

ALTERNITY

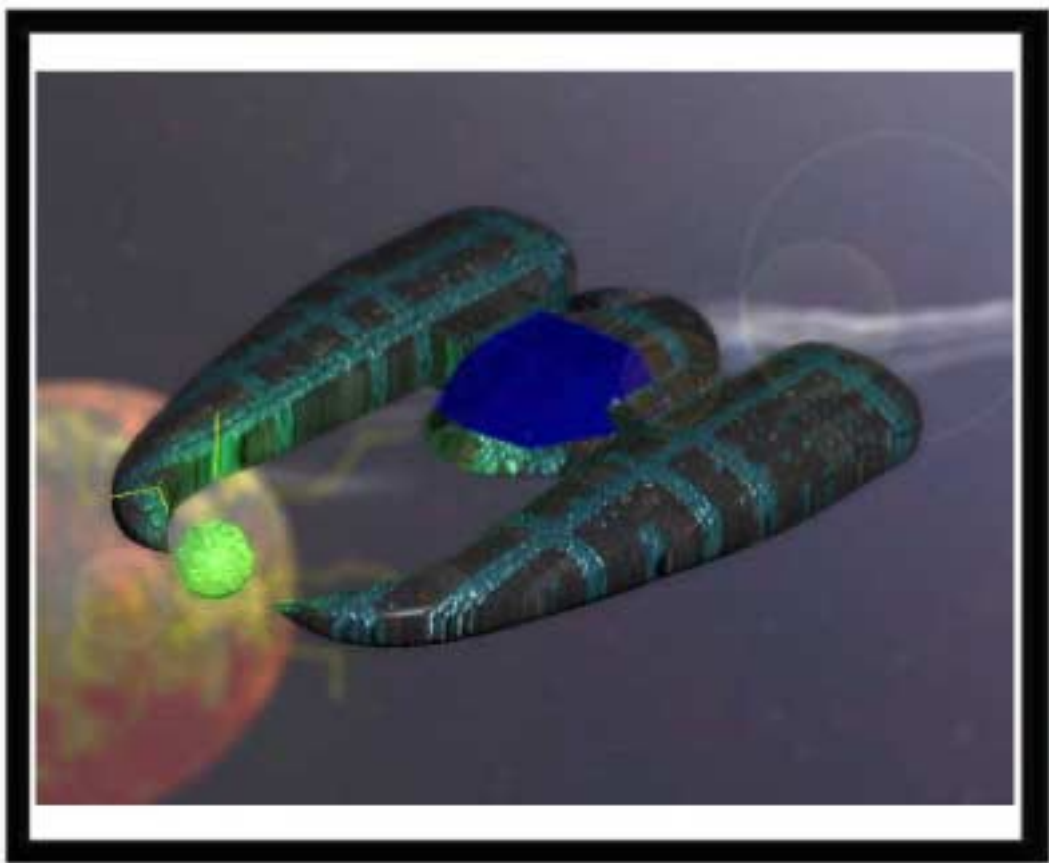
ACTION CHECK

ONLINE + MAGAZINE

STAR + DRIVE

GAMMA WORLD

DARK • MATTER



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Action Check is an on-line electronic magazine dedicated to the Alternity Role-Playing Game.

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Miniature cardboard figures for Alternity Gamma World

Eric Noah of Eric's Unofficial 3rd Edition News asked WotC's RPG Director Keith Strohm...

This month saw the release of the final Alternity products. Any final thoughts on this line? Well, I was actually one of the original editors for the Alternity game, and I think that the Alternity books were packed full of interesting and fun information that made SF gaming a real draw. It's always difficult to have to have to create "exit" strategies for game products that you personally like (ask me sometime about how hard it was for me to mark *Of Ships & the Sea* for destruction), but Alternity just didn't draw the numbers it needed to in order to survive at Wizards of the Coast. I've interacted a lot with Alternity fans and I have to say that they are all extremely passionate about their favorite game system. Hopefully Alternity will be alive and well around gaming tables across the country for years to come.

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Editorial

Feedback is an important topic for Alternity. I'm not talking about psychic feedback from some Mindwalker or biofeedback from cyberware. I'm talking about the feedback you give other people by telling them what you think, especially when they ask for it.

If there is a player or GM out there who can improve without feedback, I would love to meet him. Now, you might argue that you've played in games where it seemed like things were going nowhere, and suddenly, BAM! The stuff hits the fan, and things are right on track. Don't think that just because you didn't say anything, there was no feedback going on. Most likely your GM read your body language and perked things up.

Many of us, unfortunately, lack that kind of intuitive ability. That's why a GM should always want feedback from his players. Many times, you'll get that feedback automatically, when your players have had a great night and can't wait to tell you. Occasionally, this feedback may not be the kudos and adoration that you'd like after the hard work of creating a game. And some players never comment, bad or good.

If you want to improve as a GM, you should ask your players what they thought of your game. And when you're a player, you should make sure that your GM knows if you had a good time or not. If you have positive thoughts, let him know! If the villainous NPC threw you for a loop or the plot you've uncovered stunned you with its intricacy, let him know! And as a GM, take the compliments with grace and be happy that your hard work paid off. Make sure the players know that they contributed to your good GMing.

It's a lot more difficult to be negative than positive for most people, particularly with their friends. If you have some negative comments and don't want to bring them up in public, e-mail the GM or call him after the game with them. *And be NICE.* Remember, he's doing the hard work here, and is most likely trying his best to give you a good time.

As GM, when you get negative comments, try not to take it personally. Do your best to see if others at your table feel similarly. The players are your friends; they don't want to hurt your feelings and may not be forthcoming. If they're tired of senseless combats, try more role-playing or puzzle solving. If they've bogged down in the plot or the mystery, pummel them with some nasty externals to get their blood pumping. Try to respond to what they view as the game's negative aspects.

Now, you may argue that this could break up a gaming group, but might that not be for the best? If the players want combat and pillaging, but the GM wants political intrigue, and neither one will budge, then maybe they each need to move on. A little feedback over the course of several game sessions can prevent months or years of unsatisfying gaming for both the GM and the players. No one wants to go a game and be bored, and no one wants to run a game where he feels his hard work is unappreciated.

What does this have to do with Action Check? Well, it all comes back to feedback. Every submitter we've had has put his work out there just like your GM does every session. So let them know what you think. If an article impresses you or you used a Transmission, let the submitter know. If there's something you didn't agree with, you can tell him that too, but like I said above, *be NICE.* The submitter took the time to share his work with Action Check and with you, so don't flame him because you didn't like it.

And if you do send feedback to someone who wrote an article for us, please copy us in at actioncheck@hotmail.com, because we'd like to hear about what you like and want to see more of, too. Feedback may encourage a submitter to send us more goodies, and more material for us can make things better for you, our readers. So when you get some real use out of something, let us and our submitters know so we can keep up the good work!

Action Check Submissions

To submit an article to Action Check magazine:

actioncheck@hotmail.com

Submission Guidelines can be found at :
www.thirdfloor.8m.com

Regular Features:

Transmissions: adventure hooks, along the lines of those previously found in Dragon Magazine for the various campaign settings.

Gridsites: Alternity Web sites that deserve recognition and serve a specific purpose.

Creature Feature: Aliens, Creatures, Xenofoms, etc. for the Alternity game campaign settings.

Futuretech: gear, equipment, vehicles, weapons, armor and other hardware for the Alternity game.

Supporting Cast: NPC stats for insertion in your own games. All submissions must follow the Supporting Cast Template in the Alternity GMG!

Reviews: of Alternity or related-use product.

Special FX: New FX/Psi or Mutations.

Plus cartoons, details of campaign ideas, fully detailed star systems, artwork, etc.



INSIDE WALTER

By Jim Sharkey

Inside WALTER, an interview with the creator of the Alternity Character Manager.

Walter, the Alternity Character Manager is the premiere Alternity program package. We've mentioned it before in GRIDSITES, but it's become a life-saver on too many occasions to count. With great respect, we present you with an interview from late September with the creator of WALTER, Dr. John Erick Christgau:

Action Check: We're glad to hear that you'd like to talk a little. Here's a few questions. WALTER is a real time-saver for both the GM and the player. What was the impetus that got you started on its creation?

Erick Christgau: I'm a programmer by profession and I always seem to create these sort of programs for the systems that I like. After starting work on it, it actually began to form the beginnings of an engine for a CRPG that my friend and co-worker wanted to do. That's the only reason that the project hasn't become open-source.

AC: Judging by your initial response, it sounds like you intend to continue to refine WALTER. Do you think the project will ever be complete?

EC: The project will continue. I am one of the many that are saddened by Wizards' choice to end the Alternity product line. Although lately I've taken the view that at least it ended in its prime; it could have been worse. As for whether the project will be complete: well, is any software ever really done? One hopefully upcoming feature is output of a GRIP sheet for both heroes and NPCs. I'm talking with RPGRealms about this and hope to be able to provide it for users of their software.

AC: Are you involved in any ongoing Alternity campaigns?

EC: I run a campaign of sorts at the local game conventions (we now have 4 big ones a year!) set in the Stargate SG-1 setting. I use the TV series and a healthy dash of Dark*Matter to form the background. I'm also starting work on a Star*Drive based campaign with the RPG group that I'm currently in.

AC: What's your favorite setting?

EC: I've always been drawn to sci-fi settings like Star*Drive so that would have to be my favorite, although Dark*Matter comes in as a close second with Gamma World right after it.

AC: What do you like best about Alternity?

EC: If I have to pick one specific part of the system, it would be the core mechanic. The whole system really has what I've wanted in an RPG for a long time: point based, skills based, perks and especially flaws (something 3rd edition D&D is missing). The other modular parts of the system like psionics, mutations, FX, and cyberware help to make it into whatever you want it to be. Our group is even considering doing a fantasy test with it, just to see how deadly a system it is for fantasy.

AC: Do you prefer to be a player or GM?

EC: I'm almost exclusively a GM except for some one-shot games at conventions. I REALLY want to play!

AC: We understand you're making WALTER modular so people can add in all their own stuff instead of you having to supply the databases. How is that coming along?

EC: So far so good. There's been a few bumps but it is coming along. I may have to change some of the ways skills are done to really let it expand properly (sorry).

AC: On average, how much time in a week do you spend on WALTER?

EC: I'd have to say around 4 or 5 hours lately. There's usually quite a few weeks with none then a few with 16 to 20. It's usually in bursts like that just before a release. I'm hoping for one of them either this week or next so I can get a release done before the Manafest convention on the 6th of October.

AC: We get the impression that you'd have liked to see WotC pick up WALTER as an official product. Is that correct?

EC: Well, I sort of did before they killed the product line. It was only partially serious. Someone had mentioned Walter on one of the Wizards news-groups for Alternity as a possibility for an Alternity "Core Rules" product. Hey, you never know, it could've happened.

AC: What other game-related programs do you have in the works, or have already written, if any?

EC: There's a Spaceships plugin for Walter that is coming as soon as I finish or at least solidify the plugin spec. The only other one I can really talk about is the CRPG mentioned before. We have a few other projects, but nothing really past the initial design or idea phases.

AC: What is your PhD in?

EC: Actually, it's in Religion. That's only odd because I'm not that religious a person. Religion has always interested me as a subject as opposed to a calling.

AC: What got you to start up The Castle?

EC: Franz Kafka. It was originally started as a site for my band Retina and just evolved from there (or metamorphosed?!?). Funny story: I've had the domain since 1995 and have had two offers to sell it, one from someone in about 1996 and another around January of this year from the Australian film company that made a film called The Castle. Their initial offer was for the cost of moving to another domain. After a few minutes of research (god I love the internet), we found out that Miramax (aka Disney) bought the film for around 10 million. Sent a quick email to them stating that we knew about that deal and haven't heard from them since.

AC: Thank you very much for your time!

EC: Thanks again for this opportunity, it's been fun. This is my first on-line interview. I've done a few in the past for the band on the radio, but this is the first one on-line. Very Cool.

The WALter Alternity Character Manager can be found in it's latest form at:

<http://www.thecastle.com/walter.html>



By Jeff Ibach

A highly underestimated science-fiction game system, the TSR-spawned XXVc Roleplaying Game was that of a dark, gritty future with some fantastic source material. In fact, I used that material for the basis of my Harvest Moon Alternity campaign in 1999. For collectors or those looking for exceptional material to integrate into their Alternity games, here's the complete list and info on the XXVc game line.

- 3562 Buck Rogers XXVc The 25th Century Role-Playing Game. \$24.95
- 3570 [25CREFF1] Character Record Sheets \$8.95
- 3563 [XXVCA1] Buck Rogers in the 25th Century adventure. \$9.95
- 3566 [XXVCA2] NEO in the 25th Century adventure. \$9.95
- 2569 [XXVCA3] Deimos Mandate adventure. \$6.95
- 3571 [XXVCS2] Sargasso of Space adventure. \$6.95
- 3573 [XXVCS3] A Matter of Gravitol adventure. \$6.95
- 3578 [XXVCS4] Phases of the Moon adventure. \$6.95
- 3565 [25CR1] Mars in the 25th Century accessory. \$9.95
- 3567 [XXVCR2] Earth in the 25th Century accessory. \$9.95
- 3572 [25CR3] Inner Worlds accessory. \$9.95
- 3575 [XXVCR4] Luna accessory. \$9.95
- 3579 [XXVCR5] The Belt accessory. \$9.95
- 3574 [XXVCR6] No Humans Allowed. \$15.00
- 3582 [25CR7] Hardware accessory. \$9.95

Many of the books above as well as the boxed set came with poster maps or starship deckplans. The Character Sheets were very well done and detailed. The Hardware book was the excellent XXVc "Arms & Equipment Guide." And the No Humans Allowed book presented over 50 genetically altered human genotypes for the game.

While the XXVc roleplaying game may not have been an utter smash with consumers, they finished the series (as best can be told) and what's presented above is a complete, fully detailed far-future science fiction campaign that stands on it's own today with the best of them.



Kolchak: the Night Stalker

By Jeff Ibach

The world of Dark*Matter in the 1970's

Kolchak the Night Stalker was a television show way ahead of its time. It ran over 20 episodes during the 1974-75 season on ABC, and the original TV movie is still the fifth-highest rated TV movie of all time.

An *X-Files* for the seventies, *Night Stalker* is the story of Carl Kolchak (played by Darren McGavin), a reporter for the Independent News Service in Chicago. Carl has a first rate penchant for seeking the truth, no matter how unlikely that truth may be. More often than not, the truth is "out there": Vampires, Indian spirits, werewolves, vengeful Greek goddesses, robots, reptiles, and even space aliens. Since it was 1970's prime time, they couldn't do a bloody horror show, so like the best of Dark*Matter, they gave us hints of terror and horror.



In this series of articles, I'll take different episodes from the series and translate them to Dark*Matter. While the series took place in the mid-1970's, the stories themselves easily crossover to current day. Even though Carl uses a typewriter instead of a computer keyboard and develops his own pictures instead of using a digital camera, the stories themselves are largely unaffected by time. In the opener, I'll tackle Carl himself, gaming Dark*Matter in the 1970's, and the first adventure translation.

Carl Kolchak

Level 8 male human Diplomat (Free Agent)

STR 10 INT 12
DEX 8 WIL 10
CON 9 PER 11

Durability: 9/9/5/5 Action Check: 12+ /11/5/2

Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4 # Actions: 2

Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last Resorts: 2

Perks: Observant, Danger Sense

Flaws: Clumsy, Rebellious

Attributes: Find the Truth, Just, Curious, Aggressive

Career: Reporter

Attacks

Unarmed 11/5/2 + d4 LI/O Personal d4s/d4+ 1s/d4+ 2s

Defenses

None

Skills

Athletics [10]; Unarmed [10], *brawl* [11]; Stealth [8], *hide* [9], *shadow* [9], *sneak* [9]; Vehicle Operation [8]; Knowledge [12], *deduce* [13]; Law [12]; Awareness [10], *intuition* [11], *perception* [11]; Creativity [10], *news writing* [13], *photo development* [11]; Investigate [10], *interrogate* [12], *research* [12], *search* [12], *track* [12]; Lore [10], *conspiracy theories* [11], *occult lore* [11]; Resolve [10], *mental resolve* [10]; Street Smart [10], *criminal elements* [11], *street knowledge* [11]; Culture [11], *diplomacy* [13]; Deception [11], *bluff* [15]; Interaction [11], *bargain* [15], *charm* [14], *interview* [15]

Diplomat Contacts or Resources

Tony Vincenzo (boss, extra cash), Gordon Spangler aka Gordy the Ghoul (informant), Miss Emily Cowles (coworker, information and trusted friend).

Carl Kolchak is a reporter for INS, the Independent News Service of Chicago, Illinois. He isn't necessarily a hero, but he's not an anti-hero either. He's first and foremost a reporter, and he'll stop at nothing (including risking his own life) to uncover the truth because "the people have the right to know." At every turn his boss and other outside influences are hampering his job. The boss doesn't want to print anything controversial, the police don't want civil unrest on their hands, and the *others* just want him quiet. Story leads others would easily dismiss are his favorite, because just a little extra research might reveal something to his amazing intuition that not all is right. Unfortunately, after he uncovers a danger, he's more than likely the one who's forced to deal with it because no one else will believe him.

Carl is an unassuming man in his early 40's. He wears a simple light blue suit with a straw hat. He speaks clearly and forcefully. He's stubborn and relentless in his pursuit of uncovering the truth.

DarkMatter in the mid (pre-disco)-1970's

While this article can't hope to cover all bases of this type of campaign, a few basics should be enough for GMs to start with:

Computers were absent from mainstream society. This may be simple and obvious, but it impacts more than most can imagine. For example, data storage

was completely on hard copy. Everything from police files to motor vehicle records to libraries stored their information in metal file cabinets and on paper. Old newspaper articles and other archived information were stored on Microfiche, films that needed to be viewed with a special reader. The computers of the day were made of multiple components large enough to take up a medium-sized room, and still barely did the work of an old IBM of the late 80's. Only government agencies and the most advanced research facilities had these computers. Movie special effects had to be crafted; there was no computer animation.

Communications: Car phones were rare in the extreme and were the tools of government agents. There were no cell phones, and many phones didn't have pushbuttons, they had rotary dials. There were no fax machines and no compact disks. News Services transmitted stories to others by way of a teletype newswire.

Cars: While the names may have stayed the same, the cars themselves look like something out of Buck Rogers. Ford Mustangs, Chevy Monte Carlos and Pontiac Firebirds were out in all their big-block 8-cylinder glory, eating up gas like there was no tomorrow and burning up the streets. There were some that didn't make it to current day, either, like the Ford Pinto, Pontiac LeManz and Ford Maverick.

I 973

In The News In 1973

- * Supreme Court rules in Roe v Wade that states may not prevent a woman from having an abortion during the first 3 months of pregnancy.
- * U.S. announces the end of the military draft.
- * Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigns after pleading no contest to charges of tax evasion while governor of Maryland.
- * Gerald R. Ford becomes the first appointed vice president under the 25th Amendment.
- * A total ban on oil exports to the U.S. for six months is imposed by Arab nations after the outbreak of an Arab-Israeli war.

Entertainment in 1973

- * Nobel Prize Winner (Literature) -Patrick White - Australia
- * Best Selling Fiction - Jonathan Livingston Seagull, Richard Bach
- * Best Selling Non-Fiction - The Living Bible, Kenneth Taylor
- * Best Picture - The Sting, Universal
- * Best Director - George Roy Hill, The Sting
- * Best Actress - Glenda Jackson, A Touch of Class
- * Best Actor - Jack Lemmon, Save the Tiger

Sport champions in 1973

- * MLB - Oakland Athletics
- * NFL - Miami Dolphins
- * NBA - New York Knickerbockers
- * NHL - Montreal Canadiens
- * NCAA-Basketball - UCLA

I 974

In The News In 1974

- * Hank Aaron hits his 715th home run to beat Babe Ruth's record.
- * Impeachment hearings are opened against President Nixon by the House Judiciary Committee.
- * President Nixon resigns.
- * President Gerald Ford issues an unconditional pardon to ex-President Nixon for all federal crimes.
- * Muhammad Ali knocks out George Foreman in the eighth round to regain the heavyweight crown in Kinshasa, Zaire.
- * Heiress Patty Hearst is kidnapped by and eventually joins the Symbionese Liberation Army.

Entertainment in 1974

- * Nobel Prize Winner (Literature) -Eyvind Johnson and Harry Edmund - Sweden
- * Best Selling Fiction - Centennial, James A. Michener
- * Best Selling Non-Fiction - The Total Woman, Marabel Morgan
- * Best Picture - The Godfather Part II, Paramount
- * Best Director - Francis Ford Coppola, The Godfather Part II
- * Best Actress - Ellen Burstyn, Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore
- * Best Actor - Art Carney, Harry and Tonto

Sport champions in 1974

- * MLB - Oakland Athletics
- * NFL - Miami Dolphins
- * NBA - Boston Celtics
- * NHL - Philadelphia Flyers
- * NCAA-Basketball - North Carolina State

I 975

In The News In 1975

- * Evacuation of U.S. civilians from Saigon as Communist forces complete takeover of South Vietnam.
- * FBI agents capture Patty Hearst, who is indicted and convicted of bank robbery.
- * Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa disappears without a trace.
- * Marines rescue the crew of the American ship the Mayaguez near Vietnam.
- * First Lady Betty Ford says in an interview she thinks her children have tried marijuana. .

Entertainment in 1975

- * Nobel Prize Winner (Literature) -Eugenio Montale - Italy
- * Best Selling Fiction - Ragtime, E.L. Doctorow
- * Best Selling Non-Fiction - Angels: God's Secret Agents, Billy Graham
- * Best Picture - One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, United A
- * Best Director - Milos Forman, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- * Best Actress - Louise Fletcher, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- * Best Actor - Jack Nicholson, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Sport champions in 1975

- * MLB - Cincinnati Reds
- * NFL - Pittsburgh Steelers
- * NBA - Golden State Warriors
- * NHL - Philadelphia Flyers
- * NCAA-Basketball - UCLA

1970's Slang

Boss!

Cool; awesome

Bread

Money; Cash. "Do you have any bread?"

Check ya later.

See you later.

Dy-no-mite!

Great

Far Out Man!

Way cool

Foxy

Good Looking, as in "Hey foxy lady"

Gravy

Sweet, cool, excellent, as in "Man that club was gravy"

Groovy

Cool

Jive Turkey!

A detestable person.

Later

See you at another time.

Let's Book

Let's leave this place

Outta Sight

Like far-out. Very cool, good.

Psychedelic

Awesome; That is one psychedelic fad!

Right on!

Good; accepting something

See ya on the flipside

See ya later

Slide

To give, as in "...slide me some bread/skin man."

Solid

Cool "That's pretty solid"

Streak

To run in public in the nude. Very popular in 1974.

HORROR IN THE HEIGHTS

A DarkMatter 'Kolchak the Night Stalker' Transmission adventure hook.

This adventures takes place in any big city of the 1970's. Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, or San Francisco all work fine.

The characters are called in to investigate the murder of an elderly man in the downtown Jewish section of the city. Investigation reveals that the victim dies of horrible slash wounds to the face and chest (like those from a knife...or possibly claws). He was with some friends playing cards and went back to his apartment for liquor.

During the initial investigation, other victims are found. This time it was an elderly couple that took a shortcut home through an alley after a night at the movies. They were killed in a similar fashion to the prior victim.

In all cases, it should be noted by careful investigators that there was no struggle. Indeed, the victims did not see a creature attack them, but a trusted friend, and didn't even see the danger until it was too late...read on:

Soon a contact informs the PCs that he knows who's been doing the killing. He shows the characters the recently opened Indian restaurant, and in the back alley the many swastikas on the walls. The contact thinks it's a hate crime against the Jewish citizens.

In reality, through careful investigation, the heroes can find out that Swastikas are actually ancient Indian symbols of protection from evil, and the restaurant's owner is actually a holy warrior who has been tracking a Rakshasa, an ancient murderous spirit, and finally is near the kill. While his nephew who operates the restaurant does not initially cooperate with the heroes, they soon find the old warrior near death in the basement of the restaurant, clutching a single blessed crossbow bolt and its weapon.

Knowing the old warrior is near death, the Rakshasa appears that very night to kill the old man and face the heroes! The Rakshasa is detailed in the DarkMatter supplement *The Final Church* available online from Wizards of the Coast.

<http://www.wizards.com/catalog/product.asp?WOC11625>



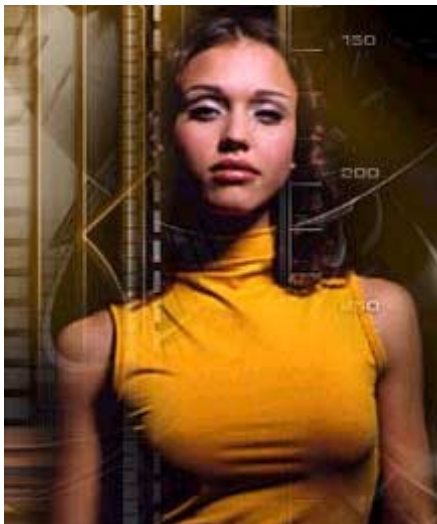
SUPPORTING CAST

By Jeff Ibach

The main character of TV's *Dark Angel*

Television has started welcoming science fiction back with open arms. While shows like *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* and *Battlestar Galactica* proved too expensive (or cheesy) for their time, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* proved that the viewing public was again ready for a weekly sci-fi series on television.

Please note that while I'm sure there's a little of this character which may get lost in the translation and her abilities and skills are up to interpretation, I feel her basic nature has been captured in the following Supporting Cast Member block.



Max Guevara from *Dark Angel*

Level 9 mutant female Combat Spec

STR 13 INT 10
DEX 12 WIL 9
CON 11 PER 10

Durability: 11/11/6/6 Action Check: 15+ /14/7/3

Move: sprint 24, run 16, walk 6 # Actions: 2

Reaction Score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 3

Perks: Great Looks, Tough As Nails, Danger Sense

Flaws: Powerful Enemy 6, Obsessed 4, Rebellious

Attributes: Find the Truth, Anti-authority, Courageous, Independent

Attacks

Unarmed 19/9/4 -d4 Personal d6+ 2s/d6+ 4s/d4+ 2w

Defenses

+ 3 melee resistance modifier

+ 1 ranged resistance modifier

CF Bodysuit d6/d6/d6-1

Skills

Athletics [13], *climb* [14], *jump* [14]; Unarmed Attack [13], *power martial arts* [19]; Acrobatics [12], *daredevil* [13], *dodge* [13], *fall* [13]; Stealth [12], *hide* [13], *shadow* [13], *sneak* [13]; Vehicle Operation [12], *motorcycle* [14]; Stamina [11], *endurance* [12], *resist pain* [12]; Knowledge [10], *deduce* [11]; Security [10], *protection protocols* [11], *security devices* [11]; Awareness [9], *intuition* [11], *perception* [11]; Resolve [9], *mental resolve* [10], *physical resolve* [10]; Street Smart [9], *criminal elements* [10], *street knowledge* [10]; Interaction [10], *charm* [11], *intimidate* [11]

Mutations

Mutant Origin: Engineered

Mutant Uniqueness: Individual with Unique Mutations

Advantageous Mutation Points: 7

Mutation Drawback Points: 6

Advantageous Mutations

	Cost
Night Vision	1
Enhanced STR	2
Enhanced DEX	2
Improved CON	1
Improved Senses	1

Mutations Drawbacks

	Cost
Weak Metabolism	4
Temporary Weakness, Moderate	2

Enhanced STR Mutation: STR increase by 2

Enhanced DEX Mutation: DEX increased by 2

Improved CON Mutation: CON increased by 1

Tough as Nails STR Resistance Modifier Bonus

Danger Sense Perk: -2 step bonus to Awareness-Intuition checks

Max is a genetically enhanced human prototype hunted by her former military handlers through the edgy, underground street life of 21st Century America. Max is aided in her quest - both to avoid capture and reunite with her "siblings" scattered in the aftermath of their escape - by Logan Cale, an idealistic cyber-journalist battling repression and corruption in post-apocalypse. Max initially resists Logan's attempts to enlist her unique skills and abilities in his struggle, preferring instead to maintain the ultra-cool demeanor of detached, alienated youth. Eventually, Logan calls to the higher part of her being and Max becomes his samurai as the pair take on the ruthless power-brokers of the new millennium.



SANDMEN THOUGHTS

By Dale Thurber

Sandmen Thoughts and Ponderings

Editor's note: This article comes from a discussion on the Dark*Matter mailing list. Each point of view has some merit, and may help a GM judge in-game situations about the mysterious race known as the Sandmen. It may be of particular help for running the adventure in *Dungeon* magazine called "A Head for Business." The comments in red are from Dale, the responses are, to the best of Dale's recollection, from Mad Kalnod.

FX Spells cast on Sandmen

"Our occultist tried to cast 'Sleep of Morpheus' on one of the Sandmen. There is no rule regarding the effect of the spell vs. Sandmen, so I made it up. I basically said that it was useless (seeing how they were transformed into electronic creatures) - essentially unable to technically 'sleep.'"

I see sandmen as still being biological, just enhanced and controlled by nanites that can modify their flesh, if necessary, in seconds. They don't sleep as much as before, but still need to shut down and defragment their memory from time to time - it's just a limitation of the design.

The nanites would have to have some independent processing under the overall direction, or policy-making, of the brain.

So a Sleep of Morpheus would still affect the living brain. However, if the sandman was in combat, it would have its nanites on standby for tissue repair, bodily enhancement and so on. When the sandman slept, the nanite dock's independent processor would detect that the body was in an inactive state, and assign nanites to try and repair it - maybe by rewiring brain cells to bypass whatever centers the spell triggers to cause sleep.

I'd say the sandman would go to sleep for a phase, but then would immediately start making Stamina-blood music checks to recover. That is, if it was in combat mode. If the sandman was enspelled when it wasn't expecting trouble, the nanites would accept the CPU's order to go to standby mode, and the spell would work normally.

"Next, I threw in the EMP grenades to try and balance the final combat, but the poor players didn't (remember/ bother?) to use them until they got way hurt. Which brings up another question. How would an EMP grenade affect a Sandman? I did the stun damage (d8+2s), but then didn't know what to do next, or for how long they would be 'out'..."

Third, What effect does Stun damage do on a sandman? Knock it unconscious? I made this up too, saying the sandmen really don't go unconscious because they don't want to be caught. They would rather self-destruct than go unconscious. So the players really had to extremely damage the sandmen, and it made them difficult opponents."

In contrast, humans just allow themselves to go unconscious, in the hands of an enemy that will certainly torture and kill them, or if their deepest purpose will be defeated? Not sure I see the distinction here.

Stun damage is battering, pain (conflicting damage signals), and shock that erodes the creature's ability to act in any voluntary manner. To me, it's not so much unconsciousness as being pounded until you can't force your brain and body to get up again. If a sandman's systems can be overwhelmed to the point of wound damage, then presumably they can also be stunned(temporarily shorted out) by lesser amounts of damage, and don't have any more choice in the matter than humans.

Think of the scene just before the ending to *Terminator II* maybe. Model 101 has stacks of damage reports through its cerebrum, gets its head repeatedly bashed, and its central power bus short-circuited. It shuts down. Doesn't matter how much it wants to save Sarah Connor, it physically can't function until it lies down for a while and runs its self-repair functions.

Don't forget that after two full rounds of being stunned, any combatant can start making Resolve-physical checks to recover. Maybe you could reduce that to one round for sandmen, and give them some sort of berserking bonus to the Resolve check.

If they'd rather self-destruct than go unconscious, that sounds more like a weakness than a strength. Along the lines of "a sandman that loses all its stun/wound points while in threat-engagement mode dies immediately."



THE DARKLAND EMPIRE

By Darrin Drader

The Darkland Empire A Gamma World campaign setting

Introduction

The Darkland Empire runs from the ruins of Spoken, to as far west as San Jen and as far south as Liston, but it is centered around the ancient college of Was-Zoo. Because this region is self-governed and self-contained, it doesn't show on most of the maps of the Putrid Northwest, nor do many people outside the region worry about what happens here.

The geography of the Darkland Empire is almost evenly divided between forests and rolling hills. The forests have taken over many of the regions that were civilized before the holocaust, leaving a great number of uncharted ruins. The other half of the region is comprised of rolling hills that were once verdant croplands for the farmers that lived there. Today there are still farmers who tend much smaller lots, carefully guarding them from mutant invasions. Weeds, many of them jagged or poisonous and definitely dangerous to pass through, fill the rolling hills between the various settlements.

The seat of power in the Darkland Empire is the old College known as Was-Zoo, where a cruel, despotic mutant named Radilos has provided a haven for the locals...at a price. Because a still operating nuclear power plant stands at the college, and the scientists are some of the best animal specialists in the world, Was-Zoo actually specializes in creating new strains of mutants. Many of these are sold into slavery, while a large number are created to fight in the arena. Under Radilos, there are no less than two gladiator fights in the arena per week. The main goal of these scientists is to create newer, smarter, and tougher mutants to amuse the fans of the sport who flock to the ruined town for the events.

The Arena

The rule of the arena is simply this: anything goes. Radilos conducts the matches as a way to generate money for the region, but it also entertains the bloodthirsty people of this land, and it secures his hold on power. The usual cost of admission for an afternoon of events is 6 gold pieces. Attendance is usually about 300 people and mutants. This number will spike to about 650 during the summer, which is the

height of the gladiatorial season. During that season there are more fights, tougher opponents, and the entry fee dips to 4 gold. Slave masters come from all around to enter their servants into combat. Most are paid between 30 and 90 gold depending on how well known their warrior is, and how well that warrior fights. Radilos has been known to pay more than this from time to time, but only when the gladiator is well known, and is retiring from the arena. The slave owners make their real money from gambling on the matches. The gambling is barely regulated; any of the slave owners or the spectators may bet any amount on any contestant of any match. The only catch is that the winner is required to pay 30% of his winnings to the gambling commission. There are undercover agents who watch specifically to see if people are paying their taxes. The punishment for evading this tax is 2 months in prison, with the option of using the prisoner for mutation experimentation.

Several types of matches occur in the arena. The most common event is the one-on-one combat exhibition. A single slave will enter the arena, usually armed with a melee weapon, and will fight another single combatant. These fights are often to the death, although the official presiding over the match may choose to spare the life of a gladiator if the combatant pleased him or showed uncommon valor during the fight. Many times even those whose lives are spared by the officials will die later from their wounds or the infections that follow.

Another common type of match is the team fight. Two or more teams are brought into the arena. Success is determined when one team conquers the other. Losing teams have the option of fighting to the death or surrendering. In some instances ranged weapons are allowed in this type of combat, although the penalty for firing the weapon at a spectator or an official is a slow death at the hands of Radilos's men. This penalty has only been necessary on two occasions. Unlike the one-on-one combat exhibition, the presiding official cannot choose to end the life of the gladiators from the losing side. More often than not, the loser forfeits the ownership of his slaves to the winner. In some cases slave owners will take a lower entry fee to have a clause which states that they will not lose any of the surviving fighters. In other cases the survivors will go to a third party with some interest in the slaves.

Matches against animals are rare in the arena, and generally cost spectators double the usual amount. In these matches wild, exotic animals are brought in from other parts of the world, and usually pitted against some of the tougher fighters who have survived the arena. These matches are not only more expensive because of the rarity of the animals, but also because there is never a favorite between human and animal. The deaths of those who fight in these matches can be more gruesome than the spectators are used to seeing.

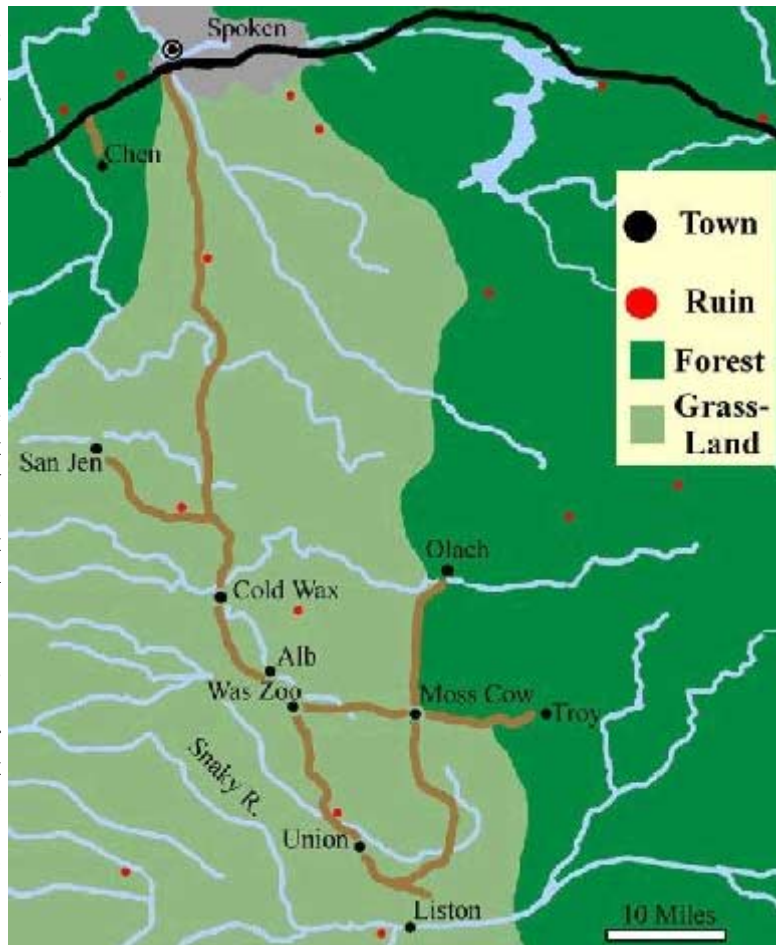
The final type of match is between two free individuals who have a dispute between them. Mediation between two disputing parties is sometimes provided by the state, but it doesn't always work. In those cases where the parties present wish to handle their dispute violently, an arena match is arranged. These duels are special attractions since most of the town's people know the combatants. The end of the duel is not always death. In many cases the combatants will fight until first blood, and they will use this method to settle disputes over various squabbles such as the love of another, property ownership, or neighbors who don't like each other. While having the lowest mortality rate, these are often the most anticipated matches.

Adventuring in The Darkland Empire

This campaign setting is designed to be used as the home base for a party of adventurers in Gamma World, or as a place for them to pass through in their travels. What happens in this setting, or how much of this information changes over the course of a campaign, is entirely in the capable hands of the game-master. A number of campaign ideas can work in the Darkland Empire. An obvious plot device would be to unseat the power of Radilos. Another type of cam-

paign could have the characters involved in a caravan through traveling this region, or even be the traders themselves. This is certainly an area where a group of individuals can amass a great deal of wealth and power. Freeing slaves is another noble purpose that could be pursued in this region. The party of heroes might be in the region for a specific reason, only to find that they have angered the wrong official and become slaves themselves. Worse yet, they could be sold to a slaver who enters them to fight in the arena. Radilos's thugs could even take them for genetic experimentation.

Overview of the Locales of the Darkland Empire



Alb: The town of Alb is a tiny settlement of no more than thirty-five people, mostly humans. Built in a shallow valley that has a tendency to flood every five years or so, it lies just five miles northwest of Was-Zoo, and is firmly under the control of Lord Radilos. The population is almost completely comprised of farmers who fight the never-ending battle to save their crops and their homes from bands of marauding thugs and mutants.

Even before the holocaust, Alb had a population that never exceeded one thousand people. There are ruins here

that have been thoroughly picked clean over the years, but many of the structures still remain intact, which makes life a little easier for the those trying to make a home here. Life is a struggle, but it does allow people some small room away from Radilos.

Chen: Chen boasts a population of about two hundred people. They have more dealings with the people who live in the ruins of Spoken than they have with Was-Zoo. There once was a college in Chen, and because of the learning resources available

there, ten of the town's people have reopened the halls of learning. So far attendance has been about 50 students per year. The students pay a tuition of 500 gold per year. The other residents of Chen raise livestock and farm the land.

Cold Wax: This city was a farming community before the holocaust, and was built on the hillsides and along the bottom of a deep valley. The survivors of the holocaust tried to restore the town, but shortly after it was established mutants overran it. This town is full of ancient ruins; many of the ruins have been plundered, but many others have not. The mutants who have made their home here do not willingly follow Radilos, though he is one of them. Instead they live under his rule because of the heavily armed thugs that patrol the streets.

Liston: This once medium sized city lies in ruins in the deepest valley of the region. An enormous bridge frame stands, minus the roadway it once supported, stretching from one side of the Snaky River to the other. Today the population is about 250, and is mostly fishermen. This town is not under the control of Radilos, despite the raids that have been staged to try to bring it under control.

A notable merchant named Jack Burnette is in possession of seemingly unending supplies of ancient and shadow age technology. Nobody knows how he happened to come into possession of the technology he trades, but most of it works, and he is one of the wealthiest men living in the Darkland Empire. It is said that he wants for very little, but some suspect that he has hidden motives for power. What those are many fear to guess, but his resources have been instrumental in repelling the forces of Was-Zoo that have tried to bring the town under their control.

Moss Cow: One of the earlier creations from the neighboring city of Was-Zoo was a mutant race called the Mintar. It has the body of a human with the head of a cow, and is covered in short green fur. Initially the Mintar were created for the arena, but they refused to fight, and they refused to take orders. Radilos was going to have the lot of them exterminated when they proved to be highly intelligent. Because of this, they were allowed to continue to exist as a species, and they were let loose in the nearby city of Moss Cow. They are required by their agreement to aid in the study and production of new strains of mutants. Because of their even temperament, they are willing to follow the rule of Radilos, though they despise him and work secretly to overthrow him.

The Mintar currently number about 150. About half of

that number are their young. They have taken up the lives of merchants, farmers, and researchers, but they never take on a violent or aggressive lifestyle. They consider themselves too refined for such barbaric behavior. As a result, the city of Moss-Cow is very orderly and polite. Much of the ancient downtown area has been restored to what it once was before the holocaust.

Olach: This town has become one of the wealthiest in the Darkland Empire. After the holocaust, the survivors here continued to do what they had been doing for ages before the disaster occurred – they logged, and exported the lumber to the neighboring cities. Currently about 150 people live here. There is a very low number of mutants however, since this is not a community that much tolerates them.

Due to all the new construction happening throughout the area and the fact that most of the settled area of the Darkland Empire exists far from the forest, Olach has made huge financial gains. The inhabitants feel that one of the best ways to ensure their town's security for years to come is to replace the trees as fast as they log them, thereby maintaining a limitless supply of lumber.

San Jen: This is a rather odd little community made up of the unlikely combination of Sleeth and Andriods. No one truly knows how these races came together, but they form a peace loving community that is very accepting of one another's differences. The fact that their temperaments are compatible helps the merging of these two cultures. The Sleeth, being very learned, are constantly trying to figure out what makes an android work so they can help them to procreate in the future. The androids, on the other hand, find the Sleeth to be intelligent companions who excel in the fine arts of debate and logic.

As San Jen is one of the main gateways into the Darkland Empire from the west, it is one of the main trade centers of the area. Many merchants traveling from Settle will pass through San Jen before heading north once again and continuing east along the main road. Merchants traveling through San Jen will find a pleasant atmosphere with an established inn that costs a mere 3 coins per night.

Radilos maintains a very low presence here, but this city is taxed the same as the rest of the local towns. While some in the community would like to rise up and fight Radilos, the Dean of the city refuses, reasoning that the money they lose in taxes would not be worth the loss in life. A number of village elders do not share his opinion, and there are some whisper-

ings that a revolt is afoot.

Troy: No one really knows why people still live here. While this was not the site of a nuclear blast, the radiation levels are higher than normal. Some people think that this is because of some sort of nuclear accident, but there are others who think that there is a malfunctioning nuclear reactor here somewhere. If they can find the reactor they would have real power...enough maybe to compete with Radilos. Because of the high degree of radiation, even Radilos's tax collectors stay at least 5 miles from the city. The population here is about 50, but the faces seem to constantly change since very few people stay here for long...and those who do stay tend to either suffer radiation burns or mutate rapidly.

Union: This small ruin of a town serves two purposes. One function is that Radilos maintains a fort here to watch his southernmost holdings. The other is that this is one of the largest food producing cities in the Darkland Empire. The population here, not including soldiers, is about 250. Because of the presence of the soldiers in this town, the people are given preferred treatment over the rest of Radilos's subjects... provided that they pay their taxes and remain loyal. There is no city council in place, and many of the inhabitants travel to Was-Zoo on a regular basis for trading, slave auctions, or gladiatorial matches.

Was-Zoo: According to the Keepers of the ancient texts, Was-Zoo was actually a slang term for the ancient college that existed in the city of Pull-man. The keepers of the ancient texts are a monastic order that guard the library - one of the only ones that are mostly intact in the known world.

The old city was built covering four hills. The college, which is being restored, was located on the Northeast hill. Most of the homes in the other sections are in various states of wreckage since most of the original inhabitants died from radiation poisoning long ago.

The people of Was-Zoo are either centered around the college (Radilos, his scientists and minions, and the Keepers of the ancient texts) or dispersed amongst either remodeled old buildings in the city or in new ones that have been built after the holocaust. About 1000 people live in the city of Was-Zoo, plus an average additional 250 merchant that pass through the city, making it the largest population center in the Darkland Empire. Their livelihoods range in activities from farming, to construction, to hunting. Other shadier side trades exist like dealing in slaves, gambling, and weapons dealing.

Was-Zoo is a seedy place to live, but a profitable one if you know whom not to offend. Presiding over the whole affair is the mutant Radilos, whose far-reaching empire affects everyone, whether they are for him or against him. Radilos makes his home at the college along with his scientists and his soldiers. He makes sure the streets are patrolled, and that everyone knows the rules. His primary money making machine is the gladiator arena, a spectacle for which people and mutants alike will come from all around to see. Twice a month the entire community is required to attend a town meeting where Radilos goes over any changes to the laws, issues that need to be discussed, and to give him a chance to hear about any potential new threats to his power. These meetings also make the perfect forum for those instances when he needs to "make an example" out of someone.

New Technology

PMT (Personal Matter Transference Device) Priceless

Rare even in the shadow age, this device is used to instantly travel up to 150 miles. The device exists in real-space, but maintains a subspace signature. When activated it sends itself along with the user and 3 cubic yards worth of material to a preprogrammed location. In order to program a location, the device must first be brought to the destination in advance. It will then take various readings and measurements so that when activated, the person using it will materialize at exactly the proper place specified. If the measurements are even slightly off, a person could reappear in solid stone, thin air, or some other undesirable location. The PMT is powered by a power cell, which recharges by either being left in direct sunlight for five hours or plugged into an electrical outlet for two hours. A fully recharged power cell will be good for 5 transferences.

Smart Slave Collar Price: 800

An improved version of the slave collar, it is ¼" in diameter, and can be adjusted to fit most neck sizes. This device is able to stimulate the pain and pleasure centers directly through the nervous system, and is activated by either a verbal command from the slave owner or by remote control. The voice recognition feature of this device is able to distinguish between one person and another, and it is accurate enough to tell the difference between the voices of identical twins. This is a rare device that was researched recently at Was-Zoo. It is used by slave owners to control and reward their slaves, and takes the place of beatings and other less civil means of control. Each

time the pain feature is activated, 1 point of stun damage automatically occurs.

New Character Races:

Mintar (Man-Cow)

Description:

Mintars are 2-meter-tall bipedal mammals. They have humanoid bodies and bovine heads. Their bodies are covered in light photosynthetic fur, which ranges in color from mint to deep forest green. They are known for their docile disposition coupled with their high intelligence. Their diet consists mainly of plants and can be supplemented by exposure to sunshine.

After Radilos and his band of corrupt scientists had taken control of the campus of Was-Zoo, they began experimenting with radiation and genetics in an attempt to create new mutant races to delight the gladiator fans. Their first partial success was the creation of the Mintar. While the creatures had physical power greater than that of a common man coupled with intelligence, the one thing the scientists did not foresee was the naturally peaceful nature of the cow, and how that would affect their creation. The result was a creature that would make a good addition to the scientific team, but have no value in the arena. There are rumors that the scientists have recently managed to create an aggressive breed of Mintar, and that it will soon be making a debut in the arena.

There is only one Mintar community, which exists in the aptly named town of Moss-Cow. Their number is divided up amongst 3 tribes, each of which has its own leader who is appointed on the basis of the oldest age. The 3 leaders get together in an elders' council on a weekly basis to discuss matters of importance.

Role-Playing

Mintar heroes should be slow to anger, and will rarely if ever take up arms against other beings (unless your game master rules that you are part of the new strain of Mintar mentioned above). If the cause is desperate enough, or if the community is in danger, they are grudgingly willing to set aside their peaceful natures in favor of defense. They will only be willing to do this if something they care deeply about is being threatened or hurt.

Mintars are not the easiest species to role-play due to their inherently docile nature. They are slow to anger, but very quick thinking. If given the choice they will always find the intelligent or diplomatic solution to

a problem rather than resorting to violence. They are thinkers, scientists, and builders. They interact favorably with other species, yet they are not blinded to the possibility of deception against them. They have a straightforward, logical outlook on life, which allows them to cope well with an all-too-often illogical world. Their favored professions are Diplomat and Tech-op. Because of their photosynthetic fur, a Mintar that spends more than 6 hours in direct sunlight is not required to eat for the day.

Mutations

Photosynthetic skin
Radiation Tolerance
Quick Thinking

Drawbacks

Attraction odor

Ability Score Limits

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIL	PER
6-15	4-10	7-15	7-15	4-12	5-16

Skree

Description: One of the more fearsome creations from the laboratories of Was-Zoo is an insectoid race called the Skree. A Skree's body made up of a walnut colored exoskeleton with three segments, six legs, and the head of a fly. Skree walk upright, using the upper two sets of legs as arms. They are quick in battle, and quite successful in the arena due to most people's inherent fear of bugs. They don't understand technology, but have proven to be quite deadly with melee weapons. To date they are a popular feature of the arena, but a couple years ago, about fifty of them were released when a group opposing Radilos raided the campus. Most of them escaped, and have since formed their own society on the outskirts of what is left of civilization. Their organizational structure naturally reverted to a hive model in the wild. As a society they are intelligent to a point, but they make their living from hunting and gathering. A few of them have learned to speak with humans, but their speech patterns are broken, and remind some of buzzing.

Skree can leave their hive without suffering any drawbacks from the separation. As a group they are vicious fighters, and take what they need for survival. As individuals they are usually thoughtful, courteous, and honorable. They do have a problem comprehending abstract concepts such as what the world was like before the Gamma Age, or why exactly nukes were sort of a bad idea. What they have a firm

grasp on is how to achieve a tactical victory over their opponents, and what they have to do to ensure their survival. Their reproductive cycle is rapid; there is one breeder per hive, and she will produce 50 Skree eggs per month. Those then grow from a larval state to an insect form within the next year. Their average life expectancy is estimated to be 30 years.

To date there are only 3 hives in existence. Two of them lie between Was-Zoo and Spoken, while another is about 10 miles east of Liston. Skree try to avoid upsetting the more intelligent races, given the fact that humans don't make the best food, and most of them have seen what advanced technology can do to their exoskeletons. However, Skree attacks on humans for food have occurred in the past with deadly consequences.

Role-Playing

Skree can be interesting characters to run given their speech difficulties and their mental limitations. On the other hand they are great in melee combat. They suffer a +2 step adjustment above the regular adjustments when trying to operate technology-based weapons. Only after a Skree has been exposed to technological weapons can they attempt to gain a skill in them. Before gaining skills in any non-melee weapons, Skree must first spend the points, then make an intelligence check at a +2 step. A similar penalty applies to any attempts to gain other technological mastery such as driving vehicles and learning how to operate computers.

In battle Skree are not any stronger than the average human is, but they are usually much faster. Their exoskeletons have a natural armor rating of d6-1(li)/d4(hi)/d4-2(En). Additionally, microscopic hairs on the pads of their feet allow them to scale sheer walls and surfaces. Their favored professions are Combat

Spec and Free Agent.

Mutations

Dermal Armor (see above)
Enhanced Reflexes
Radiation Tolerance

Drawbacks

Moderately susceptible to Energy damage (regular damage + 1)

Ability Score Limits

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIL	PER
4-14	8-16	5-15	3-12	4-14	4-14

The Campus of Was-Zoo



The ancient campus was built upon the north-east hill of the city once believed to have been called Pull-Man. At its height, the campus would more than double the native population of the city to which it belonged. In today's dark times the monolithic structures, academic halls, and recreational facilities all fall under the mad dictatorship of Radilos. The open-air arena, once the home of a popular sport,

is the regional center for gladiating. The library still exists under the strict protection of the Keepers of the Ancient Texts.

Radilos's goons are not the only ones who are allowed on the campus. Radilos has made it open for any of the citizens of Was-Zoo, and allows free passes to anyone wishing to attend the gladiatorial matches. Those who have professed their loyalty to him live there in relative peace, although he demands high taxes - 25% of all acquisitions or wages.

From those who are too poor to pay his taxes, Radilos

slowly confiscates everything they own. If a person becomes indebted to Radilos, he usually finds himself among the new ranks of the gladiator slaves. As a result, anyone who is in the confiscation process is watched closely by Radilos's Peacekeepers to ensure that he doesn't skip town. New gladiators are more valuable to the tyrant than good tax paying citizens.

Many of the buildings shown on the map of Was-Zoo that are not numbered were housing units. The larger buildings have multiple stories and once housed large groups of people, while the smaller ones were either apartment complexes or houses. Those in need of cheap housing often find themselves in one of the buildings that have been reopened. The general rate for staying in a room for 1 month is 60 gold. The larger houses run as much as 300 gold. Very few of the people are wealthy enough to afford the larger houses, and as a result many of the wealthy are involved in the slave trade. Those buildings that have not been restored are patrolled regularly to make certain that there are no squatters in the ruins. The one thing Radilos cannot stand for is people who are trying to take advantage of his empire for free. He is not nearly so picky about the ruins off the campus, given the fact that those buildings are so heavily infested with creatures that anyone who wants to constantly fight them off is entitled to a roof over his heads. Radilos has other ways of getting money out of those people...such as mandatory travel papers (2 gold pieces), and random spot taxation (whatever the GM thinks is appropriate).

The following is a list of specific locations on the map of Was-Zoo. None of these buildings are mapped out to any degree, and while it may be possible to find the actual floor plans of these buildings online, it is up to the game master to flesh them out to make them into living, breathing places. As this is a role playing game, strict adherence to today's actual floor plans or building functions is not necessary, and in fact could actually impede what could otherwise be a very tricky, well thought out series of dungeons.

1. Animal Testing lab: It is in this building that countless animals are kept, tested, and studied. Many simple operations are performed in this building, although it functions more as a training ground for new scientists. It is a place where they learn to operate on animals, and where they learn proper scientific research methods.

2. Genetic Mutations Lab: Within these halls, countless experiments are conducted on Pure Strain Humans, mutants, and animals. Several new races of mutants have been created through the combination

of applied genetics and radiation. There are a large number of failures for every success the lab boasts – experiments that simply refused to survive the mutation process. There are approximately 20 scientists that work in this division of the campus. There are an additional 20 guards on duty while the scientists are working.

Mutations are conducted on both unfertilized eggs of various species and fully-grown members of all species. If a character is unfortunate enough to go through a mutation process, first roll on the random mutation chart to see what sort of mutation he picks up. Then roll his Con with no additional modifier to see if he survives the process. At the Game Master's discretion, more than one mutation can be attempted. For every additional mutation over 1, add +1 step to the difficulty of the Con roll. A failed Con roll results in death in 1d12 days.

3. Subject Housing: What were once dormitory rooms in this building have been converted into holding cells. This is where they store the subjects that are to be used in the genetic mutations lab. 10 guards live on the top floor of this building to keep people from breaking in and releasing the creatures that are kept here.

4. Gladiator Arena: In ancient times this was the site of a long forgotten game. After the holocaust it was converted into a gladiatorial arena. The games are normally held twice a week. Various gladiators are owned by cruel slave lords who force them to fight to the death. They are typically armed with nothing more powerful than melee weapons; after all, any of them armed with projectile weapons or beam weapons could be a danger to the officials or the crowd. Several units of highly effective slaves will grace the arena on occasion. For these events, the crowds will be charged double the usual entrance fee, and they are quite willing to pay the higher price in order to witness the spectacle.

The usual cost of admission for an afternoon of events is 6 gold pieces. Attendance is usually about 300 people and mutants. This number will spike to about 650 during the summer, which is the height of the gladiatorial season. During that time there will be more fights, tougher opponents, and the entry fee dips to 4 gold. The combatants range from Pure Strain Humans and Mutants to Sasquatch and Skree. Other more exotic species have also been a part of the events. These will include virtually all the creatures listed in the Alternity Gamma World Campaign setting book. Other one-of-a-kind creatures that were created in the genetic mutations lab will appear here,

some of which have become the source of local legends.

5. Inn: This is a 4-story building that once connected directly to the library. The Keepers of the Ancient Texts have seen to it that the common points between the buildings have been blocked off and built over. This building is divided into several different areas. In the lowermost level there are rooms for visitors to Was-Zoo to stay in. The other three levels of the building are devoted to many different forms of activities. There is a large area that overlooks the arena. Many people will sit in the comfort of this place and bet on the gladiator matches below. Other areas are dedicated to gambling, shooting pool, and there is an oddity that many people flock to see called Video games. There are a large number of them in this place. Due to the power created by the energy plant, most of them actually work.

6. Library of the Ancients: This 4 story building was once the great library of the university. This is one of the most complete libraries remaining in the world, and it is jealously guarded by the Keepers of the Ancient Texts. They are an autonomous monastic group that has vowed to protect the knowledge possessed by the ancients, and keep that knowledge from falling into the wrong hands. Radilos leaves them alone, for a few different reasons: The Keepers presence predates his own on the campus; they made an arrangement with him involving the surrendering of certain scientific texts in exchange for their continued independence; and he fears what would happen to him and his regime should they decide to go on the offensive against him. There are rumors that they are well armed with some of the best technology from the shadow age, and could probably remove Radilos himself if they chose to concern themselves with mundane matters. Instead they are much more protective of their books and the knowledge they have gleaned from them. Many people in the region distrust the Keepers of the Ancient Texts, fearing that one day they may make a grab for power, and when they do they could be far worse than Radilos has ever been.

7. Field House: This is a one story building that is approximately 50 feet tall, and serves as an indoor track. The original ceiling was made from light green glass, and it was a popular running area for people on the campus. During the holocaust, the glass roof was shattered. It was later replaced by shards of different colored glass that were taken from various areas and melted together. During the daylight the track is now bathed in a sickly conglomerate of colors that shifts depending on where the person stands. This building is now used as a training field for

Radilos's men. They stay in shape by running laps, and they also practice combat in this building.

8. Gym: This building serves much as it has for centuries: as a gym. People come to this structure and its various chambers to exercise. A giant swimming pool fills the centermost portion of the top two floors of this building. The water remains, but it has long since gone stagnant. Algae grow throughout the entire chamber, and there are rumors that an enormous water creature makes its home within. Most people who choose to use this building avoid the pool area for fear of disease or whatever else may be in there.

9. Weapons locker: This building was once a gym, but it is now used as a weapons locker. As in building 8 there is a large pool once used by the ancients. People also avoid the pool here for the same reasons as in area 8. While no one knows exactly what sorts of weapons are stored here, it is known that there are definitely projectile weapons, and many believe there are shadow age weapons as well. If Radilos does possess energy weapons, he doesn't display them openly.

10. Gladiator Gym: This building was also once used as a gym in ancient times. Since this is the least of the gyms at Was-Zoo, this is where the gladiators are taken to work out and practice their craft. Slave owners must pay a fee of 1 gold per week for their slaves to use the equipment, and any owners who do not keep their slaves under control are banished from the gym. Because the facilities here are better than most available to the public, no slave owner wishes to get his privileges revoked since such an occurrence would mean his gladiators would become out of shape and easily killed in the arena.

11. Administration Building: It is from this building that the people in charge of the state administration work. The treasury is kept here under lock and key. Master copies of travel papers, housing registration, and other important documents are also stored here.

12. Courthouse: Anyone who needs to go through official arbitration in either a criminal or matter will have his case heard here. There are a total of 4 judges that deal out a form of justice that has been called uneven at best. Most criminals who are convicted of murder, rape, or treason are sentenced to slavery and auctioned to the highest bidder.

13. Prison: Anyone found guilty of a crime spends some time here if he is not sold into slavery by the courts. People here will be serving time for anything from theft to battery. Usually the people who are kept

here are considered to be of some potential value to society if they can be taught to conform to the laws.

14. Engineering Headquarters: A place like Was-Zoo would not be able to maintain a nuclear reactor for long without a core group of well-trained engineers. A great number of ancient texts were once kept in this building regarding the operations of a nuclear plant. Today those that work here are experts in the field of nuclear energy. In addition to their work on the nuclear plant, they also experiment with the possibilities of pure electric current. Their hope is to one day achieve incredible power through the use of Tesla-esque technologies.

15. Nuclear Energy Plant: Once classified as strictly experimental, this nuclear plant survived the holocaust and is still functioning to this day. It is this plant that provides power to all the buildings of Was-Zoo. It is also from here that radioactive material is collected for use in the genetic mutations lab. While the gladiatorial arena is the source of Radilos's wealth, the possession of this plant is the source of his power. He keeps it well guarded, and if he felt his power was in trouble he could always threaten the nearby communities with the widespread destruction caused by a nuclear meltdown.

16. The Sinking pit: This area is a crater approximately 200 meters in diameter. While many people assume that this was caused by a nuclear explosion, the truth of the matter is that it was created by an unknown invader weapon during the age of shadows. The ground here remains blackened to this day, and no vegetation grows here. While this region does not glow with radiation, heightened levels of radiation are present 5 meters below the ground in the very center of the pit. The surrounding buildings are in ruins and have been for a very long time.

17. Stadium: This structure takes up one entire city block and is second in size only to the arena. It is here that town meetings take place, performing artists display their crafts, and those few orators Radilos allows to speak. Structurally, this building came through the holocaust needing the least amount of reconstruction.

Notable Personae of the Darkland Empire

Note: Other than physical descriptions and specific mutations, game statistics are not given on the following individuals. This campaign setting may be used at any point during an adventurer's career, and it is up to the game master to craft these individuals to suit his purposes. Much detail is given to flesh out the

personalities of these people, although there is some intentional ambiguity regarding whether most of these SCMs should be used as friends or foes.

Agorara Dyson

Standing 6'1", 55 years of age, with a heavy build, blue eyes, and blond hair worn long, Agorara is one of the more important slavers in the Darkland Empire. He specializes in gladiators, and he reaps very large profits from their performances and their sale. He lives with his hired guards and his slaves in a ranch compound about 15 miles north of Was-Zoo, and he usually keeps upwards of 50 slaves. He is not overly cruel to his slaves, but he knows that he trades in pain and death and is growing tired of the spectacle. He usually grants freedom to any slave that manages to live through at least fifteen fights, but part of that agreement is that he has the right to hire their services out in the future should he need to call on them again. He has done this on occasion when one of his rivals has a very skilled slave that is cutting deeply into his own stock of warriors. Since his slaves are quite skilled in fighting, surviving, and working the crowd, he is in the good graces of Radilos, who will often boost the price of admission by a gold if Agorara's slaves are fighting on a given day. Having done this for more years than he cares to count, he is looking for someone to buy out his operation so he can leave this area and lead a nice quiet life in the Putrid Sound.

Athasil

Athasil is an android with dark skin, dark hair, standing 5'11", with a medium build. He has been in the Darkland Empire for six years, and amassed enough wealth betting on the gladiatorial matches that he has been able to become a gladiator slave owner himself. He boasts twenty slaves, which he houses at Was-Zoo. Unlike many androids, he feels little to no compassion towards humans, and sees them simply as tools for him to become more powerful and important in society. The one thing that sets him apart from other gladiator slavers is that he trains his slaves how to use technology-based weapons, and he will provide them to the slaves that prove their loyalty to him. There is always a chance that the gladiators will turn on the crowds or their masters if sent in with ranged weapons, and so Athasil has installed a kill-switch linked to a hand-held remote he keeps with him during their training and matches. So far there have been no major incidents of slaves killing anyone other than other gladiators, so Radilos allows Athasil's slaves, and delights in the rare spectacle of witnessing ancient technology at work.

Bucnos, The Red Flayer

Bucnos, called the Red Flayer, is a 35-year-old man who deals in slaves for the purpose of manual labor. He is known for his cruelty with his charges, and his epithet refers to a particular nasty example he made out of one of his slaves after catching him trying to escape. He is a pure strain human who stands 6' tall with light skin, brown hair kept very short, blue eyes, and a muscular build. He lives just outside of Was-Zoo, and travels frequently throughout the region with his most prime slaves on trading expeditions, usually fetching high prices. The one thing that can be said about Bucnos is that after buying bedraggled slaves cheaply for cut-rate prices, he spends the time, the energy, and the food necessary to build them up into healthy slaves that will fetch him a high price in the markets. He does not tolerate slaves who are weak, lazy, or unwilling to improve themselves. He has also never set a slave free under any circumstance, despite the rumor that one time one of his slaves helped save his life from a band of Thought Masters during a trading expedition.

Buecir

One of the common misconceptions about Mintars is the belief that they are incapable of deception, duplicity, and conspiracy. In truth, these are activities that they are not commonly involved in, but they are more than adept at, should the proper cause be presented. Buecir is a 12 year old, 7' tall Mintar with forest green fur. He works in the genetics lab at Was-Zoo as a senior researcher. He is also feeding information to the Sullivans about Radilos, his operations, and his movements around the campus. In his youth, when he was being schooled by the elders of his kind, it became apparent that he was especially intelligent and learned medicine easily. When Radilos's men found out about this they took him from his people and continued his schooling themselves. He was always well treated, but he was a slave in all but name. When he heard whisperings of the Sullivans plotting against Radilos, he made arrangements to meet with them and offer them his services. He has no love for the despot, and would like to see him overthrown in favor of someone with a little more compassion.

Carses Flarn

A former gladiator himself, Carses Flarn is a mutant who was bred for fighting. He won his freedom five years ago and has joined the ranks of slavers who takes part in the gladiatorial tournaments. He's 30 years old and appears just as any pure strain human would, standing 6' tall with light skin, blond hair,

brown eyes, and a heavy, muscular build. What is not so apparent about him is that he is a mutant with enhanced reflexes. Upon winning his freedom he tried many trades such as construction, leatherworking, and physical labor, but found that he wasn't cut out for it. He missed the roar of the crowds and the thunder of a good match. While he wouldn't sell himself back into slavery, his blood lusted for the action. For this reason he became a slaver. He keeps only ten slaves, and he picks these carefully, always looking for things such as reflexes, intelligence, and the ability to take a hit and remain vigorous. Upon purchasing them he tells all of his slaves that it is his goal to set them free eventually, and he takes it upon himself to have them properly trained. Each and every one of his slaves are local favorites with the crowds, and typically they do last long enough to win their freedom. He knows better than to accept a match against Athasil's slaves since he has no access to advanced weapons.

Corlar

Corlar is one of Radilos's chief genetic scientists. She's a 47-year-old mutant who stands 6'7" tall, has dark skin and a medium build. She also has enhanced hearing and an extra arm attached at shoulder height in the middle of her chest. She sees the world in a very logical, scientific manner, and doesn't question the morality of her line of work. If anything, she sees what she does as necessary for the propagation of her species. She is very interested in the different combinations possible when adding intelligence to animals, or just creating an animal unlike anything that has walked the earth before. She chooses to turn a blind eye to the fact that most of the mutants that come from her labs are grown rapidly and thrown into the arena to kill or be killed. Instead she looks to the peaceful Mintars as an example of one of her successes.

Criserr Sullivan

The older brother of Malla Sullivan, he is the leader of the resistance movement against Radilos. He is 30 years old, stands 6'2" tall, has light skin, brown hair worn medium length, blue eyes, and a medium muscular build. He and his sister live in the town of Union where they make the outward appearance of living as farmers. They have over 100 people working under them, each gathering intelligence, stockpiling weapons and strategizing an attack that might stand some chance of success against Radilos. Criserr picked up the cause against the dictator when "the police" raided his family's house when he was 12 years old. His family had been poor, always on the verge of not

being able to pay their way. After stripping the house of all its wealth, then having their sadistic fun, Radilos's men executed Sullivan's parents and left them hanging by nooses from the roof in front of the front door of the house as a reminder to those who didn't pay their taxes. Criserr and Malla were spared because luck would have them at a friend's house at the time of the murders. Radilos's men didn't know about the children, and the people of Union kept their existence hidden from the authorities. Criserr knows that the chances of him succeeding in ridding the area of Radilos is slim, but it is an effort he will see through to the end, for his parents sake, if none other.

Cryganiira

While most Skree pose little threat to humans, Cryganiira is the exception to that rule. It was a gladiator throughout the early part of its life, but found its freedom after surviving more than 50 arena duels. After being set free, it knew only one thing, and that is killing. Despite the fact that Radilos is a mutant, he harbors a deep-seated hatred against all humans and those who look like them, and has begun a systematic extermination of all humans, androids, and mutants that it can kill. It does this mainly by attacking small groups of travelers, or sneaking into Was-Zoo long enough to claim a victim or two, then scurrying off to its hiding place in the countryside. Radilos has put out a price on its head of 500 GP, but because of the difficulty of identifying Skree, it has proven ineffective, and has caused the deaths of 9 innocent Skree so far. It, on the other hand, has killed 25 people. In its opinion, as long as the math works out in its favor, it will continue to kill.

Eldasil

Eldasil is the most successful merchant trading in new lumber from the city of Olach. At age 47, he stands 5'7", has brown curly hair, brown eyes, a large build, and is slightly overweight. He doesn't actually get involved in cutting down the trees or processing them; instead he buys the lumber from the foresters in Olach, then brings it to the various towns in the region. The thing that makes him so successful is that he has a mind for mechanics, which goes well with the ancient 18-wheel truck he drives. Of course the roads aren't in as good a condition as they were when the truck was originally in use, so he's replaced the regular rubber tires that came with the vehicle with ones made of solid rubber, which also have increased traction on them. The vehicle isn't made for speed, but it gets around, and he makes a mint selling his lumber. Eldasil has a good mind for business, mechanics, and he has been known to lend out his

expertise regarding old combustion-fueled vehicles to a few people. He is basically kind-hearted, and he helps out people when he has the opportunity to.

Famir of the Ice March Mountains

There are few people in Was-Zoo who like or trust Famir. He leads the secretive enclave of monks, The Keepers of the Ancient Texts. He stands 6'5", is 55 years of age, and has light skin, blue eyes, a pale complexion, and long gray hair. He usually dresses in a long gray robe. He claims to have come from the Ice March Mountains, a place no one from Was-Zoo has ever heard of. He very seldom ventures outside of the library, and speaks to people even less frequently. No one knows exactly what information is contained within the library, though many fear that the information is so important it could make him the most powerful person in the region.

Hespurr

About 30 years old with long black hair, piercing blue eyes, sharp features, and an athletic build, Hespurr runs weapons throughout the Darkland Empire. She doesn't specialize in any one type of weapon, but would be a likely supplier of melee weapons, projectile weapons, and energy weapons alike. She makes trips down to Liston on a regular basis and does some business with Jack Burnette. Of course anything more powerful than projectile weapons are not allowed by Radilos, so Hespurr is very careful to hide her illegal dealings. She's had several close calls with the authorities, but is not currently suspected of running contraband anymore than anyone else who runs weapons. Many times she will take the time to help travelers or adventurers, and sell them weapons at a discounted rate; she feels that it is good to have people out and about that owe her favors. Though she is a regular in Was-Zoo, Hespurr makes her home in Alb, where she is slightly away from the scrutiny of Radilos.

Igni'Lor

Having spent too much of his life maintaining the nuclear reactor at Was-Zoo, Igni'Lor has become a mutant, with side effects that have not exactly benefited him. He is 48 years old, stands about 5'4", has pale skin, blond hair, and gray eyes. For the past 20 years he has worked on the reactor, and for the past 10 years he has been the head engineer in charge of maintaining operations. Over the years he has become one of the most knowledgeable people regarding nuclear technology and how to maintain it. Because of his importance to Radilos, he is well paid,

and he is allowed to act on nearly any whim that strikes him. Because of this he has become very corrupt and decadent. He has a mutated, weak immune system, which leaves him frequently sick. He has also become strangely photo-dependent.

Jack Burnette

A weapons dealer in Liston who specializes in Shadow Age weapons and technology, Jack Burnette has become one of the wealthiest people in the region. He's about 45 years old, 6'3", has blond hair, brown eyes, and a heavy build. Though he says he has no ambition to conquer territory or lead the people of Liston and the surrounding areas, it is worth noting that the city council tends to leave him well alone, asking for his donations to the city instead of demanding his taxes. In times of trouble he also seems to be there in the thick of it, helping his fellow people rather than hiding behind the considerable walls of his compound. It is a well known fact that he has no love at all for Radilos, and some suspect that he is either helping those who would unseat him, or stockpiling weapons so he can go to Was-Zoo and take control of the Darkland Empire for himself. Most say that he is a kind man, though he is absolutely ruthless in his business dealings. He never resorts to violence or threats, but he always manages to get top dollar for his technology. He is well protected, usually keeping between 10 and 25 bodyguards. He lives in his compound with his wife Lietha and two daughters, as well as a family of pure strain Clydesdale horses, which are tended to by the family servants.

Kelganna

At the age of 40 Kelganna has become one of the foremost merchants specializing in the food trade. She runs a very efficient caravan service for the farmers in the region. She stands 5'7", has brown hair, tanned skin, and green eyes. She has also become a key figure in the balance of power in the region. A great deal of her wealth comes from her other business of information brokering. She knows a great deal about people in the region, much of which they don't want to become common knowledge. For a price and often times a piece of the action, she's willing to keep quiet. Nevertheless many people have disappeared quietly into the night, possibly tipped off by her as payback for some deal not honored, or bargain not kept. She trades directly with Radilos, but has also made the confidence of the Sullivans, and others throughout the region.

Lyros Skan

Called the Ice Queen of Cold Wax, Lyros Skan is 35 years old, stands 6' tall, with a medium build, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and a decidedly nasty temperament. She is one of the few pure strain humans in Cold Wax, and she is a slave trader. She is the leader of a group of warriors who comb the countryside for those who are lost, injured, or vulnerable. They catch those who are not firmly entrenched in society, and she takes ownership of them so she can sell them. The only people she will not attempt to obtain are travelers who have official travel papers given to them by Radilos. The penalties for capturing such a person would be immediate arrest and the permanent loss of her business. People who do business with Lyros know her to be cold hearted, and very whimsical. She is rough with her slaves, and she has been known to kill the disobedient ones herself for entertainment.

Malgath

Standing 5' tall with long black hair, a bushy beard, brown eyes, and a heavy build, Malgath is a slaver who lives in Olach. He travels throughout the region looking for slaves that are built tough, but are not exactly smart enough or quick enough to fight in the arena. He then sells them to the loggers of Olach. He cares very little for the welfare of his slaves, reasoning that with the line of work they are being sold into, he would be doing them few favors by caring for their needs before selling them. Instead he simply makes sure that they are fed once per day, and that they are allowed enough room to exercise, fight, and do whatever else it is they feel like doing, so long as it doesn't involve them running away. Malgath believes in bulk selling. He doesn't ask a great deal of money for his slaves, but he usually talks the buyers into buying more than one at a time. He uses his low prices as a negotiating tool, and usually does very well for himself monetarily.

Malla Sullivan

Criserr Sullivan's sister, Malla is one of the key freedom fighters opposed to Radilos in the region. She also has a problem with the slavers, and has vowed to do away with them after they've gotten rid of Radilos. She is 25 years old, stands 5'6" tall, has light skin, brown hair worn long, blue eyes, with a medium athletic build. She and her brother live in the town on Union where they make the outward appearance of living as farmers. They have over 100 people working under them, each gathering intelligence, stockpiling weapons and strategizing an attack that might stand

some chance of success against him. Malla picked up the cause against the dictator when “the police” raided his family’s house when he was 12 years old. His family had been poor, always on the verge of not being able to pay their way. After stripping the house of all its wealth, then having their sadistic fun, Radilos’s men executed Sullivan’s parents and left them hanging by nooses from the roof in front of the front door of the house as a reminder to those who didn’t pay their taxes. Criserr and Malla were spared because luck would have them at a friend’s house at the time of the murders. Radilos’s men didn’t know about the children, and the people of Union kept their existence hidden from the authorities. Malla follows her brother’s lead most of the time, but she takes many of the risks herself. She believes that the best way to keep people loyal to them is to lead by example. As a result there are some people who have reported seeing her during raids and other activities. Fortunately for her she has enough pull to get the Sheriff in Union reelected, so he’s provided her with an airtight alibi on more than one occasion.

Moranus Coswell

Some call him a junk dealer, but Moranus Coswell likes to think of himself as an excavation specialist and a dealer in antiquities. At 54 years old, 5’8” tall, with blue eyes, long gray hair, and blue eyes, Moranus has traveled to most regions of the country. He brings with him not just the junk left behind by the ancients, but wondrous stories of what life is like in other parts of the world. He claims to have sailed to other continents, where life is just as chaotic, although different than it is here. He also says that he’s met an alien, who was checking to see how mankind had progressed since the cataclysm. Many people don’t believe Moranus’s fanciful tales, but he is a welcome visitor in many of the taverns and bars. He doesn’t live in one place, but rather lives off people’s kindness. He is known to stay in the area for days, sometimes weeks at a time, and then disappear for just as long, sometimes longer. When he returns he always has some new story to tell. The money he makes from the sale of his ancient junk is usually spent on alcohol, women, or given away to the poor. He rarely has any money for more than a day after acquiring it. Most people knows that his traveling papers are forged, but he is allowed to pass through since he poses no apparent threat, and pacifies the people by entertaining them.

Odiar

At 33 years of age, standing 5’11”, with a medium build, dark skin, shaved head, and brown eyes, Odiar

is a merchant who constantly plies the routes between the Darkland Empire and the Settle. He trades in a wide variety of goods from furniture to everyday common items. He heads a very large caravan, and usually makes four trips over the mountains per year. He is known to be a fair merchant of good nature and humor. He keeps his hands out of the arms business, preferring instead to specialize in items that usually won’t get him in too much trouble with anyone except for the tax collectors. He makes sure that he pays Radilos his dues, but has hundreds of gold worth of old tax debts with the various landholders to the west. He makes a concerted effort to remain neutral in any power struggles he comes across. His motto is live and let live, as long as he and his caravan aren’t getting messed with. On the rare instances that he does run into trouble, his opponents find that he and his entourage are more than capable of self-defense.

Radilos

At 45 years old, standing 6’3” tall with pale skin, brown eyes, a bald head, cybernetic eye gear, and a host of mutations, Radilos is the dictator who has claimed the Darkland Empire as his own. His mutations are Hyper Healing, Energy Absorption, and Pyrokinesis. He started his life as a violent mercenary from the middle portion of this country. Ultimately he and his band came upon this land, which was largely ungoverned, with very little in the way of commerce and activity. Upon seeing it for the first time he decided that it was a paradise and one of the most wondrous places he had come across in his travels. For that reason he and his companions quickly arranged deals with the locals for him to be their leader. He didn’t leave them much choice, yet surprisingly, he didn’t use violence to secure his holding over this area. Over the next few years Radilos was busy hiring new people to back him up while quietly arranging “accidents” for his former associates who saw themselves as equals in their conquest of this land. Radilos had never intended for anyone to be his equal, and made sure that none of his former associates would ever make that mistake again. Over the years his rule went from one of being a planner and law bringer to one of a heartless despot. He runs the arena to satiate his desire for blood, and fill his coffers with gold. No one is allowed a voice in how to run the territory unless they agree with his policies. He doesn’t have any recognized political rivals, having wiped them out years ago. For now his rule over the area seems pretty secure.

Rowaerla, the Sword

For his personal guard, Radilos puts his trust in a

brutish sasquatch known as Rowaerla, the Sword. Rowaerla is in charge of maintaining Radilos's safety, as well as heading the militia that keeps the Darkland Empire in line. Rowaerla is like many of his sasquatch brethren in that he believes that those weaker than him should not be harmed without just cause. Unfortunately he sees Radilos's presence as a stabilizing influence, therefore anyone who stands in the way of Radilos also stands in the way of stabilization, and therefore must be destroyed. There are a number of sasquatch who vocally disagree with both the premise of his beliefs as well as the fact that he uses this belief as a justification for violence. Much is said about Rowaerla, but never are mercy or compassion mentioned in conjunction with his name. In fact, Rowaerla carried out most of the brutish things that have occurred under Radilos. He is excellent at barking orders at his subordinates, as well as planning and executing a police action. He is not particularly keen on technology, and he leaves the operation of it to those who have more experience.

Shades

At age 42, standing 6' tall with medium cut black hair, pale skin, and blue eyes, Shades is a weapons runner. He is somewhat sensitive to sunlight, so he is always seen wearing a pair of sunglasses. He will run any type of weapon, and will buy or sell to anyone. Radilos has profited from trade with Shades, but he keeps an eye on him since he doesn't trust him. Shades lives in Was-Zoo and keeps five mercenaries with him at all times since he never knows when a client will try to pull a fast on one him. He is distrustful, and therefore is very successful at what he does. He usually dresses in blue jeans with a black leather jacket. He is known to have a close relationship with Kelganna.

Shadmir, the Green

Shadmir keeps trying to convince everyone he's a mutant. He paints himself green on a daily basis, and trades mostly with the mutant community. The truth is that he stands 6'3", and he's an albino with pink eyes. While not being far from a mutant in fact, it is well known that Albinos have been around almost as long pure strain humans. He trades mostly in food, but dabbles in contracting entertainers. These range from the simple and comedic to the exotic. He makes his residence at Was-Zoo, but moves from residence to residence frequently - always complaining that there is either not enough shade, or its too cold, or the lawn slopes down to the street at exactly the wrong angle. He's definitely looked at as an eccentric in Was-Zoo, but what most people don't know about him

is that he is harboring a very strange piece of valuable technology. He possesses a personal-matter-transference (PMT) device, which was rare even during the shadow age. With it he can plot in the exact coordinates of a location up to 150 miles away and it will teleport him there instantly. Possessing this has allowed him to make trading deals at a variety of locations nearly impossibly far away very rapidly. As a result he has also accumulated a great deal of gold. He guards this secret jealously since it has a significant effect on his business.

Talacan

At 30 years old with dark skin, standing 5'11", with brown eyes and an athletic build, Talacan is a weapons runner who specializes in projectile weapons, grenades, and various types of armor. He lives in Settle, but he is a merchant who does a great deal of business in the Darkland Empire. He owns a 21st century automobile with a mini-fusion reactor built into it instead of a chemical combustion propulsion system. He supplies Radilos with a steady stream of weapons and armor, and deals exclusively with him while in Was-Zoo. He meets with other interested parties at various secret locations throughout the Darkland Empire.

About the Author:

Darrin Drader has lived outside of Tacoma Washington for a number of years, and has a steady RPG group that usually meets on a weekly basis. In addition to this accessory for Gamma World, Darrin wrote The Empire of Galovinius, a campaign setting for the Dungeons and Dragons game, which is posted for free download at www.cpunet.net/~darrin/index.htm. When not working or playing, he enjoys creative writing, amateur RPG design, and chasing around his dogs and cats. He will happily answer all inquiries or comments directed at him regarding this or The Empire of Galovinius, and he can be reached by email at darrin@cpunet.net

GRIDSITES TO WATCH

By Jeff Ibach

www.alternity.net

If any web site was poised to become Alternity's official home once Wizard of the Coast decides to turn their Alternity site content over to a fan-created site, this is it. It's slick, it's easy to navigate and the content keeps on growing. Action Check back issues are hosted there and we look forward to supporting this excellent site in the future!



GAMMA WORLD MINIATURES

By Jeff Ibach

Let's just say that at our recent Alternity Gamma World game I had finally had enough of using orcs as hoops and goblins for badders and decided to do what I do all too often, make my own cardboard figures, for Gamma World, particularly the ones that

come at you in droves. So here they are, thanks to scanned images by Larry Elmore from GW3! Print these on cardstock and make a few armies!

Please visit www.elmore.com

