalent of a breeze (for motion detectors) and an area of about one cubic foot (0.03 m) where the temperature drops 10 degrees Fahrenheit from the ambient temperature (for heat detectors). Thermal sights can detect this temperature differential, but even then the creature is a tough target to spot (-2 to strike, and requires a called shot).

5. Regeneration: Dream ghouls heal from any damage inflicted (on the physical world or the **Dreamstream**) at the rate of one point per hour. Additionally, the creatures can spend any accumulated P.P.E. to heal themselves at the rate of 1D4 S.D.C. per every one P.P.E. spent.

6. Dream Combat Bonuses: +1 to counter dream manipulation at levels 1, 2, 4, and 7.

Combat: Three attacks per melee at level one; add one additional attack per melee at levels four and eight.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S., Dream Ghouls with sharp teeth will have a bite attack inflicting from 1D6 to 4D6 S.D.C., depending on the size of the creature and its jaws.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +3 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +3 save vs magic, +5 to save vs horror factor. All these are in addition to attribute bonuses.

Magic Powers: None

Psionic Powers: All Dream Ghouls have the following powers: mind block, presence sense, see invisible and telekinesis.

I.S.P.: 1D4×10plus M.E. attribute.

Average Life Span: Unknown

Experience Level: 1D6+1; no dream ghouls are known to exceed the seventh level of experience.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Dream Ghouls are dependent in P.P.E. on both the physical world and the Dreamstream. If the ghoul does not absorb at least one P.P.E. per week, it loses one point of its permanent P.P.E. base. If reduced to zero P.P.E., it ceases to exist. The creature can also be injured by magic, psionics, and normal weapons — when its S.D.C. is reduced to zero or below, it vanishes from the real world, and is sent back to the Dreamstream. If slain in the material world, the Dream Ghoul is likely to look for a new victim (1-80% likelihood), assuming that the child and the child's protectors will be on the lookout for its return.

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Dreamstream (+20%), Prowl (+25%), Concealment (+15%), Detect Concealment (+15%), and two W.P.s of choice (used for improvised weapons, typically W.P. knife or W.P. blunt).

Alliances and Allies: Usually none. A few dream ghouls become servants of a more powerful Dreamstream creature, like a Living Nightmare, or of an evil Dream Maker, but most prefer to work alone.

Weapons: Improvised weapons like scissors (1D4 or 1D6 S.D.C., depending on size), knitting needles (1D4-1 S.D.C.), and others, most of them inflicting 1D4 to 1D6 S.D.C. In the Dreamstream they use no weapons, relying on their illusionary powers.

Guilt Eaters

*Burger-Face froze in disbelief. Just a dream, he tried to tell himself, but it *wasn't* enough.*

*Standing in front of him was a robed figure, surrounded by over a dozen others, men and women and children, all horribly mutilated, burned, and cut by glass fragments. It was them, the bus-load of tourists who had happened to drive by when the car bomb that Burger-Face had meant for *Moloch's* Avatar had gone off. The Moloch-construct had survived; fourteen innocent people perished.*

The robed figure pointed an accusing skeletal finger towards the Nightbane. "There he is," a deep, inhuman voice hissed beneath the hood.

"How did it feel to kill me?" asks a little girl, her hair burned off, clutching the charred remains of a doll.

"How did it feel to kill me?" asks an old man, leaning on a broken cane, a veteran of two wars who died without knowing why.

"N-nooo!" Burger-face screamed as the avenging host fell upon him.

Guilt Eaters are among the most dangerous creatures in the Dreamstream. Evil entities that prey on any beings they meet by confronting them with their past sins, remorse or guilt. Most of them look like a **humanoid** figure covered by a hooded robe or

cloak. Their fingers and limbs are usually skeletal, but their faces can be anything from grinning skulls to the visage of a person known by the person it is confronting. The Guilt Eaters may be some sort of psychic entity that **empathically** feeds on emotions of guilt and shame, or **they might** be the living embodiments of those emotions. Regardless, this **predatorial** being uses the guilt of their opponents against them, creating simulacra of people wronged by the guilt-ridden characters. These "avenging personas" do not have to be dead to be summoned, just remembered by the guilty person. A rejected lover, a betrayed business partner, an abused relative, they can all be duplicated and sent against the intended target.

Even if the Guilt Eater's victims know the creations cannot be real, the entity projects powerful empathic waves of guilt or shame, magnified by the fact that the characters know they are guilty (or at least feel guilty). The avenging constructs *will attack* and even try to kill the target they are sent against.

Another powerful ability of this fiend is the dream trap. By the use of dream manipulation it can take a victim and trap him or her in a dream pocket designed to recreate a shameful or terrible moment from the **victim's** past. This is frequently called the Punishment Domain. The recreated moment can represent any wrongful deed, from a murder committed by the character, to a time when the character did nothing and allowed some evil, cruel or tragic event to occur. Under the Guilt Eater's power, the victim is forced to first witness the event, and then made to relive it — only the character now takes the place of those who were victimized by it! Escaping the punishment domain is difficult even for dream makers. The easiest, most direct way is to somehow make amends for the wrongful deed and accept the consequences. Brute force may also work, either by destroying the Guilt Eater or by somehow breaking out of the domain (only Dream Makers and Dream Dancers have any chance to do the latter). Both acts are difficult and risky.

Many Guilt Eaters content themselves with occasionally entering a sleeper's Dream Pool and tormenting him with visions of regret and wrongdoing. These entities may be responsible for the horrible nightmares that plague guilty people, and the only way the guilty can find peace is to confess or make amends in some way — others end their torment through suicide or slip into madness.

G.M.'s and Player's Note: Encounters with a Guilt Eater can be a powerful role-playing moment. Combat is more likely to fail than not, and only an acknowledgment of past mistakes and a willingness to make up for them are guaranteed to succeed. In some cases the character may have already made up for his or her mistake a hundred times, yet these evil creatures dredge up the smoldering embers of regret to breathe life back into them. The character must come to terms with his regret or sorrow and **force himself** not to **succumb** to **despair** — he **must realize** that he has already atoned for his sins and **that** this is all a terrible illusion. Emotional trauma, regret and guilt are often difficult baggage to discard and leave behind.

Dredged-up memories may also give the other player characters clues about their companions' past deeds (good or bad).

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+16, M.E. 1D6+18, M.A. 2D6+12, P.S. 2D6+18, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 2D6+14, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 4D6

S.D.C.: P.E.x3 plus 1D4x100 S.D.C. No hit points (dream entity).



Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 1D4×10

Natural Abilities:

1. Punishment Domain: This power is most often used against a single dream traveler or when facing a small group. The Guilt Eater can **teleport** itself and up to three victims into its punishment domain. This effect is a dream manipulation power that can be resisted as per the Dream Combat rules, but at -4.

Once in the domain, the creatures victims are each placed in a dream pocket where they are confronted with a past deed or feelings of regret or guilt. The scene may end up replaying itself over and over (the movie *Groundhog Day* can be used for inspiration). It's also important to realize that these emotions may stem from honest feelings and things beyond the character's control, like not being present at the moment of a loved one's death, feeling responsible for an accident, etc.

The character's easiest way to escape is to somehow come to terms with the event or guilty feelings. This can be as simple as doing the right thing in the recreation, avoiding the mistakes of the past, or coming to the realization that there was nothing he should feel guilty about, or that he has already atoned for his wrongdoing. Sometimes the situation is much more complicated: maybe the character is not even fully aware of the consequences of his actions, and he must spend some time in the dream construct to find out. For example, a **Nightbane** might have killed a human NSB agent who happened to be a father of **five** and thought nothing of the family the victim left behind. Sometimes, realizing the extent of one's sins can be a very painful price to escape the punishment domain.

Using brute force to break free from the realm utilizes the Dream Manipulation rules; the punishment domain rolls to resist, and has a +10 bonus to save; only the luckiest or most powerful dream travelers can hope to escape.

Characters under siege in a punishment domain have no initiative and all combat bonuses and skills are at half, due to the debilitating feelings of guilt and sorrow.

2. Summon Avenging Personae: This form of attack is more commonly used against large groups, or when the Guilt Eater is not particularly concerned with exploring a target's psyche. The entity can summon 2D6 of these dream constructs, each appearing as people wronged by the **target(s)** under attack. These avenging personae each have the same combat bonuses as the Guilt Eater itself. People facing the creatures may have to make a save versus insanity, depending on how severe the wrongdoing involved and how terrified they are at having to face these angry spirits.

Each avenging persona inflicts 2D6 damage from (seemingly) physical attacks (the exact shape of the attack will vary), have two attacks per melee round, and **have** 60 S.D.C. each. They fight until destroyed, unless the players involved can somehow atone for their crimes, come to the realization that they are not guilty of those crimes, or role-play something that will solve the moral dilemma involved. (**Note:** The game master should make sure the players have more than one option available, and be prepared to be flexible. Some players will prefer to deal with these beings through combat, while others might role-play so brilliantly the creatures might turn against their creator or smile and vanish if they feel the character has made atonement).

Characters under siege by avenging personae lose initiative, all combat bonuses are -2, and skill performance is -20% due to the debilitating feelings of guilt, panic and terror. The personae can only exist in the **Dreamstream**.

3. Dream Manipulation Bonuses: +4 to defend against dream manipulation effects, or to resist/neutralize psionics or talents; +8 to transport victims to the punishment domain.

Magic Powers: Immune to magic and magical effects, weapons and damage! Psionics and talents work normally.

Combat: Four hand to hand attacks per melee.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to pull punch, +10 to save vs horror factor. All these are in addition to attribute bonuses.

Psionic Powers: See natural abilities.

Average Life Span: Unknown.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: Guilt Eaters can be stopped by characters who refuse to be controlled by feelings of guilt, but who still accept and acknowledge the harm they have done and are willing to make (or have made) amends. Sometimes, such an attitude (if role-played properly) will make the character impervious to any subsequent guilt attacks (at least until next time) and force the Guilt Eater to surrender, or flee, or even offer help or information (game master's choice). The latter is likely to occur as a vision of the person who was wronged, forgiving the character and offering helpful information as a peace offering (furthermore, the character is +4 to save if this incident/person is ever again summoned by any Guilt Eater).

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Dream (98%).

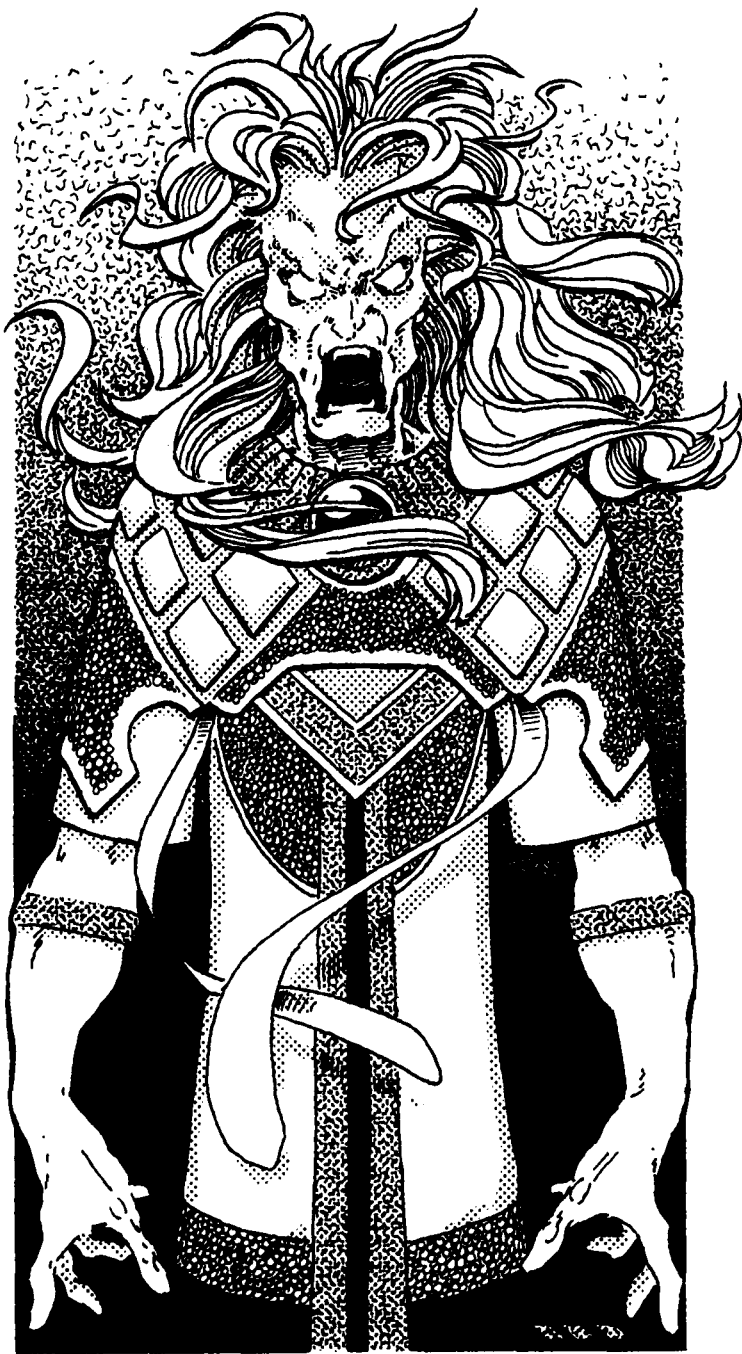
Alliances and Allies: Guilt Eaters usually work alone and with their simulacra. On some occasions, an independent dream persona, usually one that was created as a result of guilt or shame, will enlist the aid of an Eater to punish the dreamer who created it. They also occasionally work with other evil beings.

Weapons and Equipment: None.

Dream Furies

Constructs of pure anger, Dream Furies are fueled by the helpless rage all victims feel in their nightmares — the bastard children of hatred, destruction and revenge fantasies. The Furies are nearly mindless predators who will attack any dream traveler or natives they can find. The shapes of these creatures vary widely; some are monstrous and inhuman, while others appear to be rag-clad, emaciated figures who seem to gain strength from their anger and suffering. Others look like **fanged** humanoids with flowing hair and wild eyes. Sometimes the creatures change shapes to fit memories in the minds of their targets, usually the forms of bullies, abusive relatives, past opponents, or some other person or group that is likely to enrage the people they attack.

Those who fight Dream Furies in the Dreamstream risk becoming infected by the savage emotions of these creatures, especially when fighting a Fury who looks like some hated figure



from one's past. Those who succumb to the berserk impulses instilled by these creatures will themselves become mindless, attacking anybody near them, friend or foe. It is believed that at least some Dream Furies were human psychics or other travelers who were permanently transformed into monsters by their own emotions.

Dream Furies are encountered in **groups** of 1D4+1, wandering aimlessly through the stream. The creatures can occasionally enter the Dream Pools of human sleepers, giving the sufferers terrible nightmares where they relive times in their past where they were victimized or provoked into violence, or just unreasonable anger. People affected by these dreams are much more likely to become violent over the next day or two (any situation that might provoke the character has a 01-60% chance of causing an unreasonably violent or savage response).

Alignment: Possibly aberrant or diabolic.

Attributes: Mental attributes are meaningless. P.S. 2D6+20, P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 1D6+20, P.B. 2D6, Spd 4D6+6

Size: Human; roughly six feet (1.8m) tall.

S.D.C.: P.E.x5 (no hit points applicable in the *Dreamstream*).

Horror Factor: 1D6+9

P.P.E.: 1D6

Natural Abilities: In addition to understanding and speaking all languages, the creature has the following powers:

1. Alter Shape: Half the members of a group of Dream Furies will change their shape to look like old enemies from the target's past. These shapes may inspire fear or fury, depending on the character's relationship with them. Resisting either emotion requires a save versus *insanity/psionic* attack. If enraged by the shape of the creature, the victim will behave as per the *incite rage* power described below. If fear is inspired by the shape, the victim reacts as if he had failed a save versus horror factor. Dream Furies can change their shape at will, once per melee round.

2. Incite Rage: Anybody within a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius of a Dream Fury must make a save versus psionic attack to avoid being consumed by mindless rage. If the save fails, the victim will instantly fall into a berserker state, attacking everyone around him (at +1 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry). Enemies or people the character dislikes will be the first targets of such attacks, but even friends and loved ones may be targeted. The Dream Fury is not exempt from this rage, but even destroying it will not instantly stop the rage, it lasts for another 1D6 melee rounds.

3. Dream Combat Bonuses: Although Dream Furies cannot reshape reality in the Dreamstream, they are highly *resistant* to dream manipulation attacks and are +5 to save versus all such attacks.

Combat: Four hand to hand attacks per melee.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S. Some shapes have claws that inflict an additional 1D6 to 2D6 damage, depending on their actual shape.

Bonuses: The following bonuses apply to the Dream Furies themselves: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +1 to roll with impact, +2 to pull punch, +2 save vs magic, +2 to save vs psionics, +10 to save vs horror factor. In addition to , attribute bonuses.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None, other than their natural ability to inspire rage.

Average Life Span: Unknown, possibly unaging.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: None.

R.C.C. Skills: None. Mindless dream constructs.

Alliances and Allies: None. No dream creature even associates with them.

Weapons: A few Dream Furies who imitate the shapes of actual people may be equipped with hand weapons that inflict normal damage.



Dream Personae

The personae (or personas) are the "cast of characters" that live in somebody's Dream Pool. Their name comes from the Latin term *dramatis personae*, the list of characters in a stage play. Like the characters in a theater piece, dream personae (or personas) play a "part" in the dreams of a person. Personas vary from person to person, and even from dream to dream. Each is a "living" embodiment of a fragment of the dreamer's personality, memories and/or emotions. Some are relatively harmless, or even humorous, but others are malevolent incarnations of a person's dark side or traumatic past. A few personas have their own personalities, sentience, and some measure of independence even when away from the "stage" of a person's dreams. This is particularly true of "recurring" dream personas (sometimes called "Regulars"). Some Regulars include embodiments of lust or love, including movie stars, people the dreamer once had a crush on, and spouses or **girl/boyfriends**. Others are just people embedded in the dreamer's memory; teachers, family members and friends are fairly common personae. Unfortunately, many Regulars become semi-independent as a result of some severe trauma or fear. A few "good" regulars exist, typically parental figures or "guardian angel" characters, but most are embodiments of addictions, phobias, personality disorders or nightmarish memories.

Evil personae often envy their creator's true independence. As a result, a few may actually plot to destroy or take over the dreamer! Some cases of "split personality" may be the result of personas taking over the mind of their "maker," if only **tempo-**

rarily. Severely traumatized people can have dozens of strong personas, struggling for supremacy within their mind. The worst of such entities are sometimes given real independence by evil forces such as the **Nightlords**, and wander the **Dreamstream** unchecked. A few gain their independence during a powerful Dream Storm; they can even cross the line separating the Dreamstream from the physical world, and are able to materialize in the waking world (see *the Living Nightmares* and *the Morpheomoth*).

Typical Personas

Most dream personas are simple constructs that only appear once in a while in a person's dreams, playing their role and retaining no memories or personalities. A few, the so-called "Regulars," manage to develop a stronger sense of being and actually manifest varying degrees of self awareness and individuality in the unreality of the Dream Pool where they were "born." Only a comparative handful ever find life in the real world, the vast majority (90%) live their own independent lives in the Dream Pool—not unlike a TV character who is spun-off into his own show. These Regulars are the most likely obstacle dream travelers face when entering a Dream Pool.

Alignment: Special. The average persona is a simple-minded and/or narrowly focused entity, unable to think or reflect much about anything. It's simply a character in a contrived dream story. Consequently, any alignment may be applicable for the moment. A dream-self persona will typically have the same alignment as the dreamer.

Regulars have much more well defined personalities and, for good or ill, are more human-like. The alignment of the Regular, even if once a dream-self persona, may have a radically different alignment and personality than the original, real-life dreamer. Also remember that many Regulars are born from **reoccurring** dreams and nightmares that are likely to have been the result of anxieties, fears, anger and similar strong emotions which results in personas with selfish or evil alignments.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 4D6+2, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 4D6, Spd. 5D6. Note: The I.Q. of the personae cannot exceed the I.Q. of the dreamer, and most have a lower intelligence. Lesser persona will typically have a very low I.Q. and M.E. (3-5 average). Only Regulars and independent personae can have I.Q.s in excess of 10 and are still limited by the I.Q. of the dreamer.

All other attributes can be assigned by the game master as seems appropriate for a specific Persona. Regulars also tend to have higher attributes, and some of them are tremendously strong, attractive or fast.

Size: Varies. Intimidating personae and authority figures may be larger than normal, sometimes as much as two times larger. Nightmare personae can be monstrous in appearance and tower two to four times larger than a normal human. However, most human personae are human sized and even nightmarish figures are seldom more than 8 to 12 feet (2.4 to 3.6 m) tall.

S.D.C./Hit Points: Like most dream creatures, these constructs have no hit points. S.D.C. varies widely, from 2D6 for the smallest, least important personae to **4D6×10** for major characters, Regulars and independent figures.

Horror Factor: Most don't have any and even intimidating or frightening personae will only have an H.F. of 1D4+6, unless a *living nightmare*.

P.P.E.: None. Typical personas cannot survive outside the Dream Pool where they were "born." Regulars who become truly independent get 1D4 P.P.E. and may eventually grow in power and leave the Dream Pool of their birth to wander the **Dreamstream** (see natural abilities).

Natural Abilities: Most personas only have the abilities required for their "role" in a person's dreams. They only have physical abilities roughly equivalent to normal human beings. If the dreamer had any special abilities, such as psionics, magic or (and in the case of **Nightbanes**) talents, there is a chance that some of the personas of that dreamer will have some or even all of those special abilities. These personas can only exist in the Dream Pool of the dreamer.

The few Regulars who become *independent* (and who tend to be powerful, possessing all the special skills and powers of the dreamer) can venture beyond the Dream Pool and become truly independent beings. These personas possess the same P.C.C. abilities and P.P.E. of the **Dream Dancer**! See that character for more information. Most of these characters wander the Dreamstream and may even establish their own dream domains.

Disposition: Varies widely. Keep in mind that personae are not "real" people, but manifestations of the dreamer's personality, memories, emotions, anxieties, and/or fears. Most of them have "two-dimensional" or extreme personalities, with very little in the way of true awareness or personality. For example, the persona of a swimsuit model with whom the dreamer was infatuated with, may act like a stereotypical bimbo, or a nymph, or a prude, etc., depending on where the dream is going. She will have no goals, skills or other facets of character or life experience other than those important to the dream, because she isn't **real**!

Some Regulars and independent personas will have more complex personalities, emotions, and sense of being, but even many of these will be reflective of the dreamer's personality, knowledge, desires, angst, fears and frustrations. Only the truly independent and powerful personas will have strong personalities, emotions and personal goals, of which survival is their main goal.

Combat: As per hand to hand skill. Aggressive personae will have hand to hand: expert, or martial arts or assassin; most others will have the hand to hand skill of the dreamer, if any.

Damage: Most will inflict normal damage; independent and semi-independent personae have the equivalent of supernatural P.S.

Bonuses: Typical personas are +2 to save versus dream manipulation powers. Regulars are +4 to save vs dream manipulation. Independent personas have the same bonuses as the *Dream Dancer* P.C.C.

Magic Powers: Usually none; see Natural Abilities, above.

Psionic Powers: Usually none; see Natural Abilities, above.

Average Life Span: Varies. Most lesser Personae have a life span measured in hours or days (1D4 days maximum). Recurring dream characters (Regulars) often live for decades before being "forgotten" by the Dreamer. Of course, when the dreamer dies, all his or her personas die with him. The only exceptions are those few who become independent, they can exist outside the dreamer's Dream Pool and exist for centuries.

Experience Level: Varies; cannot exceed the dreamer's. Only independent personas can grow in experience.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: The typical persona cannot leave the Dream Pool where it was spawned. If they are somehow removed from the Pool, they will start losing 1D6 S.D.C. per melee round; as this damage increases, they will appear to lose cohesion and definition, until they finally disappear altogether. This is even true of Regulars.

Independent personae do not suffer these ill effects, and can travel through the Dreamstream, but cannot materialize in the physical world. Only Living Nightmares can do so (see below).

R.C.C. Skills: Varies as per the requirement of the dream story. A bimbo or bit player in the dream will possess few or no skills. Regulars and major dream personas may have some or all of the skills the dreamer has, at the same or lower level of proficiency. Additionally, some personas may have skills that the dreamer does not know but has imagined; these skills use the base skill level and have no bonuses. Skill proficiency only increases among semi-independent Regulars and those who have become independent.

Alliances and Allies: None, other than any that might exist in the dream story of the moment.

Weapons and Equipment: Anything that is appropriate for the "role" played by the persona. These items will work normally in the Dream Pool where they were created but will cease to exist anywhere else.

Living Nightmares

These very rare beings are created by the psychic energies released from Dream Storms (see the *Dreamstream* section for more information). During the storms, some Dream Pools are momentarily "ruptured," and any personas in them are swept away in the storm. In most cases, they all quickly fade away, but in some instances, a few of the strongest and most defined independent personas manage to survive the ordeal, and actually absorb enough ambient psychic energy to become truly **alive**! Not only are they able to exist in the Dreamstream, but many are also capable of appearing in the physical world! Tragically, most personas strong enough to materialize physically are usually reflections of the darkest fears, desires, hostilities, and traumas of a dreamer; beings that are born of pain and suffering and who often thrive on it. These strange, cruel and chaotic beings are called **Living Nightmares**!

Living Nightmares derive most of their initial knowledge of the world from the memories of their "creators." Those born of angst and fear usually suffer from severe psychological problems as a result of the vivid nightmares that brought them to life. In some ways, these entities are incredibly naive, with very limited and often warped notions of how things are in the world. Many of them bear nothing but hatred for their creator, and often the first thing they do upon being reborn in the physical world is to find and kill or torment him. Others become predators of both worlds, hunting and preying upon innocent people in the Dreamstream and the waking world, often terrorizing them in the former and then physically killing them in the latter. Of course, not all are evil (see the independent personas described previously), and some of the so-called Living Nightmares or Living Personas (in some cases, even the monstrous, evil and insane ones) care



deeply for their dreamers and act as their guardians and protectors. Unfortunately, if the Living Nightmare is evil, this act of devotion may result in the harm or murder of people who threaten, harm, insult or anger their creator.

Although these creatures often look human, they are constructs of psychic energy that do not bleed or feel injury like normal living things. Also, some of them have strange or terrifying shapes or characteristics, or their features transform to look more menacing or monstrous when they are angry. Some examples include scarred faces, oddly colored eyes, fangs, claws, savage or animalistic facial appearance (very common), weird costumes or clothing (killer clowns or mimes are somewhat common), strange speech patterns, and other unusual characteristics. A few are deformed enough to pass as Nightbanes, although they will not register as such to the senses of true Nightbane. Whatever their true appearance is, however, the creatures can reshape it by spending I.S.P. Such reshaping can be done on both the physical and dream worlds. Many of their powers are similar to the *Dream Dancer's*, but they have even greater potency, able to affect Earth as well as the *Dreamstream*.

Before Dark Day, there were very few Living Nightmares on Earth, perhaps a couple of dozen all told. Two to three times as many dwelt in the Nightlands, where the nightmares of Doppelgangers and captive humans were more common and more likely to produce the dream storms that give birth to these entities. Dark Day (and the so-called Nightmare Day in the *Dreamstream*) unleashed hundreds of these beings on Earth, and the constant chaos that has followed spawns an additional dozen or two every year. Living Nightmares are unpredictable elements in the Dark Day Invasion. Many ignore the war and content themselves with bringing terror and suffering on others, avoiding all

other supernatural creatures. Others have tried to use the conflict to their advantage, acting as mercenaries, spies and assassins for one or both sides. They are among the favorite minions of the Nightlords, although few are ever truly trusted.

Alignment: Any, but the vast majority are evil or anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+10, M.E. 2D6+10, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 4D6+6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6, P.B. 4D6 (can be altered by shape-shifting), Spd. 5D6; all are supernatural attributes.

Size: Human; roughly six feet (1.8 m) tall.

S.D.C./Hit Points: 4D6x10 +P.E. attribute on both the physical and dreaming worlds. Add 1D6 S.D.C. per level.

Horror Factor: Varies; typically 2D4+6.

P.P.E.: 2D6

Natural Abilities:

1. Dream Travel: Living Nightmares can enter the *Dreamstream* as per the psychic power *Dreamdance* (Superior). More importantly, the creatures can leave the *Dreamstream* and return to the physical location they started from (as per the *Dreamdance* power), or they can also choose to leave within 100 feet (30.5 m) of the location of any sleeping person whose *Dream Pool* they entered (see the *Dream Dancer P.C.C.* and *Dreamdance* power for more information). Duration: Indefinite. I.S.P. Cost: None; an innate ability.

2. Dream Manipulation: Living Nightmares can alter the "reality" of the *Dreamstream*, but to a lesser degree than the *Dream Maker*. Most of the Nightmares' powers work only on themselves, and have little effect over others. More importantly, some of these powers work even in the physical world, something most dream psychics are unable to imitate. See the *Reshape Self* and *Increase Attributes* powers; both powers can be used in the *Dreamstream* and material world.

3. Reshape Self: The entity can change shape at will. The shape can be as attractive or horrific as the Living Nightmare wishes. Additionally, it can try to imitate the form of actual people, such as famous personalities, people in a dreamer's memories, etc. I.S.P. Cost: Varies. The base cost is 5 points to alter one's shape; trying to increase the P.B. or horror factor costs three I.S.P. for every one point of each (maximum P.B. is 30; maximum horror factor is 18).

Trying to simulate/copy/impersonate a real person requires a skill roll (30% +5% per level of experience, plus I.Q. bonuses, if any). If the person to be simulated is well known or is somebody the creature has spent a great deal of time studying, or is part of its memories, the roll gets a +15% bonus (G.M.'s call). The attempt to impersonate costs an additional 10 I.S.P. However, while this disguise may look disturbingly like a specific person, there are striking imperfections and characteristics (if nothing else, how the monster carries itself) that will make an impersonation for more than 1D6 minutes impossible among people who really know the person. This ability is often used to add to the confusion and horror of a situation, like being attacked with a butcher knife by grandmother, Bozo the Clown, a Playboy pin-up girl, and so on.

4. Increase Attributes: The Nightmare can raise his physical attributes in both the *Dreamstream* and the physical world. The actual increase is limited by the creature's willpower (M.E.) and costs I.S.P. to maintain. P.S. and P.E. can be raised by +1 per M.E. point (i.e., a character with P.S. 8 in the real world and an M.E. of 15 could raise his P.S. to 23 while in the *Dreamstream*).

P.P. can be increased by +1 per 4 levels of M.E., rounded down (in the previous example, the character could add +3 to his P.P.). S.D.C. can be increased by M.E. x3 (+45 S.D.C. for an M.E. of 15, for example). Duration: Three minutes per level of experience. **I.S.P.** Cost: 5 per attribute (P.S., P.E., P.P. or S.D.C.) increased; each attribute must be "paid for" separately. Any one attribute can be raised individually, or all four can be increased for a total of 20 I.S.P.

5. Dream Combat Bonuses: +1 at levels one, three, six, ten and fifteen, in addition to M.E. bonuses, if any.

6. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to the Nightmare's natural powers over dreams, the character has some minor psionic abilities. Select one power from the sensitive, healing and physical categories at level one, for a total of three psionic powers. After the first level, select one power from any of those three categories for every other level of experience (i.e. select a new power at level 3, 5, 7, 9, etc.).

7. Other Powers: The few Living Nightmares "born" in the minds of humans or Nightbanes with unusual powers and abilities have a chance of possessing some or all of those powers. Some stories tell of Living Nightmares of Nightbanes who were able to use Nightbane talents in addition to their own powers! There is a 1-60% chance that this is the case. Roll percentile dice for each Nightbane talent, each psionic power (excluding those in #6), and roll for each level of spell knowledge (i.e. knows or doesn't know all third level spells, etc.) if a practitioner of magic.

8. I.S.P.: 3D4x10 plus M.E. attribute. Add 2D6 per additional level of experience.

Disposition: Most Living Nightmares are insane, because they are typically the living embodiments of the dreamers' psychoses, delusions, fears, anger, desires, and anxieties. As a result, they exhibit extreme personalities, severe mood shifts, and tend to be self-serving, cold-hearted, and vindictive creatures who have little or no empathy for humans beyond feelings of

contempt, envy, hatred, cruelty, vengeance, and fear. Even those who are not entirely evil will have often alien or strange feelings and stunted emotions. Most of these beings spent much of their "lives" living in a literal dream world, and will find it very difficult to relate to reality. The most common types of insanities are neurosis, psychosis and obsession.

Combat: Equivalent to hand to hand: assassin.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S.

Bonuses: +1 attack per melee round, +1D4 on initiative, +2 to pull punch, +2 save vs magic and psionics, +12 to save vs horror factor; in addition to possible attribute bonuses. Also see Dream Combat bonuses, above.

Magic Powers: None; unless the dreamer had magical powers to begin with. See #7, above.

Psionic Powers: See natural abilities and #7 above.

Average Life Span: 2D6x100 years, unless destroyed in combat.

Experience Level: Average 1D6+1; a few old or powerful Living Nightmares will average 1D6+5

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: It is said that taking a Living Nightmare back into the Dream Pool where it was first created will cause it to lose its dream dancing powers and reduce its bonuses and combat abilities by half, thus making it easier to destroy (this is true). The reason is that the monsters can't face the fact that they are the stuff of dreams, nor can they bear to face the other personas and emotions of their creator present in the Dream Pool of birth. This also explains why so many instinctively consider killing their "creator"; when he or she dies that Dream Pool vanishes from existence.

R.C.C. Skills: Any 10 skills its creator knew, at +10%.

Allies and Enemies: Some Living Nightmares ally themselves with other supernatural predators, including the occasional vampire, rogue Nightbane, Nightlords and others.

Weapons and Equipment: Varies. Can range from a great deal of wealth and power to literally the clothes on their back; typically the latter for the most deranged.

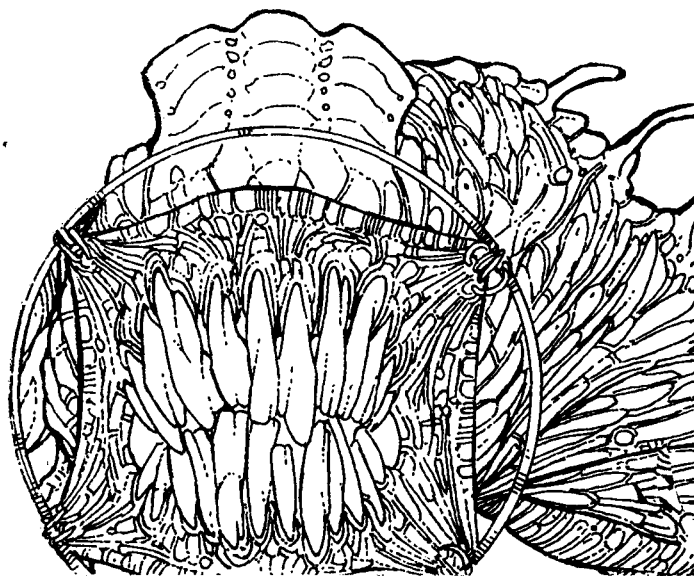
Nightlord Servants of the Dreamstream

By C.J. Carella, with additional text & ideas by Kevin Siembieda

In addition to the creatures described below, some astral creatures can also venture into the Dreamstream. *Astral Avatars* and *Necrophim* are among the most dangerous of such beings. Neither Hounds nor Hunters can enter the Dreamstream, however, nor can most other minions and alien creatures; these minions are magical constructs, unable to **dream** or affect the Dreamstream in any way.

Soul Leeches

Conflicting stories claim that these beings come from an alien dimension linked to the Dreamstream, or, alternatively, were dream dwellers who were enslaved by the Nightlords centuries ago. Whatever their origins, these beings are grotesque mockeries of human life, creatures with tentacles protruding from their



heads, often wearing necklaces made out of human skulls and bones. Their grinning faces have a feral, hungry look to them, and they are said to hunger for human souls, which the Nightlords freely grant them in return for their services.

Soul Leeches are dream killers, pure and simple. They do not have many powers over dreams, but they are able to enter Dream Pools and destroy personas and elements within. Once inside a Dream Pool, these beings subdue all personas and dream constructs they encounter and then proceed to suck the dreamer's life force (P.P.E., I.S.P., and hit points), draining the dreamer and killing him in a matter of hours. Only waking up or a direct intervention from a dream traveler or independent persona can save the victim of this attack. **Note:** These horrible creatures do not actually drain, steal or possess souls, just kill through one's dreams.

When confronted in the **Dreamstream**, or a Dream Pool, most Soul Leeches will prefer to retreat, unless they are cornered or feel confident of victory. Although they are not very powerful dream manipulators, these beings are somewhat resistant to dream attacks and are very dangerous hand to hand fighters. When destroyed, Soul Leeches release some of the life energy they had absorbed, sometimes restoring the energy reserves of dream travelers and restoring the dreamer of their most recent attack. This makes some psychics eager to find and fight these creatures.

The **Ba'al** are believed to have thousands of these creatures, which they use mostly to kill indiscriminately, and occasionally to take care of a specific enemy they do not want to strike at directly. Soul Leeches also sometimes act as bodyguards of the more powerful and dangerous **Morpheomoth**.

Alignment: Diabolic or Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+12, M.E. 1D6+13, M.A. 1D6+6, P.S. 2D6+16, P.P. 1D6+14, P.E. 1D6+12, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 4D6+6

Size: Varies; usually between 5 and 8 feet (1.5 to 2.4 m) tall.

S.D.C./Hit Points: 2D6×10 plus P.E. No hit points.

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 2D4

Natural Abilities:

1. **Soul Drain:** This power can only be used within the Dream Pool of a victim. Once the Soul Leech enters the mind of a sleeping person, it "turns off any ongoing dreams, fights and subdues any strong or independent personas, and then proceeds to feed. The victim must save versus psionics once every minute, or lose 1D4 P.P.E. or I.S.P. When both are reduced to zero, the monster begins to drain hit points. The draining of hit points (bypassing any S.D.C.) will continue until the victim dies (when hit points are reduced to zero he lapses into a coma. When they are reduced to below the victim's P.E. number, the character dies). Characters with regenerative abilities will not recover lost hit points unless the Soul Leech is expelled. If the dreamer is awakened (this requires outside intervention, if only from an alarm clock or sudden noise), the Soul Leech is expelled from the Dream Pool and will be unable to try it again until the next night.

2. **Supernatural Senses:** Able to see the invisible and through any illusion.

3. **Dream Combat Bonuses:** +5 to save versus dream manipulation attacks and effects, plus any M.E. bonus.

Combat: Four hand to hand attacks per melee. The Soul Drain requires a minute of concentration and is not usable in combat.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S. Clawed hands add 2D6 to hand to hand damage.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +1 on perception, +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to roll with impact, +1 to pull punch, +4 save vs magic, +5 to save versus psionic attack, and +8 to save vs horror factor.

Magic Powers: None.

Psionic Powers: None, other than the soul drain.

Average Life Span: Unknown; presumed to be greater than a human's.

Experience Level: Not applicable.

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: None, per se. Cannot enter the physical world — they are creatures indigenous to the Dreamstream.

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Dream (+25%), only.

Allies and Enemies: As servants of the Ba'al, Soul Leeches will work alongside their minions and servants, particularly the Necrophim and Morpheomoth.

Morpheomoth

Dream Demons

These horrendous entities were once dream personas who willingly pledged themselves to the Nightlords' service. In return, the Nightlords helped them to achieve independence from the Dream Pool where they were spawned. The Ba'al also rewarded these beings with great dream powers and disgusting, twisted bodies, somewhat similar to those of **Nightbanes**, but even more terrifying and inhuman.

Morpheomoth are able to mimic most of the powers and abilities of Dream Makers, except for the ability to build a dream domain. More importantly, a Morpheomoth has the unique power to physically drag the dreamer into his own Dream Pool, where he is attacked and killed by his own nightmares and dark personas. These dark forces of the dreamer's id are enraged and given greater power by the Dream Demons to rise up and destroy the dreamer. Thousands of innocents have disappeared without a trace since the Dark Day invasion, dragged to their deaths in the world of dreams.

Among Dream Makers and other denizens of the **Dreamstream**, the Morpheomoth are becoming famous for their ability to reshape a victim's Dream Pool and transform it into a lethal trap. After the victim dies a horrible death, the Morpheomoth escapes the Dream Pool, which collapses as soon as the dreamer perishes.

Like Soul Leeches, these beings are sent out to decimate the human race, as well as to hunt down other enemies in the Dreamstream. The oldest and most powerful Dream Demons are often put in command of small bands of Necrophim or Soul Leeches, or to act as the personal servants of a Nightlord Astral Avatar.

Alignment: Diabolic



Attributes: I.Q. 3D6+4, M.E. 3D6+4, M.A. 3D6, P.S. 3D6+10, P.P. 3D6+2, P.E. 4D6, **P.B.** 1D6, Spd. 4D6

Size: Varies from human to up to three times larger.

S.D.C./Hit Points: 3D6×10+30 plus P.E. attribute. Add 10 points per additional level of experience.

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 2D4

Natural Abilities:

1. Dream Manipulation: This power allows the **Morpheomoth** to reshape the landscape of a dream, or the immediate area of the **Dreamstream**. While inside a Dream Pool, the creature can alter the course of a dream in any way he wants, as long as the **Morpheomoth** can overcome the dreamer's will. A frightening landscape will have a Horror Factor of 10 plus the **Morpheomoth's** level of experience. To actually harm the dreamer or other dream dwellers, see *Dream Attacks*, below. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 I.S.P. per minute.

2. Dream Attacks: By manipulating the reality of dreams, the creature can inflict damage on other dream travelers or dwellers. Unlike other creatures of the Dreamstream, these attacks are almost always designed to be lethal. Murder is what these demonic fiends live for. When attacking a dreamer from his Dream Pool, damage is mostly mental in nature and creates terrifying nightmares not physical pain or death. Killing a dreamer's dream-self persona will only result in his waking up, terrified (equal to a H.F. 17!) and shaken, but otherwise unharmed. At worse, the person will have trouble going back to sleep. On the other hand, if the victim has been brought into the Dreamstream body and soul, these attacks can spell his doom (see #5, *Dream Abduction*, below).

Normal dream attacks require a "roll to strike" using dream manipulation bonuses; this roll can be resisted and therefore, negated (see *Dream Combat* for more information). If the **Morpheomoth** overwhelms the victim's resistance, the creature can inflict 4D6 points of damage at level one +1D6 per each additional level of experience. This damage can be manifested in any way the attacker desires; the entity can cause a piece of furniture to fly and strike the victim, hurl fire bolts, call down lightning, or any effect it wishes. **I.S.P. Cost:** 10 I.S.P. per attack.

3. Dream Manipulation/Combat Bonuses: +1 at levels one, three, **five**, seven, ten, and thirteen, in addition to M.E. bonuses. These bonuses are used to attack dream entities, reshape dreams, and resist dream manipulation/attacks. Also, **Morpheomoth** can heal themselves, getting back 1D6 S.D.C. for every one I.S.P. spent; each act of healing counts as one melee action.

4. Create Dream Object: The **Morpheomoth** can create objects from "thin air" at will. The only limitations are his imagination and ability to visualize the object. While weapons can be created, the amount of damage they can do is limited by the creature's raw power dictated by level of experience. **Size:** The object created can fill one cubic foot (0.03 cu.m) per level of the creature. **S.D.C.:** The maximum S.D.C. of the object is three times the S.D.C. of a "real" equivalent object, or 20 S.D.C. per level of the creature, whichever is less. **Damage:** A weapon does the equivalent damage of the real weapon, or up to 2D6 per level of the caster, whichever is more. Range is as per the real weapon; all guns/missile weapons have an inexhaustible supply of ammunition. **I.S.P. Cost:** 12 I.S.P. per minute.

5. Dream Abduction: The **Morpheomoth** can drag a slumbering person into his own dreams, or more specifically, into his own Dream Pool! Once there, the dreamer is temporarily trans-

formed into a *dream construct*. If killed, the person will cease to **exist**. If he should escape (because the duration time of the **abduction** has elapsed, or by killing or chasing away the Dream Demon), the dreamer will wake up in his own bed and will **believe** it was all a vivid, terrible nightmare. However, any damage the dreamer may have suffered in his battle in the Dream Pool remains with him in the waking world. This means any lost S.D.C., hit points, I.S.P., cuts, bruises, and other signs of battle may be inexplicably evident!

If the character falls prey to this horrible monster, it is the perfect crime, since the person simply vanishes without a trace; no body or evidence of foul-play is ever found. This ability only works on people who are asleep and dreaming. Furthermore, each attempt to "abduct" the character and drag him into his Dream Pool counts as a psionic attack, costs the monster 20 I.S.P., and the dreamer automatically gets an attempt to resist via a save versus psionic attack. If the save fails, the victim is dragged into the **Dreamstream**. If successful, the abduction fails, although the **Morpheomoth** can try again at a cost of 20 more I.S.P. **I.S.P.**: 20 to abduct the dreamer. **Duration**: 20 minutes, although the Dream Demon can add one minute at the cost of five I.S.P. each. **Note**: If the dreamer escapes because the duration time elapsed or the Morpheomoth was chased away, he instantly awakens in his own bed and the creature cannot attack again till the next night.

6. I.S.P.: 4D6x10 plus M.E. attribute, plus 10 per additional level of experience.

Combat: Three hand to hand or dream manipulation attacks per melee round; add an additional attack at levels **five**, seven, and ten.

Damage: As per supernatural P.S. or dream attack.

Bonuses: +3 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +1 save vs magic, +2 to save vs psionic attack, +12 to save vs horror factor.

Magic Powers: None

Psionic Powers: None, besides its natural dream powers.

Average Life Span: Unknown; presumed to be centuries.

Experience Level: Average 2D4+1

Vulnerabilities/Penalties: **Morpheomoths** are creatures of the dream realm and cannot enter the waking, material world — which is why they must pull unsuspecting dreamers into the Dreamstream. Likewise, they cannot exist in the Astral Plane or any other *known* worlds.

R.C.C. Skills: Lore: Dream (+30%).

Allies and Enemies: All Dream Demons are servants of the **Nightlords** who fear and obey Astral Avatars and assist Nightlord minions. How the Nightlords create these demonic, independent personas remains a mystery.





New Psionic Powers

By Kevin Siembieda and C.J. Carella

These powers are in addition to the abilities described in the *Nightbane* RPG. Additional abilities and Psychic Character Classes (P.C.C.s) can be found in other Palladium books like *Beyond the Supernatural*[™], *Ninjas & Superspies*[™], *Mystic China*[™], and *Rifts*[®].

List of "New" Psionic Powers By Category

Master Psionic Powers

Astral Transference (15)
 Bio-Regeneration (Superior; 20)
 Block Breaker (30+)
 Dreamdance (Superior; 20)
 Gestalt Circle (30)
 Group Mind Block (22)
 Mind Block Auto-Defense (Special)

Mind Bond (10)

Mind Wipe (Special)
 P.P.E. Shield (10)

Possession (30)

Psi-Shield (30)

Psi-Sword (30)

Psychic Mirage (Superior; 40)

Supercharge (30)

Telekinetic Force Field (30)

Telemechanics (10)

Healer Powers

Bio-Regeneration (self; 6)

Detect Psionics (6)

Restore I.S.P. (2+)

Restore P.P.E. (4+)

Suppress Fear (8)

Sensitive Powers

Astral Bolts (10)

Astral Navigation (4)

Dreamdance (Minor; 8)

Ethereal Mirage (Minor; 6)

Sense Dimensional Anomaly (6)

Physical Powers

Activate Dimensional Portal (10)

Telekinetic Punch (6)

Telekinetic Leap (8)

Master Psionics (New)

Beyond the three "common" categories of Healing, Sensitive and Physical, exists the "master" (or superior) psychic power category. Master psionic powers are abilities beyond the ken of most human and Nightbane psychics, or are attainable only after lesser psionic abilities have been mastered. Outlined below are some suggestions on how to add these abilities to existing P.C.C.s and R.C.C.s

The Psychic P.C.C. and Master Psionics: The Psychic P.C.C. (as described on the *Nightbane RPG*, page 69) can select a power from the Master Psionics category at levels three, five, eight, eleven and fourteen. However, this is in place of choosing a power from any of the other categories; only one new power is selected per level of experience.

Guardian Super-Psionics: Guardians can choose master psionic powers after reaching the fourth level of experience; in other words, they can choose a power from any category, including master psionics, after reaching fourth level.

Note: Additional psionic powers are also provided for the other categories as well. Game Masters can automatically include these new powers for all psychic characters or consider them optional suggestions to be added if he or she feels they are appropriate to the campaign.

Astral Transference

Range: Self

Duration: One hour per level of experience

I.S.P.: 15

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Astral Projection.

This powerful ability transforms the character's body into an astral construct, similar to an entity or other energy beings, and able to travel **astrally**. One might consider this power a sort of "super" astral projection. Unlike normal astral projection, the entire body of the character is transformed into an astral energy being, so the body is not left behind and the duration for astral travel is much greater. All the abilities and benefits of the astral projection power (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 70) apply to this form as well, except there is no silver cord involved.

Bio-Regeneration (Superior)

Range: Self

Duration: Permanent

I.S.P.: 20

Saving Throw: None

Another bio-manipulation power that enables the psionic to direct his psychic energy to immediate self-healing. The character must concentrate for one full minute while his body instantly heals itself. 4D6 hit points and 4D6 **S.D.C.** points are simultaneously restored at the end of 60 seconds. As usual, there is no scarring.

Block Breaker

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m) plus 10 feet (3.0 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 1D4 melee rounds (15 to 60 seconds).

I.S.P.: Varies; 30+

Saving Throw: Varies, see below.

This power attacks a psychic's mind block in an attempt to temporarily lower the target's defenses. If the block breaker is successful, the character's mind block is removed for 1D4 melee rounds, at the end of which the victim may restore the block by spending **I.S.P.** normally. The character under attack by the block breaker gets to save versus psionic attack, but the attacker can raise the save difficulty by spending more **I.S.P.**

The base cost of the ability is 30 **I.S.P.**, however the attacker can make his victim -1 to save at the cost of +10 additional **I.S.P.** For example, an attacker could spend the base 30 **I.S.P.** plus another 40 points (70 total) to make his intended victim -4 to save against the block breaker attack. If the defender fails to save, his mind block is temporarily *down* for 1D4 melee rounds, during which time he or she cannot shield himself from psionic probes and other psionic influences.

Dreamdance (Superior)

Range: Self

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 20

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Dreamdance (Minor)

This power transforms the psychic's body into a dream creature, enabling the character to enter the Dreamstream body and soul. Doing this has its dangers, including the fact that the dream traveler is not able to escape the Dreamstream by waking up. While in the Dreamstream, the psychic can enter other people's Dream Pools, and use psionics or other abilities to affect the dreams of the dreamer. At the end of the **power's** duration, or whenever the character decides to return to the waking world, the Dream Dancer will reappear at the physical location he originally left.

Gestalt Circle

Range: Touch; psychics must form a circle and hold hands.

Duration: One minute per participant.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: None

The psionic character can link a group of psychics (one per level of experience) together and pool their powers! While **linked** in a gestalt circle, the group can only use those powers they have in common, but those powers can be manipulated at a level equal to their combined levels of experience. For example, a gestalt circle with one third level psychic and two second level ones could use any common powers at seventh level intensity! Furthermore, the combined number of **I.S.P.** is available to the group (use is divided equally), and the range of the psionic powers are increased by 20% per each psychic in the circle. The latter only works if the range of the power is NOT affected by the level of experience of the psychic. Otherwise, range by level counts as the combined level of the group (in the previous example, the range would be at 7th level equivalent).

Total number of psionic attacks per melee round is two per participant in the circle. The maximum number of participants is eight (8).

A gestalt circle has its dangers and limitations.

1. While the psychics are linked, the connection will override any mind blocks or similar protection between the members participating in the gestalt circle. This means that any psychic in the circle can try to read the minds of the others or use other psychic

powers on the other members, and can do so with relative impunity.

2. One psychic in the group must be designated as the "key" or spokesperson through which their combined powers are directed. Only that key character can use the enhanced psionics of the circle, although the others can make verbal or telepathic suggestions. If another member in the circle tries to use one of his powers at the same time as the designated "key," neither power works, which means one melee **action/attack** is lost and half the **I.S.P.** of the intended power is expended without results! Teamwork is critical.

3. Participants in the circle cannot perform any other skills, engage in physical combat or parry, without breaking the circle. Each character can try to "duck" incoming attacks without breaking ranks as a dodge at -5 to do so.

4. If even one member of the circle breaks **ranks/lets** go of another participant's hand(s), the gestalt circle is instantly broken, all circle bonuses are lost, and the participants must rebuild the circle and spend another 30 **I.S.P.** to start again.

Group Mind Block

Range: 120 feet (36.5 m)

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 22

Saving Throw: None

The master psionic can instantly erect a mental barrier or mind block to protect himself and those around him, within a 120 foot (36.5 m) area. The group mind block works just like the individual mind block power. It can be a means of protecting those around the psychic from psionic probes and mind attacks, but it can also be used to prevent outside forces (good or evil) from communicating via telepathy or empathy. Everyone within the 120 foot (36.5 m) area of effect will be automatically blocked, but the effect is not detectable so they are not likely to know they are being mind blocked. The detect psionics power will indicate a group mind block.

Mind Block Auto-Defense

Range: Self

Duration: Special

I.S.P.: Special

Saving Throw: None

The moment the psychic is being mind probed, a personal mind block automatically snaps into place. It also alerts the psionic to the fact he or she is being probed or attacked by empathy or telepathy. The character must consciously and willingly lower the mind shield to open himself to psychic probes. Otherwise, the automatic defense mind block will stay in effect until the probe/attack is over.

The **I.S.P.** cost is different in that the character must permanently give up 10 **I.S.P.** when this power is selected. However, the mind block will automatically take place whenever under telepathic and **empathic** probes/attacks at no additional **I.S.P.** cost; it engages automatically.

Mind Bond

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: Standard

This creates an instant mind link between the psychic and the victim. When this happens, each will learn everything there is to know about the other. This includes all skills, secret identities, phobias, etc. In both cases, the memory is complete for only 3D4 hours; after that, the character must roll under 15% to recall any particular item. After one month, all memories completely disappear. Players should bear in mind that only the psychic knows the memories are not permanent, thus the other person would have no reason to make notes or act quickly before the new memories fade.

Note: Skills and skill bonuses are also temporarily absorbed, meaning that the psychic possesses all of his victim's skills and skill bonuses. Physical attributes, such as S.D.C. and attribute bonuses gained through physical training are not gained.

Alien or extremely mentally or emotionally disturbed minds can permanently impair the psychic's own mind as a result of the bond. If bonded with an alien or extremely disturbed person, roll on the following tables for a permanent insanity.

1-40 No Insanity

41-80 Phobia

81-90 Affective Disorder

91-00 Neurosis

Mind Wipe

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

I.S.P.: Special

Saving Throw: Standard

To mind wipe an intelligent creature, the psychic must make physical contact, touching his **victim's** temples to erase whatever he desires. This is done by verbal suggestion and can erase any past event, knowledge, skill, and so on. The process takes about three minutes to complete.

The loss of memory is temporary, lasting 1D4 days for every 10 **I.S.P.** expended. The memory can be permanently erased if the psychic exerts 50 **I.S.P.** at once. A psionic can also permanently wipe a mind completely blank by expending 50 **I.S.P.** and four Mental Endurance (M.E.) points. This is an extremely **grueling** process for the psychic and the loss of four M.E. points is permanent, even if the opponent successfully saves against the wipe and is not affected.

P.P.E. Shield

Range: Self

Duration: 6 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: None

A psionic defense that can be used to prevent P.P.E. vampires, mages and other entities from siphoning off one's psychic energy. The shield works similarly to a mind block, only it prevents others from draining one's P.P.E.

Possession

Range: Touch

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: Standard

The psychic can completely take over and control another person. The psychic essence of the controlling mind is transferred into the body of another individual. While in the victim's

body/mind, the psychic retains all his own knowledge and identity. He cannot read the mind of the person he now possesses, nor access any knowledge from the victim's memory. Only the physical body can be controlled, like a living robot.

During the period that the victim is possessed, that person goes into a trance state and remembers nothing about the things that happened while he was possessed. Meanwhile, the psychic's natural body falls into a coma-like state and is vulnerable to attack unless protected by others.

The possessing character can return to his own body at any time regardless of distance. When his essence leaves the body of the possessed, the victim suddenly becomes conscious again, as if suddenly being woken up.

Psi-Shield

Range: Self

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: None

A companion power to the psi-sword, in which the psychic can create an energy shield out of thin air. The shield can be used to parry all hand to hand attacks, but not against projectiles/bullets. Shield S.D.C. is 120.

Psi-Sword

Range: Self

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Third level of experience.

Psi-swords are psychic energy weapons that the character can mentally will into existence. The sword appears out of thin air as a shimmering blade of energy that resembles a glowing sword. The sword's actual appearance will generally reflect its creator. A character who is impressed by strength and power will create a huge claymore-like weapon, while somebody who prides himself on speed and agility will create a rapier or saber. Each weapon is equally powerful regardless of its form and size. The blade can even change color and shape to fit the current mood of its wielder.

Psi-sword damage: 6D6 at level three (one cannot select this power until level three). Add 1D6 at levels four, seven, nine, twelve and fifteen. The damage can be adjusted to inflict a minimum of 2D6 damage points, or increased by increments of 1D6 up to the character's **current maximum**.

Psychic Mirage (Superior)

Range: 120 feet/36.5 m (size of illusion is 3 feet/0.9 m per level of experience).

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 40

Saving Throw: Standard.

A powerful illusion that affects all senses. The illusion will move and act out any mental commands given by its creator, and will fool the ears, sense of touch and pain centers of those who face it. **Illusionary** damage will not do any permanent damage, although people who think they have been killed will collapse into unconsciousness. This illusion can be created in most planes of existence, including Earth, **Nightlands**, Astral Plane and **Dreamstream**.

Supercharge

Range: Self

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: None

Prerequisite: Summon Inner Strength

This power channels the **character's** psychic energies into his own body, temporarily granting him +6 to P.S., which becomes supernatural, and an additional 40 S.D.C. for the duration of the power. This power is especially handy when combating vampires and other superhuman monstrosities. **Note:** In games like *Rifts*®, punches and kicks with supernatural P.S. inflict mega-damage, but the **I.S.P.** cost is 40 instead of 30.

Telekinetic Force Field

Range: Self or 40 feet (12.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 30

Saving Throw: None

The psychic can instantly erect a force field around himself or others in the blink of an eye. If the creation of the force field is to parry an attack, the psionic must roll a successful parry to see if he was able to create the field before the attack struck. A successful parry means the force field beat the attacker's strike and it absorbs the damage.

The force field can be made so that it only encircles its creator or as large as a 10 foot (3.0 m) area per level of experience. It can also be created yards away, but always within the line of vision of the psychic. The smallest force field possible covers a three foot area (0.9 m). The field protects with 130 S.D.C., plus 20 S.D.C. per level of experience. When its S.D.C. is destroyed so is the field. People may be able to move around inside the force field, but the force field itself cannot be moved. The psychic can create additional force fields, as many as his **I.S.P.** will allow.

Telemechanics

Range: Touch or up to 5 feet (1.5 m) away.

Duration: 10 minutes plus 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: None

This ability allows the psionic to mentally communicate with and understand machines. This psychic power is a bizarre combination of object read and telepathy, except that it applies to mechanical devices only.

By touching any **non-artificially** intelligent machine, whether it be a bicycle, gun, car or airplane, the psychic will instantly have a complete (although temporary) knowledge of exactly how the machine is operated. The psychic knows everything about the machine; the complete schematic diagram and operation knowledge are clearly seen in his mind's eye. The level of skill expertise is equal to 80% and of professional quality.

When touching a computer, the psychic not only understands everything about its operation, repair, access codes, etc., but can actually communicate with it telepathically. This means he can tap into a computer's memory bank without using the psychic's mind. Because the information is sent directly into the psychic's mind. Remember, the telepathic link and memory are temporary abilities. The psychic's skill knowledge is equal to 88% skill profi-

ciency and applies to all aspects of the machine, its operation, repair, special codes, etc.

Healer Powers

Bio-Regeneration

Range: Self

Duration: Permanent

I.S.P.: 6

Saving Throw: None

This is the ability to mentally heal oneself of disease, poison, or physical damage. Unfortunately, this ability is limited to the healing of oneself and cannot help others. The process requires one full minute of concentration. Bio-Regeneration does not restore missing limbs, but does heal 2D6 hit points or 3D6 S.D.C. per melee round. In addition, when cuts and scrapes are healed through bio-regeneration, there is NO scarring. The psionic can regenerate as often as once every other minute.

Detect Psionics

Range: Self, sensing range is 30 feet (9.1 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 6

Saving Throw: None

This is a mental probe that will indicate the presence of psionic energy within the immediate area. The probe cannot be used to pinpoint the exact location of psychic energy nor the level of power other than a vague sense of weak, medium or powerful, but will indicate whether an individual is psychic by directing the probe at a specific person (does not reveal the type or strength of the person's powers other than low, medium, high). It will also indicate whether a group mind block is in effect and if a person is psionically possessed.

Restore I.S.P.

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

I.S.P.: 2 plus the amount of I.S.P. transferred.

Saving Throw: None.

The psychic doesn't actually restore lost I.S.P., but *transfers* some of his I.S.P. to another psychic. The operation costs two I.S.P. plus the amount transferred. So, for example, transferring 10 I.S.P. to another psychic would cost 12 I.S.P. total. A mind block will prevent this energy transfer.

Restore P.P.E.

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

I.S.P.: 4 plus the amount of P.P.E. transferred.

Saving Throw: None

This power allows the psychic to convert some of his I.S.P. to P.P.E. energy and transfer the energy to another person. Two I.S.P. counts as one P.P.E. point. In addition, the conversion and transfer costs four I.S.P. So, for example, 10 I.S.P. converts into five P.P.E. and costs four to do the conversion and transfer for a total cost of 14 I.S.P. A mind block will prevent this energy transfer.

Suppress Fear

Range: Self or others by touch.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8

Saving Throw: None

This power temporarily suppresses the chemical and psychological components of fear in the subject. As a result, the character is unable to feel the emotion, even if intellectually he realizes he is in danger or is facing a terrifying situation. This enables the character to take perfectly rational actions rather than respond with the typical "fight or flight" reactions of those who are frightened. While this power is activated, the character automatically succeeds on any check to resist horror factor, even if magically induced. This power can be used on the psychic himself or on others.

Sensitive Powers

Astral Bolts

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m) plus 10 feet (3.0 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: Dodge

Prerequisite: Astral Projection or Astral Transference.

This power can only be used in the Astral Plane, because it draws on ambient ectoplasm. The astral bolts inflict 1D4 S.D.C. per level of the caster, and are +3 to strike. Targets can dodge normally.

Astral Navigation

Range: Self

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 4

Saving Throw: None

Base Skill: 45% +4% per level of experience.

Prerequisite: Astral Projection or Astral Transference.

Astral travelers with this power are in a state of communion with the Astral Plane, and are able to **find** their way more easily. This power can be used in many different ways, depending on where in the Astral Plane the user is at the moment. Skill rolls can be made once every hour.

In the Outer Layer, the psychic can return to his body (or to the physical world if traveling through astral transference) by making a successful skill roll (do not roll on the table found in the *Nightbane* RPG, page 70).

In the Inner Plane, the psychic can travel through the Dragon Roads by making a skill roll and visualizing the destination. This skill roll is modified as follows:

Destination is well known to the traveler (i.e., an astral domain or kingdom in which he has stayed for at least 48 hours): +25%

Destination is known to the traveler (has visited it at least once): +5%

Traveler knows of but has never been to the destination: -5%

Destination is in the Inner Plane: No modifier.

Destination is in the Outer Layer: -10%

Destination is in the Void: -15%

Dreamdance (Minor)

Range: Self

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 8

Saving Throw: None

This psychic power allows the character to enter the Dreamstream (described elsewhere). The psychic's body remains in a trance, much like when traveling via astral projection. A dream projection is similar to an astral projection but without the silver cord link, and will appear in the **Dreamstream**, very close to the character's own Dream Pool. This dream projection has S.D.C. points equal to the total S.D.C. and hit points of the character (dream constructs don't have hit points, only S.D.C. equivalents).

The character's dream construct may be attacked or harmed. This damage does not affect the character's body unless the dream projection is completely destroyed. Leaving the Dreamstream can be done automatically unless some being or dream psychic is trying to prevent this, in which case both sides will roll as per the *Dream Combat rules* (described elsewhere).

While in the Dreamstream, the character can search for the Dream Pool of any given individual who is asleep and dreaming. The better that individual is known, or the stronger the emotions towards that person are, the easier the search will be. The search for a specific Dream Pool may take minutes or hours, and the psychic may be forced to leave the Dreamstream before it is successful; roll on the following table:

The psychic intimately knows the person involved, or feels a great deal of love or hatred towards **him/her**: 1-70% chance of finding **his/her** Pool (roll every minute).

The psychic knows the person: 1-60% (roll every **five** minutes).

The psychic is acquainted with the person: 1-50% (roll every ten minutes).

The psychic has seen the person at least once: 1-35% (roll every half hour).

The psychic has heard of the person, or seen **his/her** picture several times (includes famous people): 1-20% (roll every hour).

Ethereal Mirage (Minor)

Range: 10 feet (3.0 m) per level of experience. Size of the illusion is limited to 3 square feet (0.28 square meter) per level of experience.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 6

Saving Throw: Standard

Limitation: This power only works in the Dreamstream and Astral Plane.

Creates a visual illusion projected directly into the mind of the people in range of the power. If a successful save is made the target realizes he is seeing an illusion. The illusion can have any shape and form the character wishes it to have, but cannot produce any sound, nor is it substantial.

Sense Dimensional Anomaly

Range: 120 feet/36.5 m area

Duration: 2 minutes per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 6

Saving Throw: None

This power will detect the presence of a dimensional anomaly like a dimensional portal or Rift leading to an astral or dream domain, as well as any disturbances caused by **teleportation**, temporal magic or other powers that disrupt the fabric of reality.

Physical Powers

Activate Dimensional Portal

Range: Touch

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

I.S.P.: 10

Saving Throw: None; protected portals will have a standard save, modified by any bonuses of its creator.

Limitations: Applicable only to dimensional portals to and from the Astral Plane, astral domains, astral kingdoms, Dream Pools, the Dreamstream and the **Nightlands**.

This power allows psychics to open some dimensional portals. The portal must already exist (the character cannot *create* a dimensional portal). A protected portal will resist being opened by interlopers.

Telekinetic Punch

Range: By touch or one foot (0.3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant

I.S.P.: 6

Saving Throw: None.

This telekinetic power enables the psychic to deliver a powerful punch or kick-like force through telekinetic energy. A telekinetic punch will inflict 4D6 plus P.S. bonus, and a kick will do 5D6 plus P.S. bonus. The **I.S.P.** is spent whether or not the punch or kick actually hits the target (roll to strike as normal). The power is used in conjunction with a normal, physical attack that can be parried or dodged by the enemy. Every time the power is used, the psychic must make a save of 14 or higher, or he will take 1D6 points of damage himself as a result of wrenched muscles or a dislocated joint from the extra strain on his body.

Telekinetic Leap

Range: Self (leaping range is increased by 3 or 5 **feet/0.9** to 1.5 m per level of experience.

Duration: One melee **attack/action** (leap)

I.S.P.: 8

Saving Throw: None

This telekinetic application boosts the person's leaping ability, propelling the psychic an additional 3 feet (0.9 m) for high jumps, and 5 feet (1.5 m) for broad jumps (lengthwise), per level of experience. This power can be used in conjunction with a leap kick attack (damage: **6D6+6** plus P.S. bonuses), but the character will take 2D6 points of damage himself from the hard impact. An acrobatics or gymnastics roll or a roll with punch, fall or impact, may be needed to land safely after one of these leaps.



New P.C.C.'s

Note to Beyond the Supernatural Game Masters: You will notice a number of changes between the Psychic Character Classes (P.C.C.s) below and their equivalents in the original edition of *Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG*. The changes in power and **I.S.P.** levels, as well as some available psychic powers are adjusted for the concepts and world environment of **Nightbane**. They can be justified changes due to the general increase in psy-

chic energy caused by Dark Day and the "realignment" of Earth and the **Nightlands**. Skills have been modified to fit what has become the standard "O.C.C." system used in the *Rifts® RPG*, and others, as well as future Palladium products (including a second edition BTS planned for a 1997 release). Game masters who like the older format or power levels should feel free to keep them and alter these as they see **fit**.

Mind Master P.C.C.

Before Dark Day, a handful of powerful psychics lurked among the shadows of Earth, avoiding the limelight and keeping to themselves. Some were extremely **wealthy** and powerful individuals, thanks to the subtle use of their special abilities. Others lived simple lives, hiding their true natures from a world that feared the unknown. A few used their powers to commit horrible crimes with impunity, but many more tried to help humankind in many different ways. Overall, however, they did not become involved in social-economic or government affairs. These *Mind Masters*, as they called themselves, were even able to use their superior psychic abilities to escape detection and persecution by the Paranormal Activities Bureau (PAB; see the *Spook Squad*

section). So, beyond making life comfortable for themselves, most Mind Masters lived by a credo of "live and let live."

The Nightlords' invasion of Earth made it impossible to remain neutral or hidden. Their "secret invasion" was no secret to the Mind Masters. Their powerful, psionically enhanced senses alerted them to the presence of the **transdimensional** beings and their supernatural minions immediately. To these characters' horror, the Nightlord's minions also had means of detecting their psionic power; so the shadows no longer provided the psychics the safety they had come to rely upon. The minions of **Ba'al** were able to ferret out and target hundreds of Mind Masters for extermination before the psychics' realized they were targets. It seemed the Nightlords feared all psychics, especially the most experienced and powerful like the Mind Masters, because they

could see through their veil of lies and deception. Psychics were among the very few who could sense the supernatural, see the invisible, detect evil **Doppelgangers** and astral assassins, as well as use their powers to counter, avoid and strike at the Nightlords and their minions, not only on Earth, but in the Astral Plane as well. This made them potentially dangerous, and thus required their elimination.

The **Nightlords'** immediate and extreme solution may have backfired on them. The Mind Masters, realizing their cover was blown, and that they were targeted for systematic and total extermination, went quickly underground. Furthermore, for the first time in human history, they began to work closely with other psychics (lesser and masters), as well as other groups, to fight the secret invaders! Many are active in finding and warning other psychics (and in some cases, the Nightbane) about the Nightlords and their campaign of genocide. Many of those they warn are recruited to the growing resistance movement on virtually every level. Some Mind Masters (and lesser psionics) have become psychic vigilantes, some lead small groups of psychic and non-psychic humans **and/or Nightbanes**, while others have joined Spook Squad, the PAB, militia groups, Nightbane *factions and other organizations*.

Psychics of **all** degrees of power are **rapidly** being recognized as the first line of defense against the supernatural — in many cases, they alone can see through the human guises of the minions or detect astral spies. The most stubborn and solitary of the Mind Masters still continue to work alone, refusing to follow others. Many of these people have not come to terms with the changing world around them and have not yet taken their stand. A comparatively tiny number of Mind Masters have become minions of the Nightlords, trading their lives for servitude and power.

Mind Master P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses

1. Supernatural Senses: All mind masters have the ability to sense supernatural beings. This power costs no **I.S.P.** and has a range of 60 feet (18.3 m) +5 feet (1.5 m) per additional level of experience. This ability does not pinpoint the location of these creatures, just that they have entered (or left) the range of the psychic's senses. When looking at an individual supernatural creature, the psychic has a chance to detect its true nature. **Base Chance of Success:** 30% plus 5% per level. The power alter aura, and a Nightbane in facade form will reduce this chance by -30%.

2. Psionic Abilities: At first level, mind masters start out with the following abilities: alter aura, detect psionics, empathy, mind block, object read, presence sense, see aura, see the invisible, telepathy and total recall. Select an additional two powers of choice from the *master psionic category (new)* or three from the *sensitive powers category*.

At each level after the first, the character can select one power from the master, or sensitive, or healing categories.

3. I.S.P.: 2D6×10 plus M.E. attribute. Add 3D4 per additional level of experience.

4. P.C.C. Bonuses: +1 to save vs psionic attacks and all forms of mind control (including drugs), +1 on perception rolls, +3 to save vs possession and insanity, +3 to save vs dream manipulation/combat, and +4 to save vs horror factor; all are in addition to skill and attribute bonuses.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: M.E. and I.Q. 11 or higher; must be human.

P.C.C. Skills:

Native language and literacy (98%)

Basic Math (+20%)

Lore: Psychic (+20%)

Computer Operations (+15%)

Two Domestic Skills of choice (+15%)

Two Technical or Science Skills of choice (+15%)

Hand to hand must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic can be selected at the cost of one "other" skill, expert at the cost of two skills and martial arts (or assassin if evil) at the cost of three "other" skills.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select 12 other skills. Plus select one skill at levels three, five, eight, ten, twelve and fifteen. All **new skills start** at level one **proficiency**.

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Intelligence and wilderness survival only.

Mechanical: Any (+5%)

Medical: Any (+5%)

Military: None.

Physical: Any; except acrobatics and gymnastics.

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%)

Science: Any (+10%)

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated in the list.

Standard Equipment: Typical Mind Masters start with 3D6×1000 in equipment, plus an average car or motorcycle, a personal computer or lap-top, a modest wardrobe and basic personal items. Keep in mind that the wealthier and more influential Mind Masters were most likely to be among the first noticed and destroyed by the Nightlords and their minions.

Money: 5D6×100 dollars in cash.

‘Kinetic P.C.C.

During the last three decades, the PAB noticed no less than fifty cases of powerful psychokinetic activity. Most of the subjects involved were in their teens, and most incidents involved them losing control of their emotions and unleashing their powers in a violent and destructive way. These incidents were covered up by the PAB and other government agencies. Common explanations for the deaths (often in the dozens) and property destruction included gas main explosions, tornadoes, hurricanes and similar causes. Many of these young people were killed or at best, imprisoned by the PAB and the Pandora Project (see the *Spook Squad* section for more information).



(18.3 m) away plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. Note: See *Nightbane RPG*, page 79, for complete details about **electrokinesis**.

Hydrokinesis: In addition to the normal powers of this ability, the psychic can manipulate large amounts of water. By manipulating water pressure, the character can cause pipes or fire hydrants to burst. Up to 50 gallons of water, plus 10 gallons per additional level of experience, can be manipulated. By channeling a high-pressure water jet, the psychic can inflict 1D6 damage per 20 gallons used. Range: 20 feet (6.1 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. The sense water power has a range of 60 feet (18.3 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. Note: See *Nightbane RPG*, page 79, for complete details about **hydrokinesis**.

Pyrokinesis: Fireballs only cost 15 I.S.P. to produce, and have a range of 60 feet (18.3 m) plus 5 feet (1.5 m) per level of experience. The base range of all other powers is doubled (the increment remains the same). Note: See *Nightbane RPG*, page 81, for the full range of **pyrokinesis** abilities.

Telekinesis: As per the normal power description, but the amount of weight that can be manipulated becomes 10 lbs (4.5 kg) per I.S.P. spent. Throwing and manipulation range are increased to 30 feet (9.1 m) plus 10 feet (3.0 m) per level of experience, regardless of the weight lifted. Note: See *Nightbane RPG*, page 82, for the full range of **telekinetic** powers.

2. Other Psionic Powers: In addition to their major power, **'Kinetics** can select three powers from the physical category at first level, and one power from the physical or healing categories every additional level.

3. I.S.P.: 2D4x10+10 plus M.E. attribute. Add 2D6 per additional level of experience.

4. P.C.C. Bonuses: +1 to save vs psionic attacks, +2 to save vs possession and insanity, +1 to save vs dream manipulation/combat, and +2 to save vs horror factor; all are in addition to skill and attribute bonuses.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: M.E. 12 or higher.

P.C.C. Skills: Skill choices should reflect the character's background. If the player can come up with a convincing reason to get skills not allowed in the list below, the game master may consider the request, provided it will not be unbalancing or hard to believe. Most **'Kinetics** discover their abilities during the middle teens (15-17), so half never graduate from high school and their educational level should reflect this.

Native language and literacy (98%)

- Basic Math (+5%)

Computer Operations (+15%)

Two Domestic Skills of choice (+10%)

Car or Motorcycle Driving (+15%)

Two skills of choice (+15%)

Hand to hand must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic can be selected at the cost of one "other" skill, expert at the cost of two skills and martial arts (or assassin if evil) at the cost of three "other" skills.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven other skills. Plus select a new skill at levels four, eight, twelve and fourteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency. Skills should be selected based on the background of the character; the game master is the final arbiter of whether or not a skill is appropriate for a given character.

When the Nightlords invaded Earth, the sudden influx of psychic energy into the planet triggered the latent abilities of thousands of people, most (but not all) of them young. During the first chaotic days of the invasion, a few of these new psychics were rounded up by the authorities, but most managed to evade them. The Nightlords then tried to find and exterminate all psychics, but found **'Kinetics** (as they were referred to among PAB agents) to be tough nuts to crack. Each discovery usually led to an epic battle between the hopelessly outnumbered psychic and dozens of Hounds and other beings, and although victory was assured, losses among the **Ba'al** minions were high.

When Spook Squad started finding and recruiting as many of these psychics as they could, a lot of them had to choose between working alongside people who had once hunted and enslaved them, or face these supernatural enemies alone. Many have chosen to join Spook Squad, but some have joined forces with other groups of psychics, **Nightbane** factions, militia groups, gangs and other groups and organizations. Of course, some operate alone.

'Kinetic P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses

1. Psychokinetic Powers: The psychic has one particular power that he or she can use better than anybody else. Select ONE of the following physical powers:

Electrokinesis: In addition to the normal powers listed, the psychic can generate electrical arcs that inflict 5D6 S.D.C. damage. Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) plus 10 feet (3.0 m) per level of experience. I.S.P. Cost: 15. Increase the base range of the power to manipulate electrical devices or to sense electricity up to 60 feet

Communications: Any
 Domestic: Any (+5%)
 Electrical: Any
 Espionage: None
 Mechanical: Any (+5%)
 Medical: First aid and paramedic only.
 Military: None
 Physical: Any, except acrobatics and gymnastics.
 Pilot: Any (+5%)
 Pilot Related: Any
 Rogue: Any (+3%)
 Science: Any
 Technical: Any (+5%)
 W.P.: Any
 Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select **five** secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Typically, 1D4×1000 dollars in possessions, including clothes, weapons, and personal items. The character may also have a rattle-trap of a used car or motorcycle. Psychics working for Spook Squad will have roughly the same benefits and equipment as a typical agent or researcher (see the *Spook Squad* section for more information).

Money: 2D6×100 dollars in cash, or one month's salary in savings, whichever is more. Salary depends on the job chosen, from a common restaurant or stock boy job paying at or near minimum wage to a Spook Squad stipend of \$2,000 to \$4,000 a month.

Natural & Genius P.C.C.

Unknown to most (with the possible exception of the Nightlords), the subtle shift in mystical energies has increased the latent powers of the populace at large, not only the flashier "psychics" that garner all the attention and fear, but also those with less obvious abilities. For example, the few trend-watchers still in business have noticed a marked rise in achievement at the high end of the scale. In other words, the number of "geniuses," both mental and physical, seems to be on the rise.

Many, or perhaps most of these latent psychics unconsciously channel their psychic energies in one or two mundane fields they feel passionate about. They don't have to work very hard in those fields to be good at them; in fact, they sometimes do things with such effortless ease that they put most normal people to shame. Whether they become Olympic level athletes or master hackers, *naturals* will always be outstanding in at least one field of endeavor.

Although the existence of these psychics has been largely ignored by both sides of the struggle, many of them have ended up taking sides out of necessity. Several dozen naturals are working for Spook Squad, the Seekers and other organizations where humans are accepted. Their contributions are always surprising, and many have become top agents and researchers. Others remain independent or work for large corporations in the civilian

world, however, their natural ability or genius is likely to make them more open to the concepts of the supernatural and more likely to recognize the unusual (as well as plots and subterfuge).

The Natural & Genius P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Psionic Powers: In addition to their special abilities (see below), all *naturals* have the psionic powers *mind block* and *total recall*. These are "subconscious" powers that are used when the psychic needs them; many naturals are not even aware that they have any psionic abilities.

2. I.S.P.: M.E. attribute plus 3D6. Add 1D4 I.S.P. per additional level of experience.

3. Attribute Bonuses: All "naturals" have greater than average physical and mental attributes. The character is at +1 to all attributes (roll 3D6+1; if the total roll, including bonuses, is 16 or higher, roll an additional 1D6).

4. Base P.P.E.: 4D6+16 plus the P.E. attribute. This base P.P.E. is not increased at higher levels. Much of this base P.P.E. is unconsciously spent by the psychic in his/her focus on physical or mental abilities. A minimum of 2 P.P.E. must be kept by the character as his permanent P.P.E. base. Note: If the character selects a special ability that increases his/her P.E. attribute, do not count this improved P.E. for the character's psychic energy total.

5. Special Abilities: Naturals unconsciously use their initial P.P.E. to improve their minds or bodies. These powers can be used in two ways. First, they can spend permanent P.P.E. points to raise any skills they choose. Each P.P.E. point spent in this way grants a +3% bonus on a skill. This bonus is permanent and cannot be changed or transferred to another skill. Alternatively, by spending a set amount of P.P.E., the character can select one or more of the areas of specialty described below. Any combination of specialties can be selected; the only limiting factor is the amount of P.P.E. available.

a) Electrical Genius: P.P.E. Cost: 16. The focus of the character's potential psychic energy is electronics. This means he or she has an intuitive sense and understanding of electricity, circuitry and wiring. However, this "natural" skill is not the equivalent of training as an electrical engineer. The character gets basic electronics automatically and starts with a base skill of 65% plus 5% per additional level of experience.

Of course, this natural aptitude can be combined with formal education for even more impressive results. Add a one-time bonus of +15% to all electrical skills learned through formal education. Furthermore, the usual penalties for extremely advanced or alien technology are half for the natural.

Electrical Hot-wiring: 66% +2% per level of experience. This skill applies to most electrical systems, including electronic security systems, household appliances, automobiles, and similar. The game master may assign penalties of -5% to -25% when working under stressful conditions, very quickly, or on complex or alien technology.

b) Computer Genius: P.P.E. Cost: 15. The focus of this character's psychic energy is computer operation, programming and hacking. The psychic automatically has *computer operation* at 88%+2% per additional level of experience, *computer programming* at 80%+2% per additional level of experience, and *computer hacking* at 70%+2% per level of experience. The char-

acter can learn how to use any computer equipment he gets his hands on, even totally unfamiliar or cutting-edge systems; base skill for this is 56% plus 4% per level of experience. In addition, the character is +2 on perception rolls.

c) Mental Genius: P.P.E. Cost: 17. The character's psychic energies have gone into developing his mental abilities. Add 1D4+2 to I.Q. (with an absolute minimum of 17). Additionally, the character has a photographic memory and learning abilities far beyond those of normal humans. The genius gets a +3% bonus on all skills, including secondary skills, in addition to any I.Q. and P.C.C. bonuses. The new skill starts at first level proficiency, but it gets all appropriate bonuses. In addition, the character is +2 on perception rolls, +2 to save vs dream manipulation/combat, and +2 to see through illusions.

d) Weapons Expert: P.P.E. Cost: 16. The character has a fondness for all aspects of weaponry, from weapon-smithing, making modifications and the use of weapons. The character gets three Weapon Proficiencies in addition to any W.P.s chosen as P.C.C. skills. He can make and modify any weapon (modern or ancient) for which he has a W.P. (72% plus 2% per additional level of experience). Proper materials and tools are still needed to actually make weapons, and the game master may impose penalties of -5% to -65% depending on the complexity of the weapon. Additionally, the character knows how to best maintain a weapon and recognize its quality (50% plus 5% per additional level of experience).

Weapon Skill Bonuses: +1 to parry with ancient weapons, +1 to strike with any ranged weapons/guns; these bonuses apply to weapons with which the character is proficient (has a W.P.). Additionally, the character gets to select a favorite weapon: a specific make and model (whether it is a samurai *katana* or a Colt .45). When using this weapon, the character is at +2 to strike and parry (if applicable).

e) Bio-Feedback: P.P.E. Cost: 20. The focus of the character's psychic energies is a unique bonding of mind and body, similar to the techniques of Hindu masters who can walk on hot coals. This will allow the character to channel his inner mind (or Chi) to master the physical body with the following results:

- The character can go into a Death Trance (88% +2% per additional level), in which the effects of any drug or poison will be temporarily canceled. This stasis state can provide the character with precious time in which an antidote can be found without ill effect in the interim, or attempt to cleanse his body himself. The death trance can be maintained for 24 hours per level of experience.
- Bio-feedback cleansing can be performed while in a trance; base skill is 66% +2% per additional level of experience. This meditative state lasts 24 hours; during which the character will regain 1D6 S.D.C. or hit points per hour if injured, and will "flush out"/negate any poisons, drugs or toxins in his body.
- Finally, the character can channel positive energy into his body (70% +2% per additional level), which grants him the following bonuses and abilities: energy attacks, including heat, fire, electricity and lasers, do half damage, as do gases, poisons and drugs (and their duration is also halved); +1 to save versus magic, +2 to save versus psionic attacks, +4 to save vs possession, +4 to save vs dream manipulation/combat and +5 to save vs horror factor. These bonuses and abilities

remain in force 20 minutes for every one hour of prior meditation in which positive chi was being channeled.

f) Exceptional Physical Prowess: P.P.E. Cost: 18. The focus of the character's energies is towards physical achievement. Even without working at it, the character has a level of coordination and grace that most athletes fail to gain in a lifetime.

Bonuses: +1D6 to P.P. attribute (minimum P.P. is 17); +1D6+6 to Spd attribute (minimum Spd is 17); +1 attack per melee round, +3 to initiative, +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to pull punch, and a one-time bonus of +10% to the character's favorite physical skill or one he feels is most important to him (can be selected from prowl, climbing, swimming, gymnastics and similar).

g) Exceptional Physical Strength: P.P.E. Cost: 18. The focus is physical rather than intellectual. The character's strength and endurance are nearly heroic, far outshining the form. In the world of Nightbane, this strength becomes supernatural. *Bonuses:* +1D6+6 to P.S. (minimum P.S. 18), +1D4 to P.E., and +1D4×10 to S.D.C. Punches and kicks inflict damage as per the supernatural P.S. rules in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 35.

h) Exceptional Physical Endurance: P.P.E. Cost: 18. The focus is on the hardiness of the individual. *Bonuses:* +2D4 to P.E. (minimum P.E. is 18), +1D6×10 to S.D.C., +2D6 to hit points, +10% to survive *coma/death* and +2 to save vs disease, poisons and drugs; all bonuses are in addition to cumulative P.E. bonuses.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: None; see bonuses, below.

P.C.C. Skills: Naturals have the advantage of being able to learn almost any skill they show an interest in, with the benefit of their I.Q. and P.C.C. bonuses; the following skills and the bonus listed with them, do not include these bonuses. All bonuses are cumulative.

Native Language and Literacy (98%)

Basic Math (+25%)

Computer Operations (+15%)

Two technical or science skills of choice (+15%)

Two electrical, mechanical or medical skills of choice (+10%)

Hand to hand must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic can be selected at the cost of one "other" skill, expert at the cost of two skills and martial arts (or assassin if evil) at the cost of three "other" skills.

Note: Characters who work for Spook Squad or similar organizations can exchange one technical or one electrical skill for W.P. pistol and hand to hand: basic.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select 12 other skills. Plus the character gets to select an additional skill at levels three, five, eight, ten and thirteen. All new skills start at the base skill level. Some Natural special abilities will add a bonus to some skills; this bonus is cumulative with all others. **Note:** Skills should conform to the character's background, age and history. Naturals are more likely to "bend the rules" and somehow learn (even by book reading) highly unlikely skills, but some limits should apply. Game masters are the final arbiters of whether or not a skill is appropriate for a player.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any (+10%)

Electrical: Any (+5%)

Espionage: Any
Mechanical: Any (+5%)
Medical: Any
Military: Any
Physical: Any
Pilot: Any (+5%)
Pilot Related: Any
Rogue: Any
Science: Any
Technical: Any (+5%)
W.P.: Any
Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select three secondary skills at levels one, three, six, ten and fourteen. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses; they still get any **Natural/I.Q.** bonuses that apply. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Varies with background. Since naturals tend to be more successful, they often have more money available. Civilians start out with **6D6×1,000** dollars' worth of possessions, plus a nice car or motorcycle, apartment, clothing, and personal items. Spook Squad special agents may have access to the equipment provided by that organization.

Money: \$3D6×1,000 in cash.

Psi-Mechanic P.C.C.

Psi-Mechanics are psychics who use machines as a focal point to draw upon their powers and abilities. Without such machines and gadgets, the character is usually unable to tap his or her other psionic powers. This limitation is a psychological block, but no less real for that. This also means that the **Psi-Mechanic's** gizmos are useless for most people; only other psychics have a chance of being able to channel their I.S.P. through them.

Psi-Mechanics were a major subject of study at the Pandora Project's research facility, the *Detroit Metallurgical Laboratories (DML)*. The general theories postulated were that, first, the **psi-mechanic's** own psychic abilities are powering the so-called "gadgets," and, secondly, the psychic somehow manages to "imprint" the device with the desired ability or power. This imprint acts as a combination trigger and psychic circuit board, and explains why another Psi-Mechanic cannot usually operate somebody **else's** machine without first getting instructions from the creator! The study could never determine how or why these machines worked for their creators. In fact, from a purely mechanical point of view, most of these machines had no special mechanical or metaphysical components or functions. In some cases, the gadget didn't even work as an independent machine.

Psi-Mechanic P.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses

1. Build Psionic Devices: The character can build a device that emulates a broad range of psionic powers. When a machine is built, the Psi-Mechanic is drained of some of his Potential Psychic Energy (P.P.E.), which is used to imprint the device



with one specific psychic power. The machine typically follows a "pseudo-scientific" common sense. For example, to see the invisible, most **Psi-Mechanics** will build goggles, binoculars or similar viewing devices. Sometimes, the device may be a real gadget, such as a set of infrared or nightlight goggles that can be used as designed, as well as to see the invisible (equal to the psychic power). Other examples include helmets for protection from or to instill telepathic powers, or portable computers, helmets, or motion detectors for different types of psionic **detection/sensing** powers, and so on. The device draws I.S.P. points from the user to power its abilities; this **I.S.P.** cost is the same as the normal psychic ability. Likewise, the power of the devices is the same as the standard psionic ability.

Other psychics have a chance of using the device, but it is often a remote one. Psi-Mechanics have a 20% chance of using a *found* device without instructions from the creator; other psychics have a mere 12% chance. Under careful instruction by the creator of the device, all psychics have a 55% chance of learning to use the device. The powers of object read raises all the above chances by +5% and using tele-mechanics adds a +10% bonus (15% if both are used). **P.P.E. Cost:** Any psychic power can be simulated by the **Psi-Mechanic**, with the following limitations. First, the psychic must know the power to be imprinted. Secondly, each time a device is created, the psychic spends 1 P.P.E. point for every two points of I.S.P. needed to activate the device, or a total of four P.P.E. points, whichever is MORE.

2. **P.P.E.:** 6D6+20 plus the P.E. attribute. A minimum of eight P.P.E. must be retained by the character; the rest can be used to build psi-devices. Add an additional 2D6 P.P.E. per level of experience after the first; this P.P.E. can be used to build additional gadgets.

3. **Psionic Powers (Devices):** The character gets to select two powers from *each* of the physical, sensitive and healing categories (six total). These powers can only be used through machines and devices built by the character. Every level of experience after the first, select two powers from any of those three categories, OR one power from the *master psionics* category.

4. **Independent Psionic Powers:** In addition to powers that can only be used through devices, all Psi-Mechanics have the following abilities, which need no machines: telemechanics, total recall and object read.

5. **I.S.P.:** 2D6x10 plus M.E. attribute. Add 10 I.S.P. per additional level of experience.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: M.E. and I.Q. 10 or higher.

P.C.C. Skills: Most psi-mechanics develop an aptitude for the mechanical sciences. A few are actually very clumsy with any "real" machines, however, and can only work on psychic devices that have no relation to physical laws. The player gets to decide what kind of character he wants to play, and modify skill choices accordingly.

Basic Math (+20%)

Language and Literacy (native; 98%)

Computer Operations (+20%)

Three mechanical, electrical or technical skills of choice (+15%)

Two Science or Domestic Skills of choice (+15%)

Hand to hand must be selected as an "other" skill. Hand to hand: basic can be selected at the cost of one "other" skill, ex-

pert at the cost of two skills, and martial arts (or assassin if evil) at the cost of three "other" skills.

P.C.C. Related Skills: Select 10 other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, five, seven, ten, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Any (+10%)

Espionage: None

Mechanical: Any (+10%)

Medical: Any

Military: Any

Physical: Any except acrobatics.

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any

Science: Any (+10%)

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any



Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select six secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonus listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: The character can start with as many psi-devices and gadgets as he has invested P.P.E. into. The character will also own a personal computer and printer, a lap-top computer, pocket calculator, pen flashlight, pocket tool kit, full tool kit, a large duffle bag (to carry "stuff in"), a backpack, a modest wardrobe and an old clunker of an automobile (but it probably runs like a top). The character probably rents a modest apartment. Other equipment will vary with the character's interests and background. Typically has 2D6x1,000 dollars in additional possessions.

Money: 2D4x1,000 in cash, everything else has been spent on tools, equipment, materials and building gizmos.

Magic

Arcane Detective O.C.C.

This character class belongs to a small and rather unique group, many of them associated with the **Aurora Investigation Agency** (see *Organizations of the Astral Plane* for details) or **The Seekers faction** (see the *Nightbane RPG*). Less than a hundred of these mystically adept investigators are believed to exist in the world, although with the growth of Spook Squad and other organizations that fight the supernatural, more and more practitioners of magic are being discovered, and some are actually being trained in both the mystic arts and investigative techniques.

The combination of investigation skills and spells designed to enhance those skills, place these investigators among the ultimate truth-seekers, especially when the paranormal is involved.

Arcane Detectives can easily discover supernatural activities, locate missing people, and solve crimes beyond the reach of mundane methods of investigation. In addition to solving normal crimes, they specialize in crimes perpetrated at the hands of supernatural and paranormal beings. This means they are no stranger to the likes of covens, cultists, and sorcerers, as well as vampires and other monstrous predators. As a result, many Arcane Detectives have stumbled onto the Nightlords' plots, and often pay dearly for their indiscretions. This has led some to devote more time to matters dealing with the Ba'al, and getting others to join or assist organizations and individuals who oppose the Nightlords. Of course, some try to steer clear of matters involving the Ba'al and their insidious henchmen, pawns and minions.

Many detectives have connections with the local authorities and can get leads, confirmation of facts or rumors, and occasional assistance from friends, acquaintances and paid informants on the police force. In the alternative, the detective may have a network of "street connections;" bartenders, street people, stool-pigeons, informants, fellow detectives, news reporters (or more likely, the cleaning lady at the place where the reporter works) and petty criminals who pay attention to things they see and hear on the street, and who are willing to "share" what they know with the Arcane Detective for a reasonable gratuity (pay-off, cut from a reward, a favor, bottle of booze, etc.). The game master should work with the player to build this network of informants over the course of a campaign. Role-play this element to the hilt.

Arcane Detective O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

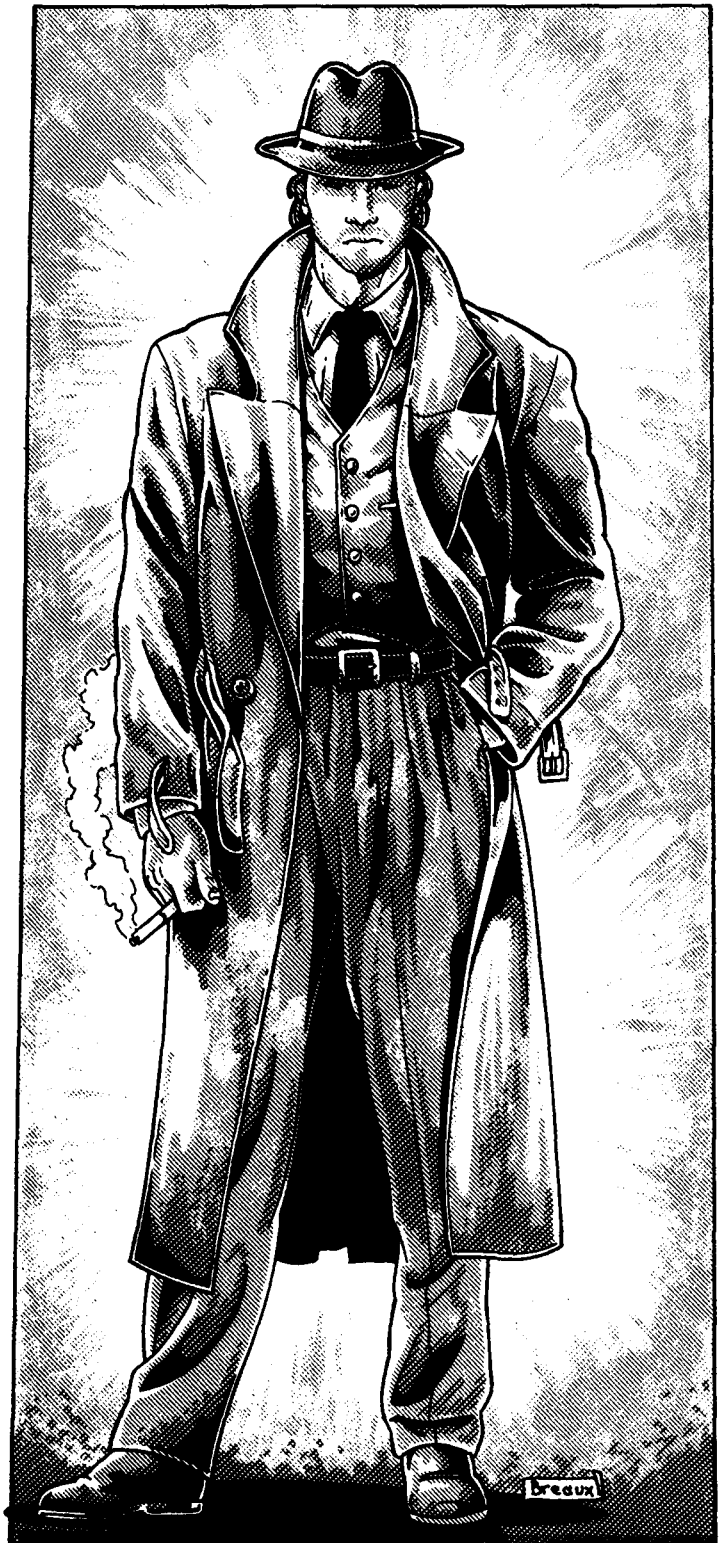
1. Initial Spell Knowledge: At first level, the arcane detective knows the following spells: see aura, see the invisible, sense evil, sense magic, detect concealment, and astral projection.

In addition to the six spells above, select an additional 1D4+2 spells total from levels 1-4, for a total of 9-12 spells. Each additional level of experience, the character will be able to figure out/select one new spell equal to his own level of achievement.

2. Learning New Spells: Additional spells and rituals of any magic level can be learned or purchased at any time, regardless

of the character's experience level. See the *Pursuit of Magic* in the *Nightbane RPG* for details.

3. P.P.E.: 1D4X10 plus P.E. attribute. Add 2D6 P.P.E. per level of experience.



4. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to perception rolls, +4 to save vs horror factor, +2 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs dream manipulation/dream combat, +1 to save vs magic at levels three, six, nine and twelve, and +1 to spell strength at levels four, eight and twelve.

Alignment: Any

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Native language and literacy (98%)

Streetwise (+16%)

Intelligence (+10%)

Lore (Demon and Monster OR Geomancy) (+10%)

Pick Locks (+10%)

Surveillance Systems (+15%)

Driving (cars) (+10%)

One W.P. of choice

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to hand: basic can be changed to hand to hand: expert at the cost of one "other" skill, or to martial arts or assassin at the cost of two "other" skills.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills. Plus select two skills at level three, two at level five, and one at levels eight, eleven and fourteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%)

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Any

Espionage: Any

Mechanical: Any

Medical: First aid and Criminal Sciences and Forensics only (+5%)

Military: None

Physical: Any except acrobatics (+5% to prowl and climb).

Pilot: Any

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%)

Science: Any

Technical: Any (+10%)

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: A personal vehicle (typically a reliable used car), home computer and printer, fingerprint kit, lock picks, flashlight, beeper/pager, telephone/fax answering machine, pocket tape recorder, 35 mm camera with a good telescopic lens, bulletproof vest (A.R. 10, 50 S.D.C.), pair of handcuffs, note pads and pens, a modest **wardrobe** (including trench coat), a small office in a run-down building, and a personal weapon (usually a handgun).

Money: 4D6×100 in savings.

New Spells

The new spells below are less well-known than those described in the *Nightbane* RPG. Finding teachers for them is more difficult, and may incur greater services or monetary expenditures.

Note on P.P.E. Recovery: P.P.E. is commonly recovered at the rate of five points for every hour of rest or sleep; this applies to Nightbanes and Guardians as well. Sorcerers and mystics know meditation techniques that will increase this recovery rate to 10 P.P.E. per hour; the meditative state is also equal to one hour of sleep.

Astral Portal (Level 7)

Range: 20 feet (6.1 m); creates a 10 foot (3 m) wide and tall opening.

Duration: Four melee rounds per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: Special.

P.P.E.: 60

This spell creates a dimensional doorway between the Astral Plane and the physical world (either originating from or leading to Earth or the **Nightlands**; character's choice). The exact location to which the portal leads (whether it is on the astral or physical world) must be known and familiar to the spell caster. There is normally no saving throw, but if the spell is used to try to flee an astral domain, the creator or creators of the domain, if aware of the attempt, may try to prevent it. This works like a normal save versus magic. Also, some astral domains will have some restrictions on the use of magic or dimensional portals (see the *Astral Domain* section for more information).

Circle of Concealment (Level 7)

Range: 20 foot (6.1 m) radius per level of experience. If done as a ritual, use the sorcerer with the highest level, and add 10 feet (3.0 m) per additional magician involved in the ritual.

Duration: One hour per level of experience/one year per level of experience.

Saving Throw: See below.

P.P.E.: 15 or 100

This spell hides an area from all or most people. Anybody passing by the area will pay no attention to anything concealed by the circle. The circle can also be "programmed" so that certain individuals, group members, or those who know the right passwords can see past the mystical effect.

A save versus ritual magic will allow somebody else to sense that something is "wrong" about the area, and may lead to the discovery of whatever is hidden by the circle. Magic and psionic powers like detect P.P.E., detect magic, and negate magic may pierce the circle of concealment and reveal what's hidden, but the circle gets to save vs magic or psionics with the bonuses of its creator.

The circle can be made temporary, hiding a place for a few hours, or long-lasting, with a duration measured in years. The first usage only costs 15 P.P.E., while the second requires 100 P.P.E. The spell is cast as a ritual only.

Dream Window (Level 5)

Range: 20 feet (6.1 m)

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: 30

The spell opens a window into the Dreamstream. Through this window, people can cross in **and/or** out of the Dreamstream. Anybody (human or supernatural) who crosses the window from the waking to the dreaming world is temporarily transformed into a dream construct, with S.D.C. equal to their normal S.D.C. and hit points combined. All of their normal abilities and powers can be used while in the Dreamstream, with the limitations described in the *Dream Combat* section.

If a window is opened while the magician is inside the Dream Pool of a particular person, he can also use it to enter the physical world anywhere within 100 feet (30.5 m) from the **dreamer's** actual location.

The window is clearly visible as a hole or tear in the air. As soon as the Window is opened, strange colored lights start flashing and swirling in a 60 foot (18.3 m) radius around it. People glancing into the window can often see visions from their own Dream Pools. If they fail a save vs psionics, they are temporarily stunned for 1D4 rounds (lose initiative and one melee attack during those rounds) and watch mesmerized by what they see.

More importantly, however, creatures from the Dreamstream can temporarily enter the real world through this magic window! Every melee round that the window is open, there is a cumulative 20% chance that something or somebody will slip out. By the fifth round, there is a 100% chance that something will come out of the window. After the first creature comes through, the chances of an additional entity appearing drops back to a cumulative 20% per subsequent rounds (15 seconds each). These denizens of the dream realm get all their usual powers and abilities, and can easily hurt or kill people, destroy property, and perform all kinds of mayhem. These beings can usually exist only within a 100 foot (30.5 m) radius of the window, but they can do a lot of mischief if left unchecked. Most ordinary dream personas will vanish 2D4 melee rounds after the window is closed, but a few monstrous entities may be able to remain in the material world (see the denizens of the Dreamstream).

Dream Senses (Level 4)

Range: Self

Duration: Five minutes per level of the spell caster.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: 8

This power allows the mage to project his consciousness into the Dreamstream. While doing so, he has all the abilities and limitations described under the **Dreamdance** (Minor) psychic power.

Observe Dream (Level 2)

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes plus two minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard

P.P.E.: 4

This ability allows the magician to peer into the Dream Pool of a sleeping person. By touching the sleeping person, the mage

can see any ongoing dreams or nightmares, as well as any dream monsters and invaders who may be attacking the character while he or she sleeps. Note that the sorcerer is not actually in the Dreamstream, but observing in a manner similar to clairvoyance; the sorcerer cannot intervene in the dream, nor can dream elements see or affect him. However, if he sees something terrible, he may get an idea of who is responsible and whether or not he should wake the dreamer up.

Summon & Control

Astral Being (Minor) (Level 5)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 12 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 80 (ritual)

This ritual plucks an astral being of any specific species the caster indicates, from the Astral Plane and brings it to the physical world. This can only be a minor or common astral entity; the more powerful beings require a stronger ritual. The astral being is automatically under the control of the summoner and will obey him without question throughout the duration period. Afterward, it will regain control over its own actions and may do as it pleases.

Summon & Control

Astral Being (Major) (Level 9)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: Four hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: 200 (ritual)

As per the minor fifth level spell, but this ritual can summon any major astral beings, including Necrophim, **Torturians**, and Vampire Specters, as well as greater astral entities. The spell will force the creature to obey, but almost invariably, evil and powerful entities will seek revenge against the summoner unless the orders given were something the creature would enjoy doing.

Summon & Control

Dream Being (Minor) (Level 7)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 12 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: 60

This ability temporarily summons a minor dream entity, such as a Dream Ghoul or a minor dream persona. The creature will be temporarily kept alive while outside the Dreamstream while it receives orders and commands, which it will then carry out in the Dreamstream and Dream Pools — it cannot exist in the material world, so missions are restricted to the dream realms.

Summon & Control

Dream Being (Major) (Level 9)

Range: Not applicable.

Duration: 6 hours per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: 250

As per the seventh level spell, but applies to greater dream creatures, including Guilt Eaters, Dream Furies, Soul Leeches and strong, "key" personas, including a dream-self, among others. These beings will often try to discover the spell caster's Dream Pool and get their revenge on him at a later date. Most cannot exist (at least for long) in the material world, but some can and may try to trick a character to unleash it via a magic or dimensional portal.

New Skills

Skills Note: A number of skills are too complicated to be learned as secondary skills. Among them are the following: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, medical doctor, demolitions and demolitions disposal, acrobatics, boxing, gymnastics, wrestling and weapon systems.

Espionage: Fieldcraft: This skill covers the common "tricks" spies use to exchange information covertly. Some fieldcraft methods include "dead drops" (the information is placed in a hiding place such as taped under a park bench, behind a brick, and so on; the other agent then comes by and picks it up, avoiding ever seeing his "contact"), ways to notice and avoid being shadowed (use this skill in conjunction with the Perception rules in the *Nightbane RPG*, page. 66) selecting code words and passwords to recognize other agents, and similar techniques. **Base Skill:** 40% plus 4% per level of experience.

Technical: Lore: Astral: An in depth knowledge about the Astral Plane, Outer Plane, Inner Plane, Void, and major kingdoms, as well as a general knowledge about astral travel, methods of travel and navigation, astral beings, domains and dangers. Having this skill will add an additional +2% per level to the Astral Navigation power (see *New Psionic abilities*). Astral Lore can only be learned from the few individuals and organizations who regularly venture into the Astral Plane. **Base Skill:** 26% +4% per level of experience.

Technical: Lore: Dreamstream: This skill is helpful in understanding and identifying the "landscape," dangers and inhabitants of the Dreamstream. Even a beginner will automatically know of such things as Dream Pools and other major concepts regarding the dream lands. Skill rolls are necessary to identify creatures and events/transformations of the Dreamstream. **Base Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience.

Technical: Lore: Psychic: Characters with this skill have knowledge in the way psychic abilities are believed to work, and what types of psionic abilities exist. This knowledge includes a good idea of the limitations of most psychics and psychic abilities, major known types of P.C.C.s, famous psychics, and similar data. The character does not have to be a psychic himself, but he must believe that such powers exist. Psychic lore is most commonly known by people who are psychic themselves, or involved in the PAB, Pandora Project (see the *Spook Squad* section) or similar organizations that study paranormal phenomena. **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience.

Weapons & Equipment

MR-30 Multi-Purpose Infantry Weapon & Helmet System

In the Jane's 2000 weapons catalog, the MR-30 is listed as a prototype weapon, allegedly still undergoing testing. In reality, over 10,000 of these advanced weapons have been manufactured and are now in the hands of the soldiers of Spook Squad. The MR-30 was designed to serve as a highly accurate, multi-purpose assault rifle that could function as a rifle, a light machinegun, a close-assault combat shotgun and a grenade launcher/light mortar! The weapon has computerized sights that link the gun with an *Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH)* that is part of the MR-30 weapon system. When the ACH is activated, a computer projects red crosshairs on the wearer's face plate, indicating where the gun is aimed. The computer actually accounts for wind speed, range, trajectory, angle of fire, and other factors. All the soldier has to do is press the trigger when the crosshairs mark a target. The gun itself is nearly recoilless, using 4.7 mm caseless rounds that cycle so fast that a three-round burst is on its way to the target before the shooter feels what little recoil the light bullets produce.

Under the rifle's barrel is a 30 mm, smooth-bore semi-automatic weapon designed to fire conventional shotgun shells, *flechette* rounds, and several types of grenades, including fragmentary, armor-piercing, smoke, incendiary, and tear gas. The armor-piercing grenades are not powerful enough to penetrate a tank's armor, but can destroy soft-skinned and light armored vehicles. The weapon uses a revolutionary disposable, tubular magazine made of plastic; magazines can be changed very quickly; they are color-coded to show what type of ammo they carry.

The main drawback of these rifles is their exotic ammunition. The MR-30 uses military rounds that were illegal to sell even before the Preserver-controlled government tightened up gun laws. Only members of Spook Squad, especially elite special forces soldiers, have access to these weapons and their ammunition.

Weight: 8 lbs. (3.6 kg)

Damage: Single shot: 3D6 S.D.C.; three-round burst: 1D6x10 S.D.C.; full automatic; as per the burst rules in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 60. 30 mm smooth-bore: Varies with ammo used. Shotguns do 4D6 S.D.C., flechette rounds inflict 5D6 S.D.C., and grenades inflict 3D6x10 explosive/fragmentation damage to a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius.

Rate of Fire: Standard. The 30 mm smooth-bore fires single shot only.

Effective Range: Assault Rifle: 2000 feet (610 m); 30 mm smooth-bore: 4000 feet (1220 m).

Payload: Rifle: 40 round magazine. 30 mm smooth-bore: 8 shot tubular magazine (disposable after use).

Special Bonuses: Advanced sighting system adds a +2 to strike on aimed shots, and +1 to strike with short bursts (not wild or full automatic fire).

Cost: Not for sale; rare prototype manufactured in secret.

Modified Stinger Missile

This weapon was developed in 2002 by researchers from Spook Squad, and only members of that organization have access to it. The weapon system is designed to destroy flying creatures such as Hunters and Necrophim. These beings do not have a heat signature like normal aircraft, so the weapon is laser guided. A laser sight is mounted on the launcher, and the missile aims towards the point illuminated by it. Such a weapon would be useless against real aircraft, which fly too fast for a human gunner to track, but it works fine against the relatively slow supernatural beings Spook Squad often fights.

Weight: 15.1 lb. (6.8 kg)

Damage: 2D4x100

Rate of Fire: One shot.

Effective Range: 15,000 feet (4,500 m)

Payload: One shot.

Special Weapon Accessories

Armor Piercing Bullets: Armor-piercing (AP) bullets use Teflon-coated rounds that can more easily penetrate body armor and hard objects. The down side of AP rounds is that they do less damage to victims, as the bullet tends to retain its speed and "go through" the victim. Reduce the A.R. of the target (whether it is natural or artificial body armor) by 6, but do -1 damage per dice. For example, a .45 AP bullet will inflict 4D6-4 points of damage, a minimum of one point is always inflicted.

Nausea Gas: This is a low-yield toxin that causes the victim to retch uncontrollably. A save vs non-lethal poison is required every round a normal human is exposed to the gas. If the save is made, the victim is still afflicted by minor nausea and is at -1 to all combat actions, -2 on initiative, and loses one attack per melee.

If the save failed, the victim automatically loses **initiative**, has only one action per melee round, and strikes, parries or dodges at -4! The effects of the gas last 1D6 rounds. Conventional gas masks will protect against this gas and even a wet handkerchief over the mouth will provide a +4 to save versus the effects. Most supernatural creatures are unaffected by it, with some exceptions. **Nightbanes** in their Facade form will be affected just like humans. In their **Morphus**, they are at +5 to save, and they are completely unaffected if they make their save. A failed roll means penalties of -1 to all combat actions and initiative. **Doppelgangers** and **Wampyrs** suffer the same effects as Nightbanes in Morphus form; all other supernatural creatures are unaffected.

Special Equipment

Psionic Sensor System

The psionic sensor system senses the radio waves and mystic energy released whenever psionic powers or magic is used. The sensors are very delicate and sensitive, so sudden impacts or other mistreatment will destroy the calibrations necessary to detect psychic activity. The smallest sensor is the size of a briefcase, and is linked to a hand-held computer that tells the user the

direction and distance separating the sensors from the target. This small sensor only has a range of 60 feet (18.3 m). Larger ones fill half a van, and only offers an increased range of a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius.

To read the sensor, a surveillance systems roll is necessary. On a successful roll, the operator will know the general direction and distance of the psychic activity, or be able to tell exactly which person(s) within a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius is using a psychic or magic power. Usually a team uses three sensors arranged to triangulate the position of the target, at which point an agent team would move in to "recruit" or "subdue" the psychic. The sensor can also detect Nightbane in Morphus and supernatural beings when they are using psionic or magic powers. As soon as the character stops using psionic power or magic, he or she stops registering on the device.

The small unit has an A.R. of 7 and 25 S.D.C.; the van-sized one has an A.R. of 12 and 90 S.D.C.

Psychic Jammer

This device produces sounds on a wavelength not audible to the human ear, but proven to *interfere* with psionic abilities. Whether the sound interferes with the psychic's concentration/focus or whether it somehow disrupts the psychic signals of the transmission is not known (probably the former). When the jammer is activated, the psionic characters in the area will feel a slight headache and the range of their psychic powers/transmission is reduced by half. Furthermore, all non-psychics within the radius of the jamming signals are +1 to save vs psionic attack (plus any M.E. or O.C.C. bonuses). The maximum effective range of a psychic jammer is a 120 foot (36.5 m) radius. Jammers are hand-held objects that resemble a large transistor radio or cassette recorder; A.R. 6 and 10 S.D.C. They are usually worn on a belt, shoulder strap, or placed in a backpack or briefcase, but the latter reduces the range by 50%.

Special Restraints

These handcuffs and metal bands were developed by the Pandora Project to deal with beings with supernatural strength.

PanPro handcuffs are made of the strongest alloys available, with several times the tensile strength of steel. Two varieties, a "light" set that looks almost identical to regular police handcuffs, and a "heavy" type that has much thicker manacles and chains, were being used by the PAB in the years 1995-2000.

The *light cuffs* cannot be broken by anybody with less than a P.S. 25 (supernatural); beings with non-supernatural P.S. cannot hope to snap the links with a P.S. under 50! The cuffs have 160 S.D.C.

The *heavy cuffs* will hold any being with a supernatural P.S. of 40 and have 200 S.D.C. **Note:** Escape artist rolls will work normally with either.

PanPro metal bands are belt-like restraints made of high-strength alloys. Particularly dangerous prisoners can be bound or wrapped by several dozen of these restraints. Four straps will hold a creature with a supernatural P.S. of 30 and give a -5% penalty to escape artist rolls. Eight or more straps will hold any creature with a supernatural P.S. of 50 and will be at -15% to escape. Each strap has an A.R. of 14 and 160 S.D.C.!

The NSB and Spook Squad/ADA both have access to these restraints. They are not available to anybody else, including the police.

The Nightbane™



Nightbane Creation Tables

Listed below are four new tables for Nightbane **Morphus** forms. Two of these are additional tables for *Biomechanical* and *Stigmata* features. If the player needs to roll or choose from that category, he can use one or both tables, or randomize it (50-50 chance of having to roll on either table). The bear and amphibian **Morphus** tables were left out of the original book and are presented here for the first time.

Bear Form Table

Bears are respected and feared for their strength and raw power, but they are also seen as relatively benign creatures that rarely kill even for food, let alone sport. Slow to rage, a provoked bear is nonetheless a lethal creature. Many **Nightbanes** who have ursine characteristics are big, gentle people, or strong at heart. The most common bear shapes include the grizzly, polar, black and brown bears. Native **American** **Nightbanes** seem to subconsciously favor this species.

01-20% Full Ursinoid: The **Nightbane's** **Morphus** is a large bear, typically close to the largest normal size for the species, and easily confused for the real thing unless other **Nightbane** characteristics make that impossible. Bonuses: +12 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +6 to P.E., +1D6 to Spd, +4D6x10 S.D.C., and +1 to horror factor. The bear form cannot use weapons, but its paw attacks do normal punch damage plus 2D6 S.D.C., and its bite inflicts 4D6 S.D.C.

21-45% Were-Bear: A mixture of man and beast, with the beast predominating. Since bears can stand on their hind legs, it is easy to confuse the **Nightbane** with a normal bear under a bad light, but when clearly seen it is obvious the creature is not natural. This animal form can manipulate objects with its hands/paws, but with some limitations; any task that requires careful manual dexterity (picking locks, typing on a computer, and using most guns) will be at -15%, and using weapons is at -2 to strike and parry. Size is usually 30 to 40% larger than the **Facade**, and sometimes much bigger. Bonuses: +8 to P.S., +3 to P.E. and +3D4x10 S.D.C. Bite attack does 3D6 damage, and claws add 1D6 to punch damage. Speed is normal. Add +2 to horror factor.

46-70% Bear Humanoid: A more human-like creature, with a basic human shape, except it is covered with fur and the head and facial features still seem to be bear-like. A cloak, large trench coat and hat and other bulky clothing might hide its appearance at a distance and in the dark, but not for long. The creature will be very tall, at least six feet (1.8 m) or more. Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +2 to P.E., and 1D6x10 S.D.C. Bite attack does 2D6 and blunt claws add 1D6 to punch damage. Add +2 to horror factor.

To many, the **Nightbane** are supernatural protectors; fantastic creatures both human and inhuman at the same time. To others, they are frightening monsters. To the **Nightlords** and their supernatural minions, they are destroyers — the bane of their existence — and the one power that may be able to destroy them.

The **Nightbane** are believed to be the progeny of supernatural forces (horrors?) from a place known as the **Nightlands™**. Each possesses a comparatively frail, human "**Facade**" and a supernatural, superhuman "**Morphus**."

The **Morphus** is said to reflect the character's personality or subconscious fears, desires and self-image. Thus, some are exotic and beautiful, while others (most) **are misshapen** monsters. No two **Morphus** appear exactly alike and even the most hideous **Nightbane** can have the spirit of a saint, while the handsome and beautiful may be evil incarnate. The **Nightbane** possess incredible magic and supernatural powers, but must transform into monsters to use those powers. This power and their supernatural nature set them even farther apart from the human race.

71-80% Bear Centauroid: The *Nightbane* has the upper torso of a **were-bear** and the lower body of a full bear, complete with four legs! This creature is far larger than a normal bear, and will not fit any small, enclosed space, including most vehicles, indoor locations, small elevators, etc. Bonuses: +10 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +2 to P.E., +1D6 to speed, and +3D6×10 S.D.C. Bite attack does 3D6, and blunt claws add 1D6 to punch damage. Speed is normal. Add +1D4+1 to horror factor. Any task that requires careful manual dexterity (picking locks, typing on a computer, and using most guns) will be at -15%, and using weapons is at -2 to strike and parry.

81-00% Bear Head: A normal looking human with the head of a bear! Bite inflicts 3D6 damage, the character gains 5D6 to S.D.C., and +1 to horror factor.

Amphibian Table

This category covers frogs, toads and salamanders. Amphibians have long been part of arcane and occult lore, from quaint "ingredients" in witches' brews to creatures attributed with a number of magical powers. Salamanders have often been associated with the element of **fire**, and toads and frogs, which nowadays are subjects of amusement, were once regarded with fear. Many stories about people being turned into frogs may have their roots in *Nightbane* phenomena.

01-20% Full Amphibian: The *Nightbane* is shaped like a giant toad, frog or salamander, typically with the same length as his/her human **Facade's** height. The creature cannot be confused for a normal member of the species due to its enormous size. Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +2 to P.P., +1 to P.E., +2D6×10 S.D.C. If a toad, the character can jump 30 feet (9 m) from a standing position, and swimming speed is the same as running speed. If a frog, the character can jump 80 feet (24.4 m) from a standing position and swimming speed is double the running speed. If a salamander, add +1D6 to running speed, and swimming speed is double.

In all cases, bite damage does 2D6, and most creatures have a long prehensile tongue that can reach targets up to 20 feet (6 m) away. The creature can also hold its breath underwater for 3D4 minutes. There is a 10% chance that the *Nightbane* will have poisonous glands that cover his skin with a contact poison. Exposure to the poison (touch with bare skin) inflicts a red rash and does 3D6 S.D.C. damage (to human and supernatural characters) unless a save versus lethal poison is successful. A save means a small rash and only 1D6 damage. Add +3 to horror factor.

21-45% Were-Amphibian: A barely humanoid frogman/amphibian, with overlong fingers and smooth, moist skin (dry and lumpy if a toad). The head is that of a full frog, toad or salamander. Bonuses: +3 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +1 to P.E., 2D4×10 S.D.C. The character can jump 30 feet (9.1 m) from a standing position, and up to 40 feet (12.2 m) with a running start. Swimming speed is double the character's running speed. Bite damage does 2D4, and most creatures have a long, prehensile tongue that can reach targets up to 15 feet (4.6 m) away. The character can also hold its breath underwater for 2D4 minutes. There is a 10% chance that the *Nightbane* will have poisonous glands that cover his skin with a contact poison. Exposure to the poison (touch with bare skin) inflicts a red rash and does 2D6 S.D.C. damage (to human and supernatural characters) unless a save versus le-

thal poison is successful. A good save means a small rash and only 1D4 damage. Add +1D4 to horror factor.

46-70% Amphibian Humanoid: The creature has humanoid features, and its basic shape is roughly human, so that the character might hide his deformities under bulky clothing and a head covering. The leg's shape is still impossibly bow-legged, the fingers and toes are webbed, and the character has a crouched posture most the time, as if getting ready to leap — all this will inevitably attract attention. Bonuses: +2 to P.S., +1 to P.P. and P.E., and 1D4×10 S.D.C., can leap 15 feet (4.6 m), swim at 50% faster than running speed, and hold breath for 1D6 minutes. Bite attack does 1D6 S.D.C. Add +2 to horror factor.

71-80% Amphibian Centauroid: The *Nightbane* has the upper torso of humanoid shaped frog, toad or salamander, and the lower body of a salamander, including four legs and a long tail. Bonuses: +4 to P.S., +1 to P.P., +2 to P.E., and +2D6×10 S.D.C. Swimming speed is double running speed. Bite damage does 2D4, and most creatures have a long, prehensile tongue that can reach targets up to 10 feet (3 m) away. The character can also hold its breath underwater for 2D4 minutes. There is a 10% chance that the *Nightbane* will have poisonous glands that cover his skin with a contact poison. Exposure to the poison (touch with bare skin) inflicts a red rash and does 2D6 S.D.C. damage (to human and supernatural characters) unless a save versus lethal poison is successful. A save means a small rash and only 1D4 damage. Add +1D4 to horror factor.

81-00% Amphibian Head: A normal looking human with the head of a frog, toad or salamander! Bite inflicts 3D6 damage, and the *Nightbane* has a long, prehensile tongue that can reach targets up to 15 feet (4.6 m) away. Can hold breath underwater for 1D4 minutes. Add +1 to horror factor.

Biomechanical Table II

Players of biomechanical characters can roll on the original table as presented in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 105, or may roll on this one, or make selections from both.

01-15% Screen Face: The head of the *Nightbane* is shaped normally, but the face is a television or monitor screen instead of normal facial features. The screen's images are controlled by the *Nightbane*; some flash written messages instead of talking, others have an animated or computer generated, cartoon image of a normal face, some show test patterns and others, electronic snow. The images may be changed to reflect the character's moods, or at random. Horror Factor: +1D4.

16-30% Speakers: Sound speakers are built into the head or body of the *Nightbane*. The actual location is determined by the player; some *Nightbanes* have speakers instead of mouths, eyes, or ears, while others have them built into their torsos. The *Nightbane* can produce frightening human, animal and/or electronic sounds (but not specific voices). These sounds add to the horror factor of the *Nightbane* and can be used to intimate. +3 to horror factor, +1D4 to **M.A.** A frightened or intimidated victim (failed to save vs horror factor or intimidation factor) is -2 on initiative and -5% on all skill performance. Range for the sound transmission is roughly 100 feet (30.5 m).

31-45% Tool Hands: Any type of hand-held tool, from hedge clippers and scissors to screwdrivers, drills and pliers, replaces one or both hands of the character. If both hands are re-



placed with tools, any skill requiring delicate finger control or an opposable thumb is at -30%. The tools do 3D6 damage in addition to hand to hand combat, are +1 to parry, and add +1D4 to horror factor.

46-60% Monitor Eyes: The eyes of the character are replaced by two digital monitors or camera-like lenses. Some monitors act like a hospital's life sign monitors, with a line that jumps at every heartbeat, some display waves that jump in reaction to the character's voice or emotions, while others project psychedelic light shows, or simply flash green or violet light. The camera lens eyes raise the character's Nightvision to 2000 feet (610 m). Both types of eyes adds +2 to horror factor.

61-75% Chain saw Arms: One or both of the arms of the Nightbane have been replaced by a chain saw. This lethal weapon does 4D6 S.D.C. in addition to normal hand to hand damage and is +1 to parry. Nothing can be held by the chain saw arm(s) and characters with two such arms will be at a great disadvantage in performing skills (-70%). Add +1D4 to horror factor!

76-90% Computer Creature: A home computer is built into the body of the Nightbane. The screen may be in the head, face, eyes, or built into the chest or belly. The keyboard is often grown onto a forearm, and connected by a cable(s) to the body, and the processor is usually in the upper or lower torso or hip. The computer will actually work, and will read information from disks and other computers! Retractable interface cables are included. The Nightbane is at +15% on all computer operations and programming, and +5% for computer hacking rolls when he uses his "personal" computer. Add +2 to horror factor.

91-00% Projectile Limbs: The hand, forearm or entire arm or arms of the character can be "fired" at a target. The hands or limbs act like flying fists, returning to the character after they

strike. These projectile limbs have a range of 300 feet (91.4 m) and are +2 to strike. They inflict normal punch damage for the character, plus any claws or weapon damage that may be part of the hands.

Stigmata Table II

When determining stigmata features, the player can roll on the original table as presented in the *Nightbane RPG*, page 101, or he may roll on this one, or make selections from both.

01-20% Inside-Out Creature: The Nightbane's body has been literally turned inside out; his/her organs are on the outside of the body, resulting in the most grotesque image possible. Not even other Nightbanes will feel comfortable around such a creature. Add 1D6×10 to S.D.C. and +1D4+2 to horror factor.

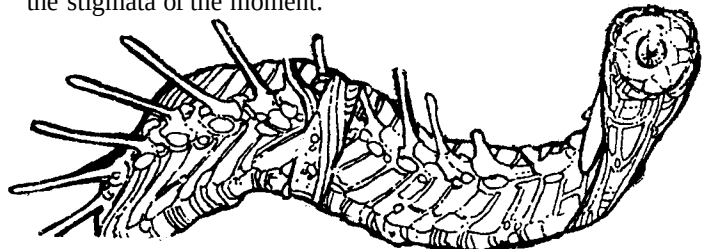
21-40% Translucent Skin: The character's skin has a translucent, semi-transparent quality, reminiscent of a thin plastic or rubber membrane, allowing muscle tissue and organs to be semi-visible. Add 4D6 to S.D.C. and +1D4 to horror factor.

41-60% Body Faces: Small faces and heads (from one to six) dot the character's body! These heads can be as small as a thumb or as large as a grapefruit. Some Nightbanes can speak through these faces; others cannot stop the faces from screaming, laughing, gibbering, or mouthing expressions. The mouths of each face may also bite any enemy that gets within grappling distance; each can inflict 1D4 points of damage per bite. Add 4D6 to S.D.C. and +1D6 to horror factor.

61-75% Withered Flesh: The Nightbane's flesh is dried and mummy-like, making the character look like a desiccated corpse. Add 3D6 to S.D.C. and +1 to horror factor.

76-90% Gut Tentacles: A pair of tentacles covered in purple and blue blood vessels, resembling internal organs or intestines, can extend out of the body from the belly and grapple, whip or strike at one's opponents! These disgusting limbs inflict 2D6 damage with a whipping attack, 1D6 with a strike/punch, and can grapple enemies with the same strength as the Nightbane, with a maximum range of 6 feet (1.8 m). Adds one extra attack per melee, +2D6 S.D.C. and +2 to horror factor.

91-00% Shifting Body: The Nightbane's Morpheus is always shifting uncontrollably, with stigmata characteristics from both stigmata tables appearing at random. So, for example, a tiny head might appear in the character's chest, linger for 1D6 minutes, and then disappear, replaced by open wounds, protruding nails or similarly disgusting traits. The new feature stays for 1D6 minutes (1-50%) or 1D4 hours (51-00%), and then is replaced by something else. Also roll or select a new stigmata every time the character switches to the Facade and then back to Morpheus. However, the character does *not* gain any of the bonuses that normally accompany those stigmata, except for the horror factor. Instead, the character gets +1D4×10 S.D.C., +1 on perception rolls, and +1 on initiative. Horror Factor is determined by the stigmata of the moment.



New Nightbane™ Talents

Air Grab

The **Nightbane** can "grab" somebody up to 50 feet (15.2 m) away +10 feet (3 m) per additional level by making a grabbing gesture in the direction of the target. The grab simply *holds* a person for two melee actions, or roughly 5 seconds, during which time he cannot move or physically attack. The captive of an air grab can break free with one, flexing, melee action of his own, but only if his strength is equal to or greater than the Nightbane's.

An "air squeeze" does supernatural P.S. damage; use the **Nightbane's** P.S. minus **five** points, and counts as two melee attacks.

The Nightbane can also use the power to grab and **bring/pull** the victim to him in one melee action (2 seconds). The captive of an air grab can break free or resist being pulled only if his own P.S. is equal to or greater than the Nightbane. Instead of pulling the grabbed character to him, the Nightbane can throw him up to 10 feet (3 m) away. Unless the victim makes a successful roll with **fall/impact** he takes 1D6 S.D.C. damage and loses two melee actions/attacks and initiative.

Victims must know they are being targeted with this power to avoid it, and even then they need to roll a 16 or higher to dodge.

Limitations: Usable by the **Morphus** only. Each action or attack costs 8 P.P.E.

Cost: 10 P.P.E. to acquire it permanently; 8 P.P.E. per grabbing action.

Astral Self

The Nightbane becomes an astral being with no physical body. In this form, the character has all the abilities and limitations of an astral projection (see *Nightbane RPG*, page 70), but without a silver cord, or any physical body left behind. The S.D.C. of the astral-self is equal to the combined S.D.C. and hit points of the Nightbane, times two! While in astral form, the character can enter the Astral Plane, affect insubstantial creatures and other astral beings, and visit astral domains or kingdoms (see the *Astral Plane* section for more information). Once transformed, the Nightbane can stay in astral form indefinitely, although changing back will use up P.P.E.

Limitations: Usable by the Morphus form only.

Cost: 8 P.P.E. to acquire permanently. 8 P.P.E. to activate, and 8 P.P.E. to return to physical form (the character must have returned to the physical world, either Earth or the Nightlands, to return to his normal state).

Darkwave

The Nightbane becomes a semi-liquid mass of pure darkness that can engulf and injure opponents. An engulf counts as a normal melee attack. An intended victim can try to dodge but does so with a -4 penalty. Once engulfed, the victim is helplessly confined in absolute darkness, and possibly made to suffer 2D6 S.D.C. per melee round locked within the **darkwave**. This damage cannot be regenerated until the victim is free of the darkness. While trapped, the victim loses half his attacks/actions per melee

round, and all combat bonuses. The use of spells and psionics are impossible.

The size of the Darkwave is determined by the level of the Nightbane. At levels one and two, the character can engulf one victim, two victims at level three, three at level six, and one additional victim at levels nine, twelve and fifteen. Multiple victims get a dodge defense against the Nightbane's single attack roll without penalty.

While in this state, the Nightbane takes half damage from physical attacks directed at the darkness, and double damage from energy and magical attacks from those not trapped inside. Furthermore, strong light will inflict damage: no damage from street lights, 1D6 from a pen light (range: 5 feet/1.5 m), 3D6 from a commercial flashlight (range 10 feet/3.0 m), 5D6 from a high-powered or police flashlight, and 1D6×10 from a spotlight or magic light or Guardian. This damage can be inflicted once per melee round per light wielder. The power cannot be used during the day; or the Nightbane will take 1D6×10 points of damage at the end of every melee round.

Limitations: Usable by the Morphus only, vulnerable to light, and not advisable in daylight.

Cost: 12 P.P.E. to acquire permanently; 6 P.P.E. per 30 seconds (two melee rounds).

Dervish Dance

The Nightbane can move in a circular pattern and make spinning attacks with incredible speed. Basically, the character spins at blurring speeds in a large circle — an area 10 feet (3.0 m) in diameter. All opponents within, or who enter the dance zone gets attacked as if the Nightbane had made an attack roll of 10 +1 per level of the Nightbane (maximum 19). Everybody in the dance circle is attacked again if anyone in the zone tries to attack the Nightbane dervish dancer. Opponents can try to dodge the dervish attack as normal, parry at -6, or try to roll with the punch, fall or impact after being struck. The Nightbane also uses the attack roll number (10 +1 per level of experience) to automatically parry all incoming attacks, even bullets, arrows and similar missile attacks (but not energy attacks — they strike and damage as normal).

The dervish dance lasts one entire melee round (15 seconds), must be the Nightbane's first attack of that melee round, and counts as all the character's melee attacks for that round. Example: **Sargon** the Uncanny, 6th level Nightbane, attacks a group of three Hounds with his Dervish Dance. All fall within the diameter of his attack (10 ft/3 m). He activates the power and wades into the group, striking at each one with a 16 to hit (no die roll is necessary). Each Hounds tries to dodge; rolls are a 10, a 15, and a 3, all fail, so each takes damage as if Sargon had punched them individually. The Hounds then all attack back; their attack rolls must exceed a 16 to harm Sargon; only one attack roll in the entire melee round does so, lightly injuring Sargon. Because they retaliated, **Sargon's** dervish dance enables him to strike again, this time the Hounds roll a 14, a 16 and a 19 respectively. Only the 14 suffers damage. The 16 ties, so the dodge was successful and the 19 dodged with ease (but all attempting the dodge use up one melee **attack/action**). Now, if none of the Hounds attack again, Sargon cannot strike again. But if even one Hound attacks, Sargon parries with a 16 (17 or higher hits) and all three are attacked again. Of course, any Hound that runs away is

likely to get outside the diameter of the dance and be safe from any further attacks. However, looking at the blur of action, he can try to strike the whirling **Nightbane** but still must roll a 17 or higher to hit him. At the end of the melee round, the Nightbane stops and prepares to fight them normally. If he had wanted to keep the power going, he would have had to spend an additional 20 P.P.E.

Limitations: Only usable in the **Morphus** form and limited to a 10 foot (3 m) diameter striking range.

Cost: 15 to acquire permanently; 20 P.P.E. per melee round.

Dreamer

With this power, the Nightbane can enter the **Dreamstream**, body and soul. While in the Dreamstream, the Nightbane has a "psychic S.D.C." equal to his normal S.D.C. and hit points combined. The character can use his other talents normally, and can enter the Dream Pools of other people. Although **Nightbanes** cannot manipulate dreamstuff to terrorize dreamers, their mere shape and appearance are often enough to create nightmares. See the *Dreamstream* section for more information.

Limitations: Usable by the Morphus only. If all psychic S.D.C. are reduced to below zero, the character is slain and vanishes as if he never existed.

Cost: 10 to permanently acquire, and 10 to enter, or leave the Dreamstream. Once there, the Nightbane can stay indefinitely.

Piecework

By using this power, the Nightbane can remove a part of his own flesh and place it somewhere as a spying device; some remove an eye, ear, or other sensory body parts, but a finger or toe will do just as well. The body part will be able to hear, see and feel everything around it, although it may be limited by where it has been placed and cannot move or communicate. The Nightbane cannot learn anything from the detached appendage until he **reattaches** it. When the piece is reattached, the character *remembers* everything experienced by the piece as if he had been there himself. Each piece has 10 S.D.C. and 4 hit points (these cannot be regenerated until the piece is destroyed or reattached).

Limitations: Usable by the Morphus only.

Cost: 10 to permanently acquire the power, and 8 to activate the missing piece. Every hour after the first that the piece is missing, the Nightbane must spend an additional 6 P.P.E. or the missing piece will disappear. If this occurs the Nightbane regenerate the damage and the item, but he loses any information the original might have gained. If the body part or piece of flesh is burned, eaten or otherwise destroyed, it ceases to exist, with the same effects.

Club Freak™

A New Nightbane Faction

I knock on the metal door, once, two raps, then one more. I bought the code from a — thing that lives in an abandoned building and claims to eat human flesh.

The viewing slits opens with a slam. An inhumanly large eye, bloodshot and angry, stares out at me. "You ain't Morphed out," a voice hisses behind the door.

"Out here? In the street?" It's more than fear that makes me hesitate. I don't want to Change. I don't want to see what I've become. I thought they would understand.

"This here's Club Freak, jerk. Gotta see if you look the part. You a Ken-doll?"

I shake my head violently. Not a Ken; not even close. "All right," I spit out, and start the Change.

It hurts at first. The glass shards push their way out of my skin, and blood seeps out, cooling in the evening air. A pressure on my forehead gives way to a tearing pain, and a short tentacle, tipped by a large blue eye, pokes its way out. My bones stretch and twist, and now my arms reach down to the floor, and black claws tip my fingers.

"You happy now?" I growl at the doorman. I hate him almost as much as I hate myself.

The door swings open. I shuffle into a smoke-filled room. Blues music is playing loudly in the background, but it is half-drowned by laughter and conversation. My three eyes blink. Everywhere I look, there are monsters. A wolf-creature is playing poker with an insectoid thing and a woman who would be pretty if it wasn't for the oozing wounds that stain her clothing and her chair. A game of darts is being dominated by a four-

armed thrower. Something like an ink blot slithers down from the ceiling and pours itself into a human shape—human, except for horns and cloven feet.

The conversation dies out as people notice my entrance. The music drones on for a few moments, and then somebody or something turns off the record machine. The entire room takes a long look at me.

Somebody in the back starts clapping.

The entire club, the freaks and the monsters applaud me, cheer me, welcome me. They give me a standing ovation, clapping together clawed hands, tentacles and chitinous limbs. They are glad to see me.

My smile tastes of joyous tears as I join my people.

The first Club Freak appeared in London during the late 19th century. It was the creation of the self-styled "Earl of Hideous," a centuries old Nightbane said to be related to the Tudor kings. His design aped the gentlemen's clubs that were common at the time, a place where the well-to-do could relax and socialize with their peers. The Earl's version was a place where Nightbanes could abandon their "charade of humanity" and could be themselves in every sense of the word. In the following century, over a dozen such clubs appeared throughout the world.

Most Club Freaks are places where any and all Nightbanes are welcome, as long as they behave themselves. Some clubs are more restrictive, however, rejecting "Kens and Barbies," as they refer to those Nightbanes without noticeable deformities. The emphasis is on the fact that Nightbanes are not human. The Façade is considered a necessary disguise that members are sup-



posed to "check at the door," just as one would a coat or hat — an unnecessary accessory when in a safe place. For decades, members sneered at humankind, so mortal, weak and fearful of the inhuman. The clubs' goals went beyond providing a safe place for Nightbanes to socialize; the Earl of Hideous wished to establish a network of influence among those Nightbanes who used their longevity to amass wealth and power. Even the poorest and most destitute Nightbanes were welcome because, after all, who knew **what** they might accomplish ten, fifty, or a hundred years down the line? Many Nightbanes suspect that the Earl's ultimate goal was to forge a secret society that would run world affairs from behind closed doors.

Whatever the club's ultimate ends may have been, they remained popular in the years preceding Dark Day. During the 1920s, the U.S. versions of Club Freaks became more like Jazz clubs or "**speak-easies**" (secret drinking establishments during Prohibition). During the 1980s and '90s, new clubs looked more like alternative nightclubs where young and scared Nightbanes could feel right at home. In all its manifestations, the club freaks all honored one old tradition: newcomer Nightbanes were welcomed with a standing ovation in celebration of their hideousness.

Organization

All Club Freaks are owned in common by a group of wealthy and influential Nightbanes known as the *Club Trustees*. This loose organization's comprised of some of the most important Nightbanes in the world. Supernatural beings so powerful that they snickered at the Underground Railroad. Beneath the Trustees are other Nightbanes charged with managing each club "franchise" as they see fit. Although the managers answer to the Trustees, they often run each Club Freaks as their personal kingdom.

Many of the larger clubs employ humans, a necessity given the relative few number of Nightbanes even after Dark Day. The Club employees are usually people who for some reason or another owe loyalty to the Nightbane. Most of them belong to extended families who have been in the service of the older Club Trustees for centuries, long before Club Freaks were even discovered. These volunteers undergo a magically-enforced oath of secrecy; in return, they are the highest-paid waiters, barmen and servants in the world.

While each Club Freaks is often unique and has its own idiosyncrasies and special elements, a few stand out far above the rest. The two most notable clubs are described below.

The Capital Club

Set in Washington D.C., the membership of the club includes Nightbanes who manipulated the U.S. government for decades, if not centuries. These Nightbanes did not control the government, but through campaign contributions (or outright bribes), hired lobbyists and with the occasional use of Nightbane talents or magic spells, often helped shape policies that affected the U.S. and the entire world. The club had one of the largest memberships in the world, just as Washington had one of the largest **pre-Dark** Day Nightbane populations. The reason was obvious; this was the place to be if one wanted to have an impact on world affairs. Many ancient Nightbanes set up shop here and rubbed shoulders with their peers at the Capital Club.

When the **Ba'al** and their agents seized control of the U.S. government, the club members' carefully nurtured network of influence collapsed like a house of cards. Three of the most prominent Nightbane members were killed during Dark Day. In their arrogance they had become public personalities, and they were thus easily discovered and destroyed by Hounds and other Ba'al minions. The survivors quickly hid themselves and their organization, and have managed to weather the storm. The club is now working to pay the invaders back.

The Capital Club can be reached through the Washington subway system, where a number of secret doors (all carefully watched and concealed with the best available magical and technological resources) will lead members to a richly-furnished "gentlemen's club" (female Nightbanes have been welcome there since the mid-20th Century). Members who wish to relax can go to the Sitting Room to enjoy well-padded armchairs while waiters (loyal humans, with a few psychics and supernatural beings thrown into the mix) keep them supplied with the best food and drinks in town. An open bar and a dining room are places to socialize and find out what's new.

The Capital Club has 11 charter members (there were 14) and about two dozen "regulars" who show up at least once a month. Another few dozen Nightbanes who inhabit the city know about the Club and visit infrequently for meetings with others of their kind, to acquire or share information, seek help, or simply to relax.

The Astral Club

The largest Freaks' Club is not found on Earth. Instead, it exists in an astral domain (see the *Astral Plane* section), constructed by Nightbane sorcerers aided by a mysterious organization of human mystics. The Astral Club is twice the size of a city block, and acts both as a social club, a bar and a lodging house with a capacity of over two hundred guests.

The club is divided into over a dozen chambers. There is, for example, the Concert Chamber, where musically-adept Nightbanes perform for their peers. On any given night, patrons can be entertained by ancient Greek harp-music, Gregorian chants, rock 'n roll and rap music, one after the other. Guests wishing to enjoy a good meal go to the Dining Chamber, where a 300 year old Nightbane known as *J. Blades* will prepare almost every known dish in history with the quality of a five-star restaurant. Other chambers include a casino, bars, dance floors, banquet halls, and a hotel. Servants include humans, **Tarantuloids** and astral entities. Portals reach into no less than a dozen locations on Earth, including two other clubs (in London and Boston), a **number** of Nightbane safe houses and other secure locales.

Although the Astral Club has avoided politics in the Astral Plane, recent events have made it difficult to stay out of them. As the Nightlords' influence over astral space increases, the managers of the club worry that soon their domain will be targeted by the Ba'al. The Trustees are considering trying to make a deal with other astral organizations to protect this valuable location. Some members have spoken about waging their own secret war against the evil interlopers.





Club Freaks relations with other Factions

The Clubs Freak's are unique in that they are places where Nightbanes from any faction are welcomed, so long as they are peaceful. Still, individual clubs often show favoritism for some groups over others.

The Underground Railroad: This faction's policy of hiding and retreating from humankind has often been considered cowardly by the powerful trustees and managers of the Club Freaks. Still, many wealthy Trustees have helped fund and underwrite many of the Railroad's activities, recognizing the need to safeguard as many Nightbanes as possible. With the coming of the Dark Day invasion, however, the Club Trustees are more interested in action rather than escape, and their support for the Railroad has greatly diminished.

The Resistance: Many Club Trustees are important members of the Resistance, and most clubs act as unofficial Resistance meeting places and safe houses. The additional risks of doing so are minimal, since a Nightbane owned and operated establishment would be marked for termination by the Ba'al in any case. The most militant Resistance members, especially those who have no trust for humans, are frequent "regulars" at these places.

Spook Squad: As far as the Trustees are concerned, this organization represents the worst aspects of humankind, and any Squad member (even a Nightbane) who discovers the existence of any club will be targeted for termination. At the same time, some Spook Squad agents have uncovered evidence of Nightbane interference in American politics, and suspect the existence of some sort of "power monger" Nightbane group that existed before the coming of the Nightlords.

The Nocturnes/Vampires/Wampyrs: Although most clubs will not welcome any non-Nightbane, some will make an exception for supernatural beings, as long as Nightbane club members in good standing vouch for them. A non-human who has proven himself to be a friend of Nightkind may even be made an honorary member (a rarity). A few Nocturne members have earned this distinction; they are the closest thing to a mediator between the Nocturnes and the other Nightbane factions.

The Warlords: Two Clubs, one in Chicago and one in New York, have more of a "streetwise" outlook than most other establishments. Rap is the music of choice, and most of the patrons are tough Nightbanes, many of them minority members who grew up in the slums. Several Warlords frequent these two clubs; their outlook of racial superiority over humans is echoed by the club's policies. The only problem is violence often erupts among the Warlords themselves, let alone between the Warlords and Nightbanes from other factions. Since fighting is not allowed in any Club Freak, Warlords have been ejected on many occasions. Nightbanes were killed during two particularly nasty incidents. The Club Trustees are pondering the wisdom of catering to these outlaws, and may end up closing the two clubs altogether.

The Lightbringers/Guardians: The same principles that apply to all supernatural beings include Guardians, although more of their number than any other have become honorary members. However, the Lightbringers as a whole see these clubs as places where Nightbanes reject their humanity, something that may (and often does) lead Nightbanes to believe they are above morality and the law. In New Orleans, a group of Lightbringers tried to forcibly shut down a Club Freak's that had existed in that city since the 1920's. The ensuing brawl left three Nightbanes, two Guardians and twelve humans dead, as well as a score injured. Now New Orleans is split in a three-way war between the Resistance/Freak's Club, the surviving Lightbringers, and the Nightlord controlling the city. This conflict has colored the worldwide relationship between these organizations.

The Seekers & Sorcerous Orders: Human sorcerers and psychics are greatly feared by many Nightbanes, since they are one of the few groups who can discover and ferret them out, no matter how well hidden they are. Since most Club Freak's are protected by magical circles and wards, their greatest vulnerability is from magicians. As a result, some club members will "pre-empt" any sorcerers they find — by killing them on sight. There are some exceptions to this rule, however. One is a mysterious group of wizards who are believed to have taught magic to a number of Nightbanes. The other is the *Gray Ghost Society* (see below). Likewise, the occasional lone wizard who has proven his loyalty may be employed or associated with a club.

The Seekers are considered to be a danger. This organization of scholars has discovered the existence of the London, Washington D.C. and Tokyo clubs, and suspects that more exist. The Club Trustees know that the Seekers know, and fear the worst. So far, however, the Seekers have not used their knowledge against the Nightbanes, so the club is reexamining its policy towards them. Maybe a truce, at least until the Nightlords are dealt with.

The Gray Ghost Society: The existence of the Astral Club Freaks is known to the Gray Ghost Society, and vice versa. In recent months, an attack against the club by Necrophim led club

patrons and Gray Ghost psychics to join forces to repel the attack. This collaboration came out of mutual necessity, and has softened the attitude of some club members, and even a couple of the Trustees, towards human psychics and magicians. Their argument is that psychics and magicians are, in their own way, almost as inhuman as the Nightbanes themselves.

Places of Interest

Rehabilitation Camps

In the year 2002, the Preserver Administration launched a program designed to "revolutionize penal institutions." This program financed the opening of twenty-five *Rehabilitation Camps* throughout California, Texas and Florida — all places where warm weather made it easy to build housing. The Rehabilitation Camps use makeshift construction materials and rely on barbed wire and watchtowers to keep the prisoners in. The inmates are housed in wooden barracks and every day they are put to work in fields picking fruit, harvesting crops, and similar jobs. Most of the pay for those jobs goes to the State. The Preserver propaganda paints these camps as the cheapest option available to deal with the criminal element. By 2004, twenty-one of the camps were paying for their own costs, and seven were even making a small profit. The propaganda overlooked the fact that the camps are, in fact, selling slave labor to wealthy farming concerns. The similarity between these places and concentration camps, or at least work camps, has not even been noted by the media.

Life inside the camps is hellish. The prisoners are not locked in individual cells but placed in barracks. Cameras monitor each barrack; if any outbreak of violence occurs, pipes flood the structure with "nausea gas" (see the *New Weapons section*). A heavily-armed team of guards will then move in and proceed to "pacify" the barracks. Particularly unruly prisoners are placed in Solitary Confinement, a 6x6x6 foot (1.8 by 1.8 by 1.8 m) box. The box has an air conditioner system, but it is always turned off, leaving the victim to broil in the usually hot conditions. Many who draw a turn in solitary also end up severely beaten by the guards. Career criminals who have tried to bribe or intimidate the guards have found themselves in solitary; to the last man, the guards in the Rehabilitation Camps are incorruptible, because they are Hollow Men (60%) and **Dopplegangers** (35%), as well as a few Ashmedai and similar creatures (5%).

Disappearances at these camps are quite common. Sometimes an entire barrack of inmates won't show up for their daily work period, and are never heard from again; **truckloads** of replacements usually arrive soon after. Typical excuses for these disappearances are transfers or early releases, but soon most prisoners realize that these are lies, and that they may be next to suffer an unknown fate. Very few inmates have actually been released in the two to three years since the camps opened, because most of them had prison terms of at least five years. The few who are released for "good behavior" are typically **Doppleganger** replacements sent out to infiltrate dissident groups or to carry out other tasks.

The guards in these camps carry **M-16** rifles and will fire on full automatic at those attempting to escape, careless of any in-

nocent bystanders (one of the reasons the camps are usually built away from populated areas). Other security systems include motion sensors "planted" in a perimeter around the barbed wire, guard dogs, and, it is rumored, anti-personnel mine fields placed alongside possible escape routes (a wrong step and the unfortunate takes **1D4x10 damage!**).

Spook Squad is constantly looking for ways to break more prisoners out. So far, most attempts have failed.

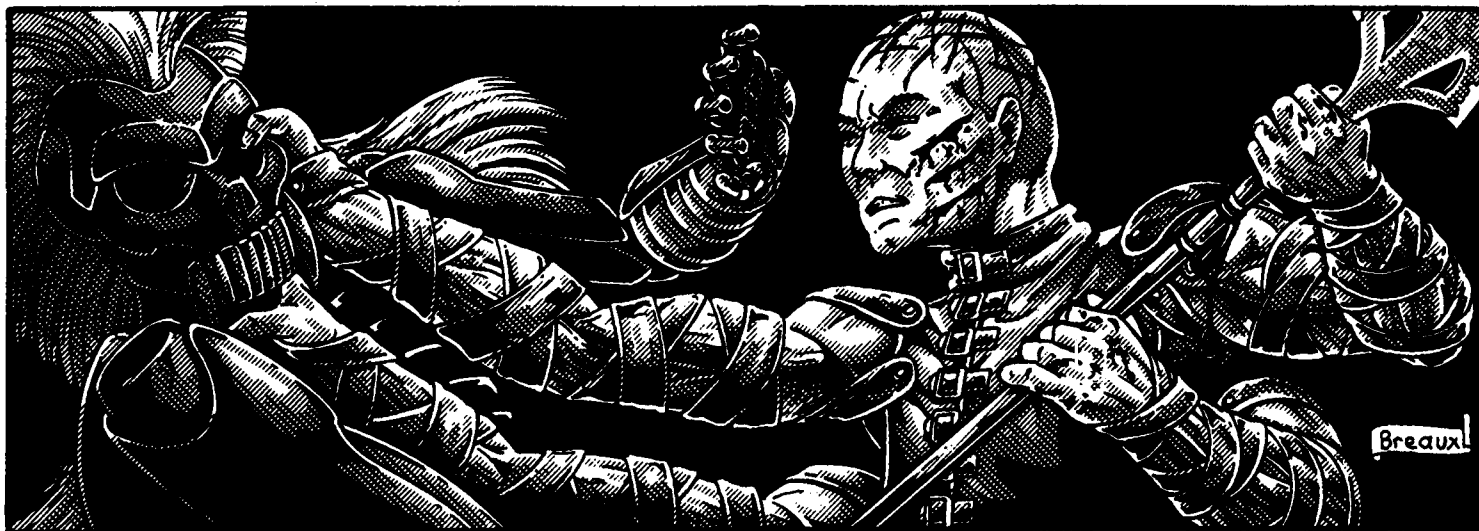
Spook Squad Safe Houses

A typical Spook Squad safe house looks completely normal from the outside. Common locales include farms, ranches, summer camps, vacation resorts, houses in the city, and buildings that appear to be condemned. Even before Dark Day, many of these locations were heavily protected by advanced security systems, including cameras, motion sensors, and more. Since then, the ADA has made each house into a small bunker, fortified and brimming with traps and weapons. Most front doors are armored and booby-trapped; if somebody knocks down the reinforced doors (A.R. 12, 350 S.D.C.), an explosive device is detonated, blasting a 10 foot (3 m) area (2D4x10 damage). Typically a number of weapons will be in special, hidden places; most will be pistols and sub-machineguns, but these have been recently supplemented with grenades, assault rifles and other military-grade equipment.

More important than these defenses (which are only meant to slow down, not stop the enemy) are the escape routes Spook Squad engineers have built into most of these houses. Hidden passages and tunnels typically lead several hundred feet away from the buildings. City locales usually have tunnels connecting to the sewer system or subway, while countryside houses lead to other houses, barns and fields where vehicles are stored for just such an eventuality.

As a last resort, most safe houses have a self-destruct device. These consist of incendiary bombs and are designed to destroy any information and evidence that might fall into the enemy's hands. The incendiary bombs will inflict **1D6x100 S.D.C.** to everything within the house and the fire will burn for 3D6 minutes, inflicting an additional **1D6x1000** points of damage and consuming anything that remains. Any files, computers and other information storage devices will be completely obliterated, as well as, (hopefully) any Nightlord minions caught in the blast. Extreme measures, but Spook Squad believes it's better to be safe than sorry.





Campaign & Adventure Ideas

Covert Revolution

One of the goals of Spook Squad is to destabilize the Ba'al-run governments and try to "take America back." At the same time, secrecy is to be maintained to prevent panic and to preserve the Squad's own secrets. This delicate balancing act depends on covert operations: assassination, infiltration and small military operations hidden away from the public eye. Sometimes, secrecy may be more important than the mission itself, at least in the opinion of some pencil pushers micro-managing the operation. This may mean some agents risk being "left out in the cold" if things go wrong, and they may have to return to base by themselves or try to strike out on their own. Any theme from spy movies (from cinematic action to complex games of death and deceit) can be used in this campaign.

Common O.C.C.s: All Spook Squad O.C.C.s, including Ex-Federal Agents, former spies, former soldiers, police, etc.

Enemies/Rivals: NSB agents (human and otherwise), Ashmedai, Doppelgangers, Nightbane factions, independent Nightbane, cults, and so on, might be involved. If it hits the fan, Hounds, Hunters and other cannon fodder creatures will be sent against them.

Role-playing Hooks: Some character "types" can include the betrayed spy who will trust no one, the patriotic hero who trusts too much, the self-serving mercenary who does the right thing only by accident, the snitch, the traitor, and the spy (or double agent).

Nightland Wars

This campaign is centered around the Beachhead, Spook Squad's invasion of the Nightlands. The characters are humans facing the alien entities that prowl this dark world. They have their weapons and technology to deal with the supernatural powers of the enemy. All too often, this is not enough. As losses mount, the survivors start sacrificing their own humanity to fight their monstrous enemies. Desperate times breed desperate measures.

Common O.C.C.s: Any military O.C.C. will fit into this campaign. Additionally, the players can be researchers, scientists, psychics, Nightbane or even sorcerers. Supernatural players are possible, but should probably be discouraged, since they might unbalance in a mostly-human group (or give the group its edge).

Enemies/Rivals: Since most missions will be conducted in the Nightlands, the most common encounters will be with Hounds and Hunters. Although these creatures rely on primitive hand weapons, they are extremely dangerous due to their high A.R. and supernatural P.S. Other minions such as Doppelgangers, Ashmedai and Hollow Men may be found, particularly in the Ba'al City States. Occasionally, other dwellers of the Nightlands (whether or not they are associated with the Nightlords) may attack or cause trouble for the patrols. Nightbanes often venture into the Nightlands, and may be tentative allies or yet another enemy.

Role-Playing Hooks: Many themes from war movies can be played out in this campaign, including psychological warfare and shell shock. Some possible character concepts include the "green" recruit, well-trained and eager to go to combat, but inexperienced to the horrors of the Nightlands; he may become the hero or the goat (or the pawn). The grizzled NCO veteran who is the soul of the squad or platoon. The decent but sometimes naive commanding officer, or the self-serving commander who takes advantage of the confusion of war to line his own pockets (or escape danger) at the expense of others.

Not all missions are conducted in the lifeless Wastes; sometimes combat teams will venture into the City States, where the soldiers may interact peacefully with Doppelganger renegades, Nightbanes, human ex-slaves and other unfortunates hiding out in the catacombs beneath the cities.

Adventure Ideas: Plots from spy and war movies or TV shows like *Combat*, *The Prisoner*, and *Space: Above & Beyond* can be adapted to this campaign setting. The biggest challenge

for the Game Master is to keep things fresh and prevent the campaign from degenerating into "shoot-out of the week" games. Some possible ideas include:

Weapon Test: A new weapon system has been developed by Spook Squad's scientists (some possibilities include an energy cannon, new bullets, a sonic projector, etc.) and the players' team is given the task of testing it in the field. Any number of things can go wrong: the weapon may fail **catastrophically**, or it works fine —but it attracts the attention of a large force of Hounds and Hunters, or it falls into enemy hands and must be retrieved. The characters have to survive and make it back to their own lines, but without leading the Hounds to them, etc.

Another classic is to have the members of the player group, along with some non-player characters, get captured by the enemy and placed in a prison camp, or holding area. Here, they must endure all manner of hardships (interrogation, torture, psychological tests/games, infiltration, etc.) before they can finally escape, hopefully with new insight or valuable information about the enemy, or they may rescue other prisoners or a famous hero believed to have been killed.

Other adventures in the **Nightlands** can include exploration, uncovering ancient weapons or artifacts (which the bad guys or bandits also want), helping a group or village of local inhabitants, uncovering a Nightlord plot or spy operating on Earth, developing friendships with Nightbanes and Guardians, combating human traitors, etc.

Astral Exploration & Politics

The Astral Plane can easily become the focus of a campaign or mini-campaign. Just exploring the myriad domains and kingdoms that exist there can keep a group busy for dozens of game sessions. Game masters who wish to give their campaign a change of pace can use the Plane to drop the characters into a fantasy or science fiction domain, or some other kind of bizarre, alien or offbeat environment or situation.

The characters may get involved in the intrigue and machinations of the Astral Lords and their kingdoms. They might encounter (or be) ambassadors from one of the Nightbane factions or Spook Squad, trying to get help against the Nightlords. The Ba'al's expansion into the Astral Plane is a danger to every realm, but many Astral Lords and other rulers of these domains distrust each other, and getting them to cooperate will not be easy. Even worse, some "**monarchs**" may decide that they will benefit from an alliance with the Nightlords, and may betray the adventurers. Some of these lords are as despicable as the **Ba'al** and have their own agenda.

Some of the rulers of the plane may require the characters to undertake quests or missions for them. Others may try to assassinate the characters, or capture them and use them as a bargaining chip with the Nightlords. An atmosphere of paranoia and tension works best in adventures of this type. The characters' skills at negotiating, planning and manipulation may be of great importance; action and danger will always be a possibility.

Common O.C.C.s: Astral lords and mages will be very useful. Nightbanes, Guardians, psychics, astral travelers and others can also be allies, bodyguards and friends. Some players might even want to play some astral creature like the **Tarantuloid** or Millek, or perhaps a Necrophim.

Enemies/Rivals: The Ba'al have several types of minions operating in the planes. The mysterious Necrophim may be enemies, or allies of convenience. Entities have their own alien goals and agendas, and may befriend or betray the characters.

Dream Wars™

The Dark Day invasion did not limit itself to the waking world. The Ba'al already had a presence in the **Dreamstream**, and after they broke free from the Nightlands, they took steps to attack humans in their sleep! This is being accomplished by using their dream minions to twist or shatter the minds of thousands, making them more docile victims, and even assassinating those who might be a threat. In this battlefield, the characters are fighting for the sanity of humankind. These heroes can be Nightbanes, Guardians, Dream Makers, psychics and magicians. Several groups, such as the Order of Morpheus (see the *Dreamstream Section*), dedicate all their efforts to expel the Ba'al and their minions from this realm. The characters may be members of such a group, or occasionally lend them a hand.

Another possibility is to conduct a campaign before Dark Day (or even completely unrelated to the Dark Day invasion), focusing mainly on the Dreamstream and the characters who venture there. The characters can belong to one of the organizations mentioned in the Dreamstream section, or can be on their own. Furthermore, all kinds of psycho-dramas, horror stories and surreal adventures can be played out in this realm of half-realities, nightmares and dreams.

Common O.C.C.s: All the dream P.C.C.s will be very influential, but Nightbane, psychics and practitioners of magic are also appropriate. Even a Spook Squad agent might find his way into the Dreamstream (or be abducted into it).

Enemies/Rivals: Dream creatures and Nightlord minions are the obvious choices, but independent personas, dream constructs, and all the fears, anxieties, guilt, desires and dark thoughts locked away in the subconscious can be unleashed with infinite possibilities. An interesting twist might be to take the characters' own dreams and turn them against him or the group. **Anybody's** fears, hopes and fantasies may all come to life in the Dreamstream to pester, endanger or enlighten them.

Role-playing Hooks: Venturing into the Dreamstream means delving into the collective human consciousness, or entering the Dream Pool (mind) of a specific person — explore the possibilities. Characters may discover a great deal about themselves and each other just by experiencing their dreams come to life. And don't forget, the Nightlords dream too.

More Conversion Notes & Crossover Ideas

A number of fan letters and reader comments requested more ways to mix and match Nightbane with other Palladium Megaverse settings. Detailed below are some more suggestions and optional rules for integrating other Palladium RPG worlds with the concepts in **Nightbane**, particularly campaign and adventure ideas.

Heroes Unlimited™

Superheroes and horror/dark fantasy can be mixed to interesting effect, as witnessed by DC Comics' Vertigo line. Mutants, experimental subjects and other super-characters can be valuable allies in the war against the Nightlords. Some of the campaign ideas described below work on finding ways to mix a world where super-abilities are real with a place where Spook Squad plots and the Ba'al invade the Earth through supernatural means.

Then there's the Dreamstream and Astral Plane, likely places imaginary and where not so imaginary super-powered beings can meet and collide in environments that are strange and alien or as common as the back alleys of any big city.

Rule Adjustments

These are some optional rules for adapting **Heroes Unlimited** to **Nightbane**. Game masters can do with them as they wish, of course.

Supernatural P.S.: Stone and metal alterations, invulnerability, increased strength and any power, mutant or alien characteristic that gives strength bonuses all give the characters the equivalent of supernatural strength. Physical training does not grant supernatural strength, however.

Invulnerability: Invulnerable characters are NOT immune to the attacks of supernatural creatures! Damage from supernatural strength, magic and psionic energies of **Nightbanes**, Guardians and minions of the Nightlords will inflict full (or half) damage even to otherwise invulnerable characters. If these characters remain invulnerable even to magic and the supernatural, they are certainly vulnerable through their *dreams*!

What are the fears, guilt and desires of a superhero? How will even the mightiest of heroes face his own inner hostilities and dark emotions in the Dreamstream? Likewise, invulnerable and super-powerful beings may not be as powerful or meet their match in the Dreamstream or in the Astral Plane where astral villains can mold their world into their own dark image.

Magic: The magic system depicted in **Heroes Unlimited** does not use the more common, P.P.E. based system that is now standard throughout most Palladium lines (including the upcoming *Palladium Fantasy RPG, Second Edition*). Game masters may want to adapt the spells from HU into the P.P.E. based system found in the *Nightbane RPG*.

Villains: Guilt Eaters, Furies, Living Nightmares, Soul Eaters, astral lords, astral assassins, and other supernatural beings all make great super villains, just as Dream Makers, Dream Dancers, Psychic Detectives, Nightbane and others might make interesting **superheroes** and anti-heroes.

Campaign and Adventure Ideas

The Secret Invasion: There was a world of heroes. Costumed crusaders had walked the Earth since World War II, and the sight of a caped hero flying over the skyscrapers of a city was something most people were used to. Heroes and villains slugged it out in heroic battles, and evil seemed easy to recognize. Then Dark Day came.

The Nightlords planned their strike with great care. During the twenty-four hours of darkness, many heroes (and villains) were taken by surprise and overwhelmed by Hounds, Hunters and other horrors. Most survivors were forced into hiding, and the fearful peoples of the Earth looked towards the darkening

skies for help — and saw nothing. Feeling betrayed, many common people turned against their former idols. Reports of monstrous "mutants" (the Nightbanes) further fueled the hysteria against ultra-humans. The Preserver Party ran on a platform of "preserving Earth for Humankind," targeting mutants, so-called superhumans, and ultra-humans as the cause of Dark Day and the ensuing chaos. Super-abilities are now considered to be inherently dangerous or evil, and those who exhibit them are marked for persecution or worse.

Most heroes have abandoned their costumes and now live in hiding. Some blame the Nightbanes for their downfall, and attack them on sight, unwittingly doing the **Nightlords'** work for them. Many others have discovered the terrible secret of the invasion, and now fight side by side with Nightbanes, Guardians and **Wampyrs**. A few daring heroes still retain their costumes and try to act as living symbols of freedom, but they are often the first to fall, hunted by supernatural minions, super-villains (many of whom now serve the Nightlords), and rejected by most common people. Ironically, some villains and self-serving masterminds are now fighting side by side with heroes, because they understand that the Nightlords are a common threat that must be dealt with. Some of these criminals, however, are still looking out for number one, and will try to take advantage of their new "allies" at the earliest opportunity. Other villains take advantage of the chaos and strike at heroes, freedom fighters and the Nightlords alike.

This would be a "gritty" super-heroic game, where most heroes have abandoned their colorful costumes and nicknames, and are involved in a long, inglorious, dirty war against an absolutely evil enemy. Ultra-humans and Nightbanes are considered equals in the eyes of the common man and the media: strange beings with great power, hated and feared. Even the ultra-humans' powers may not be enough to deal with such enemies.

In this setting, the Spook Squad and other characters and creatures from this book would all fit in nicely.

Arena: A group of astral travelers come upon a bizarre Astral Kingdom where beings with super-abilities are pitted against each other for the entertainment of a race of bizarre beings. The characters are captured and forced to fight in the Great Arena against these ultra-human champions. When (if) the travelers escape, one or two renegade super-beings may follow them (new player characters, *perhaps*?).

Ninjas and Superspies™/Mystic China™

Martial artists from Ninjas and Superspies have the skills and mystic powers to stand alongside psychics, mages and other human champions in the war against the Nightlords. Superspies, with their gadgets and special equipment, can give Spook Squad a more "cinematic" feel, more James Bond than Tom Clancy, which may appeal to some players. The Mystic China supplement adds even more special abilities, strange supernatural creatures (like Immortals), and more magic stuff; all of which can be incorporated into a Nightbane campaign and vice versa.

Campaign and Adventure Ideas

Dragons Against the Darkness: The Silver Dragons, a secret society of martial artists, has been founded in Asia to combat the Nightlords. The Silver Dragons include not only martial artists but a number of Nightbanes, psychics, mystics and super-

natural creatures. More information on the Silver Dragons and similar societies will be detailed in future **Nightbane** source-books, but game masters with Ninjas and Superspies and/or Mystic China can adopt the concept of the Silver Dragons or a similar group in their campaigns.

Creatures of the Night: Friends and associates of the characters (members of their Nightbane Faction, perhaps) are being murdered one by one. At first, it appears that the Nightlords are responsible. Eventually, however, the characters realize they and their friends are the target of a Ninja clan. Maybe the Ninja are in the employ of the **Ba'al**, or they stalk the characters for their own purposes. The shadow assassins will eventually pit their dark Chi powers against the Nightbanes in a fight to the death.

The Evil Immortal: A group of Nightbanes crosses paths with an Evil Immortal (see *Mystic China*), a powerful martial artist and alchemist who, over the centuries, has amassed great power. In a historical campaign where the characters "live" through several centuries before the Dark Day invasion, this immortal could be their nemesis, always managing to cheat death to torment the Nightbanes another day. Now, the immortal is the overlord of a city's Chinatown; the Nightlord in charge of that city is trying to destroy this obstacle. The characters must decide whether or not to help their old enemy, or to destroy him even if this means a victory for the **Nightlords**! Or the characters could get caught in the middle of a war between Nightlord minions and the martial-arts trained servants of the immortal master.

Rifts®

The Rifts setting, with its links to the entire Megaverse, is one of the most likely sources of crossover games, characters, monsters, elements, other dimensions (like the Astral Plane and Dreamstream) and adventures. Integrating characters and themes from Nightbane into Rifts (and vice versa) can add even more levels to the campaign. Outlined below are a few more such ideas.

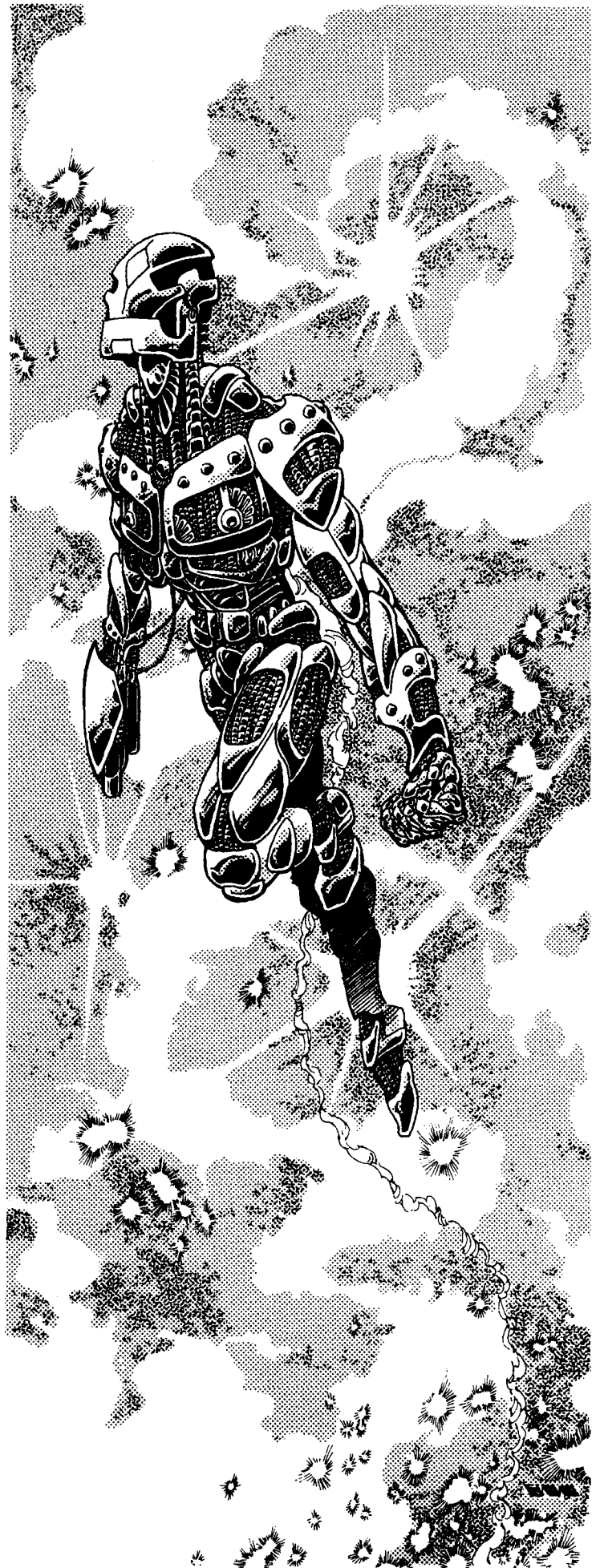
Rule Adjustments

These are some optional rules to adapt Nightbane to Rifts and vice versa. Game Masters should feel free to modify them to suit their own tastes and the needs of their campaign.

Nightbane M.D.C. Conversions: On Rifts Earth, *Nightbanes* are S.D.C. beings in their Facade form, and M.D.C. beings in **Morphus** form. In the latter shape, take their S.D.C. and hit points and transform them into M.D.C. on a one to one basis. Nightbanes regenerate 10 M.D.C. points per melee round; their powers inflict mega-damage and their strength is supernatural as per the *Rifts Conversion Book One*, page 22. The Coalition States will regard them as dangerous, baby-eating monsters to be hunted down and destroyed. Places like **Lazlo** will accept them as fellow **inhumans**, and Tolkeen and the Federation of Magic will recruit them in their armies to oppose the CS. Playing a Nightbane in Rifts would be cool.

Guardians and **Wampyrs** are also supernatural beings with M.D.C. points equivalent to their S.D.C. and Hit Points combined.

Nightbanes and Other Races: The Facade of a Nightbane can belong to any non-supernatural **humanoid** (and human-sized) race, although most (90%) Nightbane are human. This includes such races as Elves, Dwarves, True **Atlaneans**, and similar human-like races. No supernatural race (includes races



with supernatural strength, large amounts of S.D.C. (100+) or any mega-damage beings or creatures of magic) are never Nightbane.

Nightbanes and Special Enhancements: Nightbanes cannot accept bionics in either **Morphus** or Facade form. Characters whose Facades have lost limbs can have them replaced with cybernetic prosthetics or bio-systems; these prosthetics disappear when the Morphus form is assumed. All other cybernetic implants and bionics are expelled out of the body of the Facade in a matter of 2D6 hours (the Morphus will expel them in 2D4 melee rounds!). This is true even for Nightbanes with Biomechanical characteristics (remember, these biomechanicals are not "real" but simply a shape adopted by the character). Furthermore, magical enhancements like bio-wizardry, tattoo magic, Nazca runes, and transformation rituals or circles, have NO effect on either the Facade or Morphus of the character. Even latent Nightbanes cannot get magic tattoos (or, more precisely, can have tattoos imprinted on them but they will not work). This will reveal the fact that they are not truly human.

Rifts Races on Nightbane Earth: Normal S.D.C. races require no changes; supernatural (M.D.C.) species use their M.D.C. as S.D.C. points; Hit Points may be two or three times greater than normal, depending on how powerful the Game Master wants the creatures to be. So, for example, a hatchling dragon would have 1D4×100 S.D.C. and P.E. x2 hit points, plus 2D6 hit points per level. The largest and most powerful M.D.C. beings may require further reductions (adult dragons might only have one-half of their normal M.D.C. converted to S.D.C.), or might not be allowed at all (they may be inappropriate, over-powering, or funky). Any unusual natural powers will inflict normal S.D.C. damage.

Technology and Armor on Nightbane Earth: Bringing M.D.C. weapons and armor into the world of Nightbane would be completely unbalancing. The quickest fix for this is suggested on page 203 of the *Nightbane RPG*: any non-organic object entering that world is disintegrated. This would make it impossible for 'borgs, power armor, robots, and other characters to enter this world. Some players and game masters may find such a solution unfair, so here are two other "fixes" to deal with this situation:

S.D.C. Switch: This solution was suggested in the Conversion Book One; simply convert all M.D.C. damage and values to S.D.C. on a one to one basis. While this will not unbalance the campaign, players will be disappointed when they discover that their weapons and armor may be less effective than their 20th Century equivalents!

S.D.C. Conversion: Alternatively, the G.M. may convert M.D.C. to S.D.C. on a 1 to 5, or 1 to 10 bases (i.e., 1 point of M.D.C. is equivalent to 5 or 10 points of S.D.C.). By doing this, ultra-tech body armor and weapons will be much more effective than Earth equivalents — although most weapon systems will not be able to get repairs and maintenance under such primitive conditions. Sooner or later, characters will have to abandon their advanced weapons when they run out of E-clips or when power armor is severely damaged. Furthermore, the **Nightlords** and groups like Spook Squad are likely to hunt these characters down and try to capture them and their equipment for study. Be careful not to create characters that are too powerful.

The Nightlords™ & their Minions in the Rifts® Setting

The Nightlords themselves: In the P.P.E. rich environment of Rifts Earth, the Ba'al's powers would be increased to god-like levels. Their powers would inflict equivalents in mega-damage. Their M.D.C. while on such places as Rifts Earth, Wormwood and Phase World would be 3D4×1,000, making them the match for alien intelligences, godlings and lesser gods. These powers, coupled with their numbers (possibly hundreds of them), would make the Nightlords a serious danger. However, it is probably best not to have the Nightlords invade the Earth with plans of conquest, but to have one or two expeditionary forces or rogue Nightlords (and their loyal minions) establish a small stronghold or kingdom on Rifts Earth. Likewise, the **Ba'al** may visit Rifts Earth periodically as dimensional raiders, or as mercenaries or allies of another supernatural force.

Of all the evil powers on Rifts Earth, the Ba'al would be most closely linked to the Horsemen of the Apocalypse (see *Rifts World Book Four: Africa*). Like the Horsemen, the **Nightlords'** goal appears to be the destruction of all life. The Nightlords might also pay homage to the Lord of the Deep (see *Rifts Underseas*), who may belong to the unknown "pantheon" worshipped by these malevolent beings. On the other hand, the **Plugorath**, **Myrrlin** and his master, the vampire intelligences of Central and South America and Inix of Cibola would be seen as enemies to be eliminated (and vice versa). Alliances of convenience with any of the above entities, except vampires, would be considered at first, but neither side could trust the other to keep its promises.

Rifts® Campaign and Adventure Ideas

The Hunted: Nightbanes traveling the Astral Plane are pursued by a team of Plugorath Conservators (see *Rifts World Book Two: Atlantis*) who have used magical means to travel into the Plane (double their body M.D.C. to determine astral S.D.C.). Which will prevail, Nightbane talents or alien bio-wizardry? The hunt can be conducted in the plane itself or an Astral domain or kingdom. If the Conservators win, they might choose to enslave rather than kill the Nightbanes. Next stop: the Atlantis Arena!

Rifted Adrift: A group of adventurers from Rifts Earth are swept away by a dimensional maelstrom and find themselves on Nightbane Earth! All their high-tech equipment is lost during the dimensional disturbance, and they must rely on their skills and smarts to survive. They will face persecution from the NSB and Nightlords, and may find allies among the Nightbanes or other factions. Ambitious and resourceful characters may try to advance the technology of 21st Century Earth, helping enhance existing weapon systems. A **techno-wizard** might be extremely useful to Spook Squad and similar organizations.

Random Rifts: Rifts characters can get accidentally, randomly, or deliberately Rifted to the Nightlands, Nightbane Earth, the Astral Plane, or the **Dreamstream**.



Experience Point Tables

Former Special Forces/
Team Epsilon Trooper,
ADA & PAB Field Agent,
Pandora Project Researcher,
Ex-Government Agent

- 1 0,000-1,900
- 2 1,900-3,800
- 3 3,801-7,300
- 4 7,301-14,300
- 5 14,301-21,000
- 6 21,001-31,000
- 7 31,001-41,000
- 8 41,001-53,000
- 9 53,001-73,000
- 10 73,001-103,000
- 11 103,001-138,000
- 12 138,001-188,000
- 13 188,001-238,000
- 14 238,001-288,000
- 15 288,001-328,000

Dream Maker,
Dream Dancer,
Astral Lord

- 1 0,000-2,500
- 2 2,501-5,000
- 3 5,001-10,000
- 4 10,001-20,000
- 5 20,001-30,000
- 6 30,001-50,000
- 7 50,001-80,000
- 8 80,001-120,000
- 9 120,001-170,000
- 10 170,001-225,000
- 11 225,001-275,000
- 12 275,001-350,000
- 13 350,001-420,000
- 14 420,001-520,000
- 15 520,001-700,000

Arcane Detective,
PAB Psychic Agent

- 1 0,000-2,300
- 2 2,301-4,600
- 3 4,601-9,200
- 4 9,201-18,400
- 5 18,401-26,500
- 6 26,501-36,600
- 7 36,601-51,700
- 8 51,701-71,800
- 9 71,801-96,900
- 10 96,901-137,000
- 11 137,001-188,100
- 12 188,101-229,200
- 13 229,201-289,200
- 14 289,201-355,400
- 15 355,401-420,800

Torturian,
Turantuloid Warrior

- 1 0,000-2,050
- 2 2,051-4,100
- 3 4,101-8,250
- 4 8,251-16,500
- 5 16,501-24,600
- 6 24,601-34,700
- 7 34,701-49,800
- 8 49,801-69,900
- 9 69,001-95,000
- 10 95,000-130,100
- 11 130,101-180,200
- 12 180,201-230,300
- 13 230,301-280,400
- 14 280,401-340,500
- 15 340,501-400,600

Dream Ghouls,
Astral Entities

- 1 0,000-2,240
- 2 2,241-4,480
- 3 4,481-8,960
- 4 8,961-17,920
- 5 17,921-25,920
- 6 25,921-35,920
- 7 35,921-50,920
- 8 50,921-70,920
- 9 70,921-95,920
- 10 95,921-135,920
- 11 135,921-185,920
- 12 185,921-225,920
- 13 225,921-275,920
- 14 275,921-335,920
- 15 335,921-395,920

'Kinetic,
Genius & Natural,
Psi-Mechanic

- 1 0,000-2,120
- 2 2,121-4,240
- 3 4,241-8,480
- 4 8,481-16,960
- 5 16,961-24,960
- 6 24,961-34,960
- 7 34,961-49,960
- 8 49,961-69,960
- 9 69,961-94,960
- 10 94,961-129,960
- 11 129,961-179,960
- 12 179,961-229,960
- 13 229,961-279,960
- 14 279,961-329,960
- 15 329,961-389,960

Necrophim

- 1 0,000-2,700
- 2 2,701-5,400
- 3 5,401-10,800
- 4 10,801-21,600
- 5 21,601-31,600
- 6 31,601-42,800
- 7 42,801-62,000
- 8 62,001-90,000
- 9 90,001-120,000
- 10 120,001-170,000
- 11 170,001-220,000
- 12 220,001-280,000
- 13 280,001-370,000
- 14 370,001-480,000
- 15 480,001-650,000

Millek,
Mind Master,
Astral Mage

- 1 0,000-2,600
- 2 2,601-5,000
- 3 5,001-10,000
- 4 10,001-20,000
- 5 20,001-30,000
- 6 30,001-50,000
- 7 50,001-80,000
- 8 80,001-130,000
- 9 130,001-180,000
- 10 180,001-230,000
- 11 230,001-290,000
- 12 290,001-370,000
- 13 370,001-480,000
- 14 480,001-575,000
- 15 575,001-750,000

Mountebank,
Turantuloid Mystic

- 1 0,000-2,400
- 2 2,601-4,600
- 3 4,601-9,200
- 4 9,201-18,400
- 5 18,401-28,300
- 6 28,301-48,000
- 7 48,001-78,000
- 8 78,001-110,000
- 9 110,001-150,000
- 10 150,001-200,000
- 11 200,001-250,000
- 12 250,001-310,000
- 13 310,001-380,000
- 14 380,001-470,000
- 15 470,001-600,000

Morpheomoth,
Living Nightmare

- 1 0,000-3,000
- 2 3,001-6,000
- 3 6,001-12,000
- 4 12,001-24,000
- 5 24,001-50,000
- 6 50,001-80,000
- 7 80,001-120,000
- 8 120,001-170,000
- 9 170,001-220,000
- 10 220,001-290,000
- 11 290,001-375,000
- 12 375,001-450,000
- 13 450,001-525,000
- 14 525,001-625,000
- 15 625,001-875,000



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