

# THE ORDER OF THE FIFTH WORLD

A Realmwalkers Supplement  
From Mind's Eye Publishing

Written by Todd Holland

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# Introduction

## The €

The Order of the Fifth World is a source book that describes one particular setting of the game Realmwalkers. Realmwalkers is a versatile role-playing system designed to be an infinite setting. It allows an extreme amount of flexibility in generation of characters and worlds. It also sets up an umbrella system of rules to allow travel between any of these worlds (or realms) in the course of a game. You will need to be familiar with the concepts outlined in the main Realmwalkers book to get the full meaning and significance of much of this book. If you do not have the main Realmwalkers book, you can get it and all of the supplements at: <http://www.homestead.com/mindseyepublishing/home.html>

## h €OR

A great wizard he was, aged and powerful. A thousand worlds he had visited. Mountains of secrets he knew. But some mysteries proved too much even for him, at first. Why was it he who had been given these powers of long life and regeneration? He hadn't had a cold in centuries. His finger was even torn off once and grew back in only a week. Was it a result of the tremendous magical energies that he had used? And how was it that he was often flung, against his will, to strange worlds all over the

cosmos? Was it just some quirk that came with power such as he possessed? Or was something else at work? These thoughts troubled the old wizard. They gnawed at him ever more, but the answers eluded even him, until the day he found the book. It was unthinkable that such a thing would lie open and in plain view for even a few minutes in the area he found it in. None the less, it had been there. A simple, enigmatic name, *The Codex*, had been printed inside its front cover. There he found clues and even answers to some of the questions which had gnawed at him for so long. The War, the Factions, the Cosmos, the Guardians; it was all there. It was almost unbelievable. Then, as he looked back on his unexpected jaunts, he thought he could almost piece out a pattern. Many of his most prized artifacts had been found on them. Often in the most unlikely places and in plain view, though plainly ignored. A great fear and revulsion began to rise in him. Was it possible? Had he been *used by the Cosmos itself*? Had he helped to keep others in ignorance even as he quested for knowledge and enlightenment? The very thought *burned* him! The Paradox Guardians, if such beings actually exist, are obviously used to suppress knowledge by *someone*. Was it possible that he too had been used, unknowingly, to pick up a piece here, break up a fight there, or kill an attacker who might have revealed a secret if left alone for another hour, minute, or

day? Had he too been an agent of the Cosmos? If so, then his own little collection of odd facts hardly balanced the whole worlds whom he had unknowingly helped to keep in the darkness of ignorance. He absolutely *seethed* at the thought. He would not sit idly by after making this discovery. *War*, that is what it meant. A War against ignorance of the truth and those who would propagate that ignorance, even if it meant a war against *the Cosmos itself*. For, after all, what else could stop the madness of The Great War, except enlightenment to the truth?

So his quest began. Others soon followed him. They began to call themselves the Order of the Fifth World, after a legend once told to him by an old shaman on top of a mesa on a planet long forgotten. The old woman had told a story of how her people had escaped from a place of evil, the third world, into a new place through the navel of the world. The fourth world they had called it. The Fifth World became an expression of the little band's greatest dream: to create a world where knowledge is free and peace reigns; where the paradox guardians and the War have no place.

Many close calls they had. Phaedrus soon found out just how real the Paradox Guardians were. No noticeable effect seemed to be made. People either would not or could not see the truth, even if it was right in front of them. And if the truth was so outrageous and blatant that it couldn't possibly be ignored, then the Guardians were sure to come, and this usually

meant death for at least the one whose actions summoned them. There had to be a better way. Then he remembered a story he once had heard of a great spell, long since lost, that could be used to create a place of safety, a micro-world under the control of its creator. It had seemed too outrageous to believe at the time, but now it seemed their only hope. He dove into the task of finding it, travelling ever backward, through countless ancient worlds, almost back to the Great Beginning itself. He fought beasts of unimaginable horror and power, and lost parts of his soul and most of his sanity along the way. But at long last, he succeeded. When he returned to his little band they hardly recognized him, and he hardly recognized them. For they had grown from a loosely organized few to an army of great strength and unshakable fortitude and dedication. The spell tore loose the last threads of his humanity as he cast it, and when the band of followers found themselves in the new land, he was not to be seen. Some say he was consumed, others transformed. Whatever the case, his sacrifice was not in vain.

The Womb, as the new world is called, has become our primary training ground. But it was only the beginning. Other worlds we now have. We picked the first few because they were uninhabited. We peopled them with only those from our brotherhood. All Aware, all dedicated to The Cause. Our numbers continue to grow, as does our power. Recently we have learned of a world that seems

perfect for the next phase of The Plan. A world sparsely populated, where magic abounds, and elements of several technological levels can be found in either historical or current use. A world ready to be made Aware. We are ready. Our operatives are already there. The war has already begun. Welcome to the Fifth World.

## The F II

*An excerpt from the journal of Dr. Finnius Manx, founder of Carcinoma township. Preserved in a block of glass there and Dated Feb 3, 2039.*

Note: This is written in the original American English circa 2039. Most characters from this setting who have not experienced the becoming will not be able to read it. Two notable exceptions are scholars who have learned to translate ancient texts, and the Ranger focus.

We had no idea what we were doing. None of us actually believed that our wildest speculations were anything more than the ranting of madmen or ghosts from our nightmares. Although we had placed the new facility in the bottom of the most desolate wasteland on earth, we imagined that that was just to calm the nervous politicians that were backing the project, and to better hide it from the public. On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2033 the new UltraMega Particle Accelerator came online. It was by far the most powerful

machine ever built by man. It was capable of flinging even the heaviest atoms at each other at speeds approaching the cosmic speed limit, 386,000 miles per second. It used the greatest artificial intelligence computer ever built to handle the intense calculations and probabilistic determinations necessary to keep the particles on track. After a few test runs, it was decided to go forward with the first round of experimental runs. Uranium atoms were to be stripped of their electrons, sped to near the speed of light, and smashed into each other. The temperature and pressure reached at the peak of this collision, it was calculated, would approach or equal the conditions existing during the Big Bang. It worked flawlessly on the first run. Some restated their fears in the final seconds, but they had seemed to the rest of us to be too preposterous to even seriously consider.

OH GOD WHY DIDN T WE LISTEN!

No one is really sure what happened. Some say that we actually created another universe, which now co-exists in the same space as our own. Others claim that we only weakened the barrier between our universe and the one that we have been getting glimpses of since the first religious and spiritual experiences of humankind. Whatever the case, the results were worse than anyone could have imagined. Whole areas of the Earth were scoured clean of life as the conflicting laws of physics of the two worlds struggled to reach equilibrium. Volcano s,

tidal waves, and storms the likes of which hadn't been seen on this planet for perhaps 4 billion years stripped whole continents of life. I estimate that perhaps greater than 95% of all of the larger land animals on earth were exterminated. Those few of us that are left are far too few to even begin to reassemble the infrastructure needed for a technological manufacturing society such as the one we had before The Fall. We can only do our best to preserve what few relics we have and pass on our stories in hopes that our children's children will learn from our arrogance and not repeat our mistakes. May God have mercy on their souls, for ours shall surely burn in Hell.

## UmbraGaia

UmbraGaia is the name for the world that now exists as the fusion of the two. The old world could be described as having been primarily physical. Through science, reason, and perseverance, its secrets could be slowly unlocked. The new world, often called Otherworld, which was created or broken into can be described as primarily psychic or spiritual. Those who claim to be able to see into say it has no up, down, or any dimensions of space as we think of them. Only near and far. The creatures there appear to propel themselves aimlessly if undisturbed. Our world seems to give them a tangible reality to orient themselves to. The creatures of this spirit world are fascinated

by our world as moths are enchanted by a flame. Over the centuries since the fall, many of them have forced their way into our physical world by taking over previously existing physical bodies, or constructing new ones out of raw materials found here. New races of beings, many considered monsters, have been created in this way. They have collectively been given the name the **Nephir**. The most powerful of the Nephir are called demons or dragons. Many of the Nephir, whether by coincidence, contrivance or fate, resemble creatures of ancient myths and legends. Some have forgotten their origins. Others never had enough of a mind to comprehend them.

## THE F L O O D E R T H

Back, in the World before this one, before the Time of Magic, men once lived in iron cages high above the ground, and they could fly. "How could they fly if there was no magic?" you may ask. Well, I guess they had their own kind of magic, but it was different from ours. Our magic draws its power from the Netherworld, the land of spirits. Theirs came from other places. Places lost to us. From things actually. It is rumored that there were great black lakes under the ground then. The men of the Old World got their magic from these lakes. They took their energy out of the ground.

But then these lakes began to dry up. The men feared that they would lose their magic, so they began to look for other ways

to make it. They turned over every stone, and looked in every place high and low, and learned a great many things, but still their magic ran dry. Then, in their fear, they did a terrible and stupid thing. They tried to steal the fire of creation, and that is for the Maker alone. In doing this, the foolish men loosed the Nephir upon the world and brought ruin upon it. Their way was lost, and so began the Time of Magic.

*Next are some optional rules that might add variety to the game, hopefully without taking away from the flow with extra die rolling. If they seem too tedious for your taste, throw them out. All rules in this book are only guidelines anyway.*

### i L T iir

There are also a few humans who have learned ways to tap into the strange energies of Otherworld and use them to their advantage. They are known as wizards, psychics, mages, and the like. They are feared by most people, and with good reason. The energies of the overlap between the worlds have not yet reached a full equilibrium. When these energies are drawn upon, the results are often turbulent and unpredictable. Sometimes the spells of even the most experienced wizard can go astray and destroy him. However, this instability can also act in ways that are to the wizard's favor. Any time that three sixes are rolled during a magical effect, the referee should roll 4 six sided dice, add

them together, and look on the following chart:

	<b>Random Magical Effect</b>
4	Bright flash of light, blinds night vision.
5	Caster is attacked by insects scoring 1 pt per rnd.*
6	Caster's hands, face, or body glow. *
7	All terrain, PCs and NPCs within 100 yards glow. Does not include caster. *
8	Spell's effects are doubled.
9	Spell's effects are tripled.
10	Attracts attention of supernatural being (Nephir or Spirit).
11	Spell caster bursts into flames, 1 point scored against him per round, unless submerged in water, dripping wet, or immune to fire. Also damages anything touched by caster. *
12	Spell caster bursts into flames, but neither he nor his equipment is hurt. Touch scores +1 point. *
13	Closest person bursts into flames as 11.*
14	Closest person bursts into flames as 12.*
15	Caster immune to fire.* **
16	Caster immune to cold.* **
17	Caster immune to electricity.* **
18	Caster does not have to breath and is immune to poisonous gases.* **
19	Lightning bolt strikes caster. 1d6 points scored against him.
20	Lightning bolt strikes closest person.
21	Caster becomes magnetized (have fun RM).*
22	Caster becomes invisible. *
23	Caster becomes noncorporeal. * ***
24	Roll twice.

\* Roll 2d6 and see following chart for duration.

\*\* Roll a d6. A roll of 1 means this affects the person closest to the caster.

\*\*\* Character becomes invisible and intangible. Now exists primarily in Otherworld. Takes 1d6 days to learn to speak. Voice sounds disembodied. Precise location cannot be identified. In time may learn to manipulate air currents to interact slightly with the physical world. Can still cast spells. Can be hurt only by magic, or psychic attacks. If permanent, there is a chance of losing contact with the physical world entirely. The referee should roll at the beginning of each story. If three sixes are rolled, the player is trapped in the spirit world and can no longer interact at all with the physical world.

	<b>Duration of random effect.</b>
2-5	1 round
6-7	10 minutes (or rounds)
8	1 hour
9	1 day
10	1 week
11	1 month
12	Permanent, unless Dispelled

## **i L E T I O**

The use of magic and psychic powers can draw the attention Spirits, Nephir, and other magic users. Conversely, magic users and psychics can detect the use of magic and psychic powers from a distance, often even when they are not concentrating to do so. They can also detect creatures and items that are strongly magical in nature (spirits and powerful nephir). Less powerful creatures and magic items must be manifesting a magical power at the time to be detected. The referee may have the player roll to determine if he detects magic or strongly magical creatures in the area, even if the

character isn't actively trying to detect magic. However, if the player states that his character is trying to detect magic, then the difficulty should be lower. The referee should modify the difficulty based on how powerful the magic is, and how far away the character trying to detect it is from its source. This roll can also be done for creatures or NPCs trying to detect magic or magical items of the PCs. Describe detection as a coldness, or a graying of colors, or a brightness, or ears ringing, or a warm breeze, etc.

The character can also try to determine the distance and direction to the magic that they have detected. Use the same difficulty as when originally detecting it if the character was trying to actively detect the magic to start with, or a lower difficulty otherwise.

## **T H E O**

The land, as it is known, is mostly unpopulated. The known pockets of civilization that exist are all located in the interior region, in what used to be called the Great Plains. Small towns and villages are scattered throughout the area, with only a few reaching the size worthy of being called a city, even using the liberal standards of the day. The people make their living in much the way people have here since before the Fall, by farming. They use mules and horses to work the land, and trade their goods in town markets for what they don't produce. Although nearby are the enormous buffalo herds and wild

predators that follow them, they rarely bother the townspeople unless they venture out too far from the safety of civilization. If they do, there are also the Indians to worry about.

## THE TRI E

Since the Fall, the Native American tribes that lived on this land long ago have sprang back in numbers that may even exceed pre-European times. Some of them say that they had warnings of the impending doom from the spirit world. Others say that they were just better equipped to live in a world where man has to live without machines. Either way, they easily outnumber white civilization of the Great Plains five to one now. Many of them nomadically follow the buffalo herds for most of the year. Some have returned to their traditional farming ways. Although they do exist as separate tribes, and war among themselves, they all now share bonds that they never did before.

They have kept alive the stories of the white man's conquest of their peoples; how he foolishly raped the land and almost destroyed himself and everything else. They see the small towns and villages that are springing up as the greatest threat to the world, not the monsters and spirits that are now common in it. They see it as their duty to the land to keep the white people from ever regaining the technological power that they once had before. Although most do not wish to

utterly wipe out the white people, they keep an eye out for any signs of technology. Many a would-be inventor has turned up missing, along with his invention, soon after making a breakthrough. And the natives will almost surely execute anyone on sight that is found to have a working firearm. Even broken relics are distrusted. They would like to see even the memories of such things lost to the white men. But they themselves will never forget. They also spy on the small towns and villages, and sometimes stage small raids to break up alliances between them.

## THE ER

However, there are rumors that one group of non-natives are respected and somewhat trusted by the Indians. Hardly more than a myth to most people, the Rangers are the guardians of the land and the small settlements that populate it. A loosely knit, secretive organization, they can trace their heritage back to the Airborne Rangers of the United States Military. They are a combination of survivalist, soldier, and mystic warrior. Although they can get along in groups, they are often found roaming the world alone, watching over it. They know each other by The Ancient Tongue, and by a few words and phrases that would pass for harmless to uninformed ears. They have strong myths of The Fall, and know of mankind's former glory and folly. Fiercely disciplined, they believe that they are the chosen protectors of the holiness of life. They see the

Nephir, as they call creatures that trace their existence to Otherworld, as unholy invaders from an evil domain that must be stopped at all costs. They also fear and mistrust humans that use magic, thinking them either foolish or in league with evil. Rangers usually possess a keener knowledge of the supernatural than the common man; they are especially concerned with how to combat it.

Trained in hidden strongholds rumored to be in the fallen ruins of the ancient world, the Rangers are masters of reconnaissance and guerilla warfare. They will often follow an unsuspecting enemy for days, analyzing patterns and looking for weaknesses, before striking them down with all the fury of an angry god. Their skill in wilderness lore, tracking, and survival is unsurpassed. Animals are also drawn to them and unafraid, as though they sense the Rangers keen respect for life and nature. Many a tale has been swapped between Rangers of the bear or owl who remarkably swooped in and distracted an enemy in their time of greatest need. Their respect of Nature is not unfounded. It is also rumored that some Rangers even gain magical powers later in their careers, but the Rangers would probably describe these as gifts of Gaia, or something similar.

### Ranger template

#### Requirements:

Good alignment, beginning talents only from Ancient time frame.

#### Bonuses talents:

Resistance; Read, Write, and Speak the Ancient Tongue; Play one musical instrument (to practice discipline).

Can pick the following talents at  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal Point cost and with the following bonuses to points scored using them, or dice rolled, as specified:

Survival +1  
Tracking +1 die  
Stealth +2  
Camouflage +1  
Lore: Monster  
Lore: Magic  
Any Animal +1

Can recognize other Rangers by subtle verbal or non-verbal signals within one round. Will never reveal these signals to non-Rangers under any circumstances.

Must meditate and exercise for at least 30 minutes per day, or lose bonuses to talents and all other special abilities. Referees should require characters to mention this at least occasionally while role-playing.

At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, gain the ability to survive on  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal water and food rations. After 2 weeks, subtract 1 point when rolling for talents or in combat, and 3 points from toughness (temporarily). No further penalties.

At 5<sup>th</sup> level can survive indefinitely on  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal food and water with no ill effects. Can survive for 2 weeks with no food or water.

Gain 1 minor psychic talent (costing 3 points or less), or one druidic faer (See Placidhaven: Druidic Magic section) at levels 2, 4, 6, and 8 free of cost.

Cannot accumulate more wealth than can be carried on them. Must live and dress frugally.

Cannot harm another for selfish gain. If Ranger does, he instantly loses all benefits of the focus. May redeem himself by going to a priest of a good faith (a Druid counts), repenting, and completing a task of attrition chosen by the priest.

Distrusts magic, wizards, and unnatural creatures.

May take an apprentice after 5<sup>th</sup> level.

## The Mountains

In the mountains to the west of the Great Plains, near the ancient ruins of Denevar, there is a great rock with two faces. It is said that this rock is alive and has the power of prophecy. It is called the Rockspeaker. It is large, over ten feet high, and stands precariously perched on its end, upon another, even larger rock. Two tower-like rocks stand just out from it, and at the center of the triangle that these form with the Rockspeaker is a small, flat-topped pillar of rock that juts out of the ground. On seeing this, one gets the impression that the small rock is a kind of altar, in the center of an audience chamber, and that the

Rockspeaker is leaning over to better hear and see whomever might be at the altar.

The face on the left is dour, long, and stern. It seems to look down at the altar in harsh judgement. But it is said that if one will sit at this altar, offer some bread and wine upon it, and tell a good tale, that the Judge's face will soften a bit. And just maybe, if the tale is good enough, that the other face will open its eyes. It is a comical face with the head rather pointy at the top, the jaw large and square with a huge mouth, and the eyes small and hidden by a jutting brow. This is the true face of the Rockspeaker, and if it awakens, it will compliment you boldly on your good tale, and then it will offer a tale of its own, in its gravely, rolling voice. Sometimes these are ancient tales of the world before the Fall, or even before the colonization by the white men. Sometimes they are the tales of people or creatures whose fates are entwined somehow with the listeners, and sometimes they are prophecies of things to come. Either way, they will be tales epic in scale and grandeur; of heroic struggles, grand tragedies and righteous redemption.

There is also rumored to be an Elven kingdom hidden away in the mountains. Great cats with psychic powers are said to help keep it hidden and protect it. It is common to hear of the weary traveler, bloodied and tired, who was taken in and nursed back to health by these elves. Most such tales end with the traveler awakening, sometimes miles from

where he was originally, with only a foggy recollection of what happened and no idea of how to return to the Elven kingdom, if it was even real.

Use stats from Fantasy Compendium for Elves.

Siliques-Psychic Mountain Lions

Points 12

Racial Abilities (11): Robust, claws +1 point scored, enhanced smell, agile (+1die), speak telepathically and latent psychic.

Pick 3-1 point psychic powers from Inner Mind supplement

Possible PC

Battle points 1 (+1)

## ○ L ER

A gentle race of large stone giants also lives in these mountains. They claim to be the children of the Rockspeaker, whatever that means. And in their faces they do bear a resemblance to the wide jawed face of that great teller of tales. They may accompany travelers through the mountains, keeping them entertained with tales of boldness and grandeur. The difference between the tales of the Rockwalkers and the Rockspeaker is that the Rockwalkers usually like to talk most about themselves. And the truth of their tales has been questioned more than once. If you accuse them of lying outright, they will act highly incensed, and may even storm off for a while. But usually their compulsive need to spin yarns will bring them back.

Although they no doubt have great knowledge of the mountains, it is difficult to get a straight answer out of them if you ask their advice on which pass to take, or for directions to the nearest town or ruin. They often will give brief, jumbled and contradictory replies, only to launch into another grand tale that your question somehow reminded them of. Some find them annoying, but most take comfort in their companionship in the lonely beauty of the mountains. If danger presents itself, a traveler may look around to find the rockwalker already gone. But if the danger is too great for them to handle, the rockwalker may reappear up the mountainside and launch boulders down to help them in their struggle.

## THE ○ T I

Anywhere there is a wilderness, there is bound to be a mountain man. The wilds of UmbraGaia are no exception to this rule. Mountain men (or women) are people who shun the ways of so called civilized people and return to the wilds. They live off the land, and drink of the marrow of the world. Mountain men prefer to live simply in isolation, without the complications imposed on them by society. They love the beauty of untouched wilderness and revel in the challenge of living on their own in dangerous lands. Some call them hermits, and that suits them fine. They'd rather be left alone. Myths often grow up around them, if anyone is near enough to spread

them. They are sometimes feared. They may be enemies with the indigenous people of the area, or share a mutual respect with them. Maybe they will even become friends with some. But either way, they will know all about how to live off the land, including enough about any local tribes to allow them to coexist with them without constantly stepping on their toes. The mountain man can be a valuable asset to anyone traveling through the wilds, if he can be persuaded to give his help. But his price will not be in gold. More likely he will take one look at you and judge your character. He may help you, or he may leave you to die. He knows that Nature takes those that she needs, in her time. He does not grudge her of her take. She's given him enough of what he's needed, and he knows that with her, nothing comes for free.

#### Mountain man template:

Due to the harsh conditions that the Mountain man lives under, he gains the talent Tough for free, and hide armor for free, which when combined give +6 points that cannot be used for anything else.

He/she also can buy the following skills at ½ the normal point cost and gains +1 point to successes using them: Survival, weaponsmithing: ancient, Hunting/Fishing, Lore: animal, Lore: native\*, and Navigation: land.

\*Lore: native is a new skill that says that the character is familiar with indigenous peoples in the area, and knows how to approach

them, avoid angering them, and also how to fight them if the need be. It is a common skill similar to the other Lore skills.

#### Limitations:

Mountain men don't usually have use for the money used by others, and don't accumulate much of it. They usually prefer their own company and are usually perceived by more civilized people as hermits or cretins. They also favor simple weapons, clothing, and equipment. The simpler, the better. They often use their own homemade things. They enjoy simplicity in all areas of their lives, and if things get too complicated, they often pack up and leave.

#### i iL r

-from the Latin; characterized by hissing

The sibilants evolved on a world that was once lush and tropical. The average daytime temperature was much warmer than what we Earth natives would consider comfortable. The planet also had a much less pronounced axial tilt, so that the seasons were milder, almost nonexistent actually. Therefore their bodies needed no internal temperature regulation mechanism. We would consider them exothermic, or cold-blooded. They also, by a coincidence of convergent evolution, have a number of other features that add to the human labeling of them as reptiles. They had no need of an insulating outer covering, such as fur, to keep them

warm. However, a tough skin was beneficial, and they developed what remarkably looks like scales. The oxygen content was high on their homeworld, and the atmosphere dense, so that huge flying creatures were common. Many of these would also be called reptiles by a human observer. Some speculation says that perhaps the Sibilant homeworld was also the birthplace of Dragons. But there has been no evidence found of this.

The sibilants' ancestors took to spending part of their time underground to escape these fierce flying predators. Over time, they became more and more adapted to this underground lifestyle. They also began to develop technology. Agriculture was first. They began to grow various fleshy, non-motile organisms that lived off of mineral deposits that seeped up from deeper in the planet into the caves that the Sibilants inhabited. They were similar to what we humans call mushrooms. They also kept colonies of motile organisms that fed off of these "mushrooms". We could think of them as very large grubs (about the same weight as a large chicken, according to my friend Sithka Namuul). This food and protection left the Sibilants with a lot of free time, and they began to use this to delve deeper into sciences and technologies. They advanced rapidly.

Which was very fortunate for them, because it helped them to survive the tragedy to come. When life had first evolved on the Sibilants' homeworld, their sister galaxy had been no more than a rather largish hazy patch in the

sky. By the time the Sibilants' first primitive ancestors came onto the scene, it had grown in size until it covered much of the night sky and its core was about as bright as a full moon from Earth. Actual collisions between stellar objects are uncommon in galactic collisions. However, as the two galaxies passed through each other, massive gravitational perturbations spread through each. The paths that stars had taken for billions of years while orbiting galactic cores were disturbed. Bursts of star births caused by quick collapse of gas clouds made the night skies two or three times brighter than they had been. Then, several hundreds of thousands of years later, the truly massive stars formed by these bursts of starbirth began to die. The death of a blue supergiant star is one of the most spectacular explosions known to occur in the universe, bested only by collisions of neutron stars.

By the time it happened, the Sibilants had become fully adapted to underground life. Not needing them, they had lost use of the organs that allowed them to see in the visible spectrum. They had instead developed keen senses of smell, touch, and the ability to see in the cooler, infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum. They saw in heat patterns. Their technology had also developed to the point where they were familiar with nanotechnology and were toying around with dimensional gating. They had had limited success with this little understood technology, but it soon became

their only hope. The star that exploded was only 7 light years away. This is just under twice the distance from the Earth's Sun to its nearest neighbor, Proxima Centauri. The resulting shockwave stripped much of the atmosphere off the planet, and thoroughly poisoned the surface with radiation. The surviving Sibilants were forced deep into the planet. They had to learn to manufacture their own air and to keep it in balance by managing their underground ecosystems. The explosion also disturbed the orbit of their home world, and after a few centuries, its orbit began crossing the orbit of a larger planet in their system. The sibilants had long ago set up observing stations on the surface that were maintained by artificially intelligent machines, and could be used teleremotely from their underground cities. They saw the tragedy to come, and knew what they had to do. There was not enough time or resources to send everyone. They gathered together and decided to divide their strongest and brightest up into three groups. Each would be sent through a different dimensional gate, in hopes that at least one group would find a world where they could survive and preserve their race. Then the Sibilants had a great feast the likes of which their world had never seen. Casks of fermented drinks that had been aging for centuries were opened. They ate the last of their food reserves, except those to be taken with the travelers.

The time came. The gates were opened, and the Exodus began. After the last of Pilgrims had passed through, the remaining Sibilants broke open the long sealed passages to the surface, donned their respirators, and began their own journey. It didn't matter that they were taking lethal doses of radiation, they would not die from it. They settled down into groups with their closest friends and relatives, and watched the approaching swirling clouds of the gas giant. Many exclaimed that it was the most beautiful sight that they had ever seen. It was the last sight that any of them ever did see.

Note: Sibilants can be played as PC s. Although the Sibilants can walk upright to free the use of their hands, they are more agile and swift on all fours. They do have a tail, but cannot use it to grasp objects. It is mainly used for balance. Their vision is entirely in the infrared region. Therefore, they see only in heat patterns. They cannot see the same colors that humans see, they can see temperature differences between objects quite well though. They do not see with what humans would consider eyes. They do not have eyes as you and I have. They "see" using sensitive patches of skin on their face and neck. They have no visible external eyes or ears. They can use technological devices to convert visible light into patterns that they can see, but rarely see the point in doing this. These devices look like goggles that the Sibilant wears (attached with an elastic band) that have patches

that extend from them to various places on the Sibilant's head and neck. They may also be in the form of a pullover "ski mask" type device. Sibilants appear gray in color, stand between 4 and 5 feet tall, and are excellent swimmers. Their voices are soft and they often hiss when speaking. Their own language consists of hisses and clicks.

#### Sibilant Racial Attributes under MEP light system:

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Description</u>
Scaly skin	1	+3 points
Diverged toes	2	can grasp objects with feet; +1 die to balance or skill rolls that require balance and agility.
Claws	1	Scores +1 point
Enhanced Smell	1	X 2 human, can identify individuals and materials much like a dog
Infravision	2	See infravision under the vision section in the Telling Your Story supplement.
Natural Scientist	3	+1 die to rolls on Math or Science skills

<u>Hindrances</u>	<u>Gain</u>	<u>Description</u>
Vulnerable to cold	3	Causes X 2 points
Frail body type	4	Light frame -3 points
Slow healer	3	After a confrontation, it takes ten rounds for the character's points to return.

### Ruins, spirits, and monsters

The land of UmbraGaia is mostly wilderness populated only by native tribes and the occasional Nephir. By far the most dangerous places, excluding the Great Wastes, are the ruins of the ancient cities. Not much more than rusted hulks and spires of buildings, and piles of concrete rubble, the worst of Nephir (and

humans) seem drawn to these places. Perhaps it is because of the ancient psychic imprint of the countless deaths of the Fall; or because of the ghosts of those lost then that still roam the land looking for home, or solace, or a body to inhabit. Whatever the cause, venturing into one of these places is definitely taking your life into your own hands. However, it is rumored that ancient relics of great power can still be found here, and clues to the old Kingdoms await those brave enough to look for them. It is also said that the Rangers make use of these ruins to train their initiates, and that perhaps they even have a stronghold in one of them. However, if this is true, the Rangers aren't talking.

Note: Along with the original creatures described here, any creatures from the Fantasy Compendium Supplement may also be found in UmbraGaia.

### THE LOOD TOR

On the plains, great storms sometimes are seen which are unlike anything known of before The Fall. They are called the Blood Storms. They blow in quickly and woe to those who are caught in one in the open. The sky turns dark, and the clouds redden. Red, poisonous rain falls from these clouds. Although this rain will kill any that drink it, and often makes those sick who merely get in on their skin, it quickly breaks down once in the environment, so that the ground behind the bloodstorms

is left unharmed. These storms are always accompanied by fantastic displays of red lightning. It has been claimed that anyone hit by this lightning can be transformed into a lightning beast. These lightning beasts are often seen wandering around in these storms, wailing pitifully. But do not be fooled. They are very dangerous and not to be trifled with. It has also been reported that at the center of some of these storms is a furious funnel cloud called the Vortex. This vortex looks like a tornado shot through with bolts of the red lightning. Wraiths are reported to circle this funnel, and at least one report claimed that these wraiths could actually use magic, although how one could live to report such a horrific tale escapes me.

RM notes:

Once per 10 rounds (or minutes) in storm, referee should roll 3d6. Scoring 2 or more points means someone in the group got hit by lightning. Determine randomly who. Roll again. A success means that the person struck will become a lightning beast. The player whose character was struck must roll and score at least 2 points with a single roll to maintain control of their character. They can try this once per round. If person is not transformed into a lightning beast, lightning scores 10 points against them. During a storm, there is a chance that a Vortex may be seen. It moves very fast and pulls anyone within 100 ft of its base into it. The Vortex is actually a gateway to another realm, and scores 4 points

against anyone pulled into it. If a Vortex is seen, 2d6 wraiths will be seen accompanying it. One may be a Mage-Wraith

Lightning man stats:  
Points: 15

Creature may attack twice using its hands, or fire one lightning bolt with +1 die for a ranged attack. (If someone hits monster with a non-insulated metal weapon, they receive 1 point of electrical damage.)

Battle Points 4

Creature is immune to electrical attacks.

Wraith stats:

Wraiths are non-corporeal spirits that cannot interact with the physical world. They can be harmed only by magical or psychic attacks. They have 10 points in their natural form. If they successfully take over someone's body, they use their points. They only have two attacks. One is a psychic scream that they can use once per round. PC's must make a successful roll or be frozen in terror by it (all characters roll only once per round, no matter how many wraiths there are). Once they are frozen, the wraiths will try to possess their bodies using a limited form of the Psychic power Transfer Consciousness. This power is the same as that in the book, except that the duration is only 1d6 rounds. The person whose body has been taken over will be a spirit floating around outside of their body. They can use only psychic and magical powers.

The wraith is a spirit that has been lost without a body for so long that it has gone completely insane. It does not have the intelligence to use even the simplest archaic weapons. Once inside the body of its victim, it will shriek and lash out at any other living creatures in the area using any natural weapons at its disposal (claws, etc.) It will also attempt to use super hero powers if the individual had any, but only the simplest ones such as altered form: metal can be used. The wraith may also fling its new body into the vortex. If this happens, the person will awaken to find himself or herself in a new realm. Any other PCs may follow them by jumping into the vortex.

Mage wraiths are far more dangerous than other wraiths. They are actually the souls of spellcasters that lost their bodies somehow. Though intelligent, they are completely insane, and will try to use any powers that they have, including spell casting powers, to possess or destroy anyone that comes within their evil grasp. They have the same powers and stats as other wraiths plus the ability to cast spells as a wizard of the same level. They can cast spells without a body. They may also try to destroy the spirit of the person whose body they have taken over. If they do so, they keep the body that they have possessed.

## THE R O

Grandpa, Where do Dragons come from?

Well, sit child and listen to a story. It is an old story of love, envy, greed, idolatry, and murder. But it is more than that. Listen. It is a story of Dragons.

There once were two friends, Davin and Mikael. They were the best of friends. They were always seen together, everywhere they went. Davin was a tall lad, and strong. The best at prog and all the other games, and a favorite among the girls. But although he was the favored child of the village, he was modest and always quick to give a polite word.

Stories of his bravery were reaching the legend status among the children even before he had come of age. And although any of the other children in the village would have bent backwards to have been his friend, it was Mikael that he loved most. He always waited for Mikael, and asked if he would like to go along or play in the games. If Mikael wasn't playing, then Davin wasn't either. That was just the way it was.

Mikael also loved Davin greatly, but his feelings went beyond love. You could have said that he worshipped Davin. He emulated his every action. He walked like Davin, talked like Davin, and in every sense of the word, tried to be Davin. When Davin was around, Mikael stood a little taller, and spoke a little louder. He was first to challenge a game of whif-nuf, and to race down to the shady brook for a swim. He

began so to even pass for Davin. Sometimes, when your back was turned, why you'd swear that you'd been talking to Davin, only to look around and see Mikael. And sometimes, when Davin wasn't around, Mikael would pretend to BE Davin. He became so good even as to fool some of the villagers on occasion, and even a few of the girls.

Then came the day when the two boys were off on the river in their favorite dugout. They had been gone for some time when someone cried Look, there comes Davin, and he seems all affright. What's the matter with you boy? He cried, "Mikael has fallen into the river and washed away!" The villagers were all in a fluster and ran every one down to the river. But search far and near, never a trace of the boy did they find. Then, there was a great mourning all about. Many baskets of flowers were spread down the lane to the river and laid upon its banks. Then, the last of the boy's belongings were tied up into a bundle and sent flaming to the Maker in a reed boat, in place of his unfound body. At this the villagers cried their last tears and were making their way back when they noticed the boy walking away down the lane. One little girl said, "Mommy look, there's Mikael." To which the mother replied "Silly child. Mikael is dead, that's Davin." Neither boy was seen again after that day, but afterwards mothers were noticed to clutch their children a little tighter, and deacons were known to frown upon

little boys whose friendships became *too* close.

#### Game Description

In the beginning, Dragons aren't dragons yet. They are Wendigo. They are man/spirits that grow in power by devouring other men. They gain the powers and strength of those that they devour. They do not reproduce as other creatures, and there are no baby dragons.

After a few years of this, their form begins to change. Their hair falls out. Their limbs become longer and clawed. Their faces grow long, and their teeth sharpen into fangs. They become more like beasts than men. They roam the wilderness, terrorizing travelers.

Somewhere along the line, they cease to be men at all. They become Half-Dragons. They grow scales over their bodies. Their pupils narrow to slits. They begin to hide from the rest of the world. Their appetite for flesh recedes, but does not totally leave them. They begin to contemplate their greed, and evil grows in their hearts. All along, they will have been hoarding the valuables of their victims. Now, they begin to search out things of greater value to hoard. No one knows why they do this, not even them. Some speculate that knowing that they have no real use for the things they hoard, they hoard them only to keep others from using them. Others say that they hoard these things knowing that adventurers will come in search of them, so that they only have to wait for victims to come to

them. Still others say that the Dragons hold a subconscious hope that perhaps their hoard will finally lead someone to them who can end their miserable, wretched existence. At some point, most seal themselves off completely from the world, usually in an underground chamber, or ancient ruins. Here they may lay for centuries undisturbed. Here they become true Dragons.

Note: This is an optional method of Dragon creation. I believe that it is more in accord with the original ideas of Dragons from Western mythology than what I see in most role-playing games. The Dragon is the ultimate symbol of greed and impotent power, and has more in common with the Scylla of Homer's Odyssey than with a race of giant lizards. Dragons hoard great wealth, but never use it. They wield great power, but it only serves to hoard more wealth for them. The ultimate vision of the Western Dragon as the great Devourer was its preference for the flesh of virgins.

#### Wendigo Form

No one is sure what makes a man become a Wendigo. Just eating human flesh is not enough in itself. Some say that a spirit of greed and envy must enter the man first. There are stories of men searching such spirits out.

Points: as previous character, or 10. Also add extra points from feeding as described below.

Claws: add +1 to points scored.

Strong: add +1 point, roll an extra die for feats of strength.

Battle Points: 2-10, depending on what he's been eating☺.

Ravenous hunger for the flesh of their own kind: must feed at least once per week or lose powers temporarily. Must save versus special if Wendigo encounters victims and has not eaten in 1 week, to keep from attacking them immediately. Also, Wendigo will seem nervous and may be taken as a lunatic if he has not eaten for 1 week. Normal food will not satisfy this hunger.

#### Feeding Effects:

Increased endurance: add ½ of victim's points that are devoured to Wendigo's points. After one week without feeding, returns to base points. No matter how many victims the Wendigo consumes, his points may not exceed 3 times his base level. These points may not be spent. The Wendigo may use this ability to heal wounds. Any wounds that the Wendigo takes that do not lower his total endurance below his base level may be immediately closed using these extra points. This is mainly done to terrify enemies. Severed limbs may be regrown after one week, if the Wendigo feeds during that week, and if the severed limb is bound back into place. Destroyed or lost limbs may not be regrown.

Increased powers: The Wendigo may gain one of the powers of its

victim, if that power is related to the victim's physical body. These extra powers are lost if the Wendigo has not fed for 1 week or more. The Wendigo may gain only 5 extra powers in this way.

Wendigo are almost always solitary. They may form short-lived bands (until one of them decides to eat the others).

#### Half Dragon Form

Creature reaches this after 2d6x10 years as a Wendigo.

Points: 15 May be triple base from feeding, as Wendigo ☺. Size is now considered Large.

Battle Points: 5(+20 to 40)

2 Turns per round.

#### Talents:

Claws: score +1 point.

Mega-Strong: scores +3, rolls an extra 2 dice for feats of strength.

Bite scores +2 points

Sense Magic

Infravision

Turn Invisible: Once per day, Half Dragons may turn invisible as the spell.

The Half-Dragon may also use a weapon, and if it does, it will be magical. It will also have a hoard somewhere, which will contain money (give 3 points to everyone in the party to spend on gear, if it is found), and may contain magical items.

Hunger recedes: Half Dragon now may maintain extra powers and points for 1d6 months without

feeding. However, if the half dragon does not feed after the 1d6 months is over, he begins to weaken. Unlike the Wendigo, he does not lose all of his extra points and abilities immediately though. He loses them at the rate of 5 points per week, and one power per week. However, this loss does not stop when they reach their normal levels. The Half Dragon will continue to lose points and powers. If the creature's points reach zero, the Half Dragon dies. The creature will not heal at all without feeding. The only exception to this is when the creature goes into a hibernation-like state to transform into a Dragon. This hibernation may last for hundreds of years, often well past the time where the creature has become a full Dragon.

Magic use possible: Half Dragons may buy magical powers, or steal them by eating someone who has them. They may go after magic using victims specifically to gain their powers. They may not gain more than 5 extra powers in this way.

Resistances: Half Dragons may pick up a resistance at this point, from the racial attributes section of character. This resistance is same as the breath weapon that will develop when the creature becomes a full Dragon.

Creature begins to grow wings later in this stage, but does not achieve full flight capability until nearing full Dragon status. Also, creature begins to increase in size, doubling every 100 years.

Half Dragons, while more common than Dragons, are still quite rare. They are solitary, but may lead bands of evil creatures.

#### Dragon

After 2d6x100 years as a Half Dragon, creature becomes a full Dragon. It still has all of the abilities of Half Dragon, and more. It is now generally a competent magic user. It may assume any form that it wants magically, but the true form of most is a giant, winged reptile. Size increases to 100 + 2d6x10 feet long.

Points: 80 (20 of these must be spent on magic spells, psychic powers, or hero powers.) Creature no longer needs to eat, except to heal damage. Damage can be healed only by feeding, at a rate of 20 points per day. Creature may eat more than 20 points per day in victims. Endurance points above 20 will be added to the next days healing. Healing X 5 if victim is a virgin, and may exceed the 20 point per day maximum.

Battle Points: 100

3 Attacks

Turn Invisible: at will

See the Invisible: Always active.

Breath Weapon: May be used once per confrontation. If used, this is the only action that the Dragon may take for that round. May be electrical, fire, poisonous gas, cold, or anything else that the referee

wants. Characters must make a successful roll, or have points scored against them from it. If character rolls bonus dice for feats of agility, they may be used to escape the Dragon's breath. Use the Dragon Breath weapons from the Fantasy Compendium supplement as examples, make up your own, or use 5d6 points scored against everyone in the confrontation.

Claws do +2 and bite does +4. Strong and Mega-Strong +4 points, + 3 dice for feats of strength.

Gain +1 die when attacking.

Creature has wings and may fly as the magic spell.

Creature is immune to the element of its own breath weapon (fire, for example).

Dragon has a power similar to the Spell Deceit, but ignore all limitations. The Dragon may use it to turn into anything it wants, but it will keep its own points. It may stay in this form for as long as it wants.

Full Dragons are extremely rare, and less than a dozen are usually known to exist on even the most magical worlds. All Dragons are solitary and almost never cooperate with other Dragons, although they may use lesser creatures as pawns and servants. Most Dragons will have magical items or weapons in their hoard, and may have haunted steel items (referees discretion). They will definitely

have a great deal of money in their hoard (give everyone in the party 5-10 points to spend on gear)

Because of their great greed, most almost never leave their lairs for fear of someone stealing their hoard. They may also set up traps to stop intruders from ever reaching their hoard.

## THE ORKS OF R I

The Orks of UmbraGaia are a race of warlike creatures that developed sometime after the fall. Their bodies are heavily muscled and covered in a tough, gray, leathery hide. They have a large snout and tusks that they sometimes use to gore their enemies in battle. Their ears are somewhat pointed and near the top of their heads. The humans often call them Pigmen, a term which the Orks greatly dislike. They are found in scattered bands East of the Rocky Mountains, but are more common West of the Great Waste. There they roam the plains and scrub lands in large nomadic tribes. They often ambush travelers in both places. In the West, they have partially domesticated great beasts known as Trainstoppers. The Orks actually ride these monstrosities and use them to assault moving locomotives, but more on that later. Although most humans think of the Orks as evil beings, many tribes do have codes of honor that they adhere to. Intertribal feuding is the norm, and they are often found to be even more brutal in battle against enemy clansmen than they are

against human foes. Although their females do not usually accompany them in battle, they are worthy opponents themselves, as many an unsuspecting human warrior has found.

Points: 12 (or as normal if PC or NPC)

<u>Trait</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Benefit/Hindrances</u>
Robust	(2)	Large body frame. +5 points.
Thick Skin/Hide	(1)	+3 points.
Tusks	(1)	Score +1 point for goring.
Strong	(1)	+1 point scored for non-ranged attacks, and +1 die for feats of strength.
Enh. Hearing	(1)	2 X Normal human
Enh. Smell	(1)	2 X Normal human
Infravision	(2)	See infravision under the vision section in the Telling Your Story supplement.
War-like	(1)	One free combat talent.
Poor Sight	(+1)	½ Normal human
<u>Vul.to Magic</u>	<u>(+5)</u>	Magic scores double points and effects last twice as long.

Total Cost to play=4 points

Use as monster, NPC, or PC.

NoA:1d6(East) 1d6X10(West)

Size: M Alignment: Any (Usually N or E)

### Commonly held talents

Brawling

Armor Optimization +3 points

Stamina

Climbing

Weapon training Blunt, polearm, axe, or sword (pick 2).

Weapon training Crossbow

Will also be equipped with weapons that they are trained in.

Orks encountered in the Western provinces may be accompanied by a trainstopper.

### The Trainstoppers

Far to the West, across the Great Wastes and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is an area of human civilization much like the old West of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Six shooters and lever action rifles are the norm, and a

system of locomotives connects the bustling towns and small cities of the region. The locomotives are driven by wood-burning steam engines, since the coal and oil reserves were mostly depleted before the Fall.

In between the cities, on the sage prairies and grasslands, roam large tribes of nomadic orks. The orks war with themselves more than with their human neighbors, but attacks on smaller towns are not uncommon, and even the larger cities must repel an occasional attack by an ork. The only thing that saves the humans from total defeat at the hands of the brutal, warlike orks is the lack of solidarity between competing tribes. Most of the human settlements that have lasted any time at all have strong walls and well-trained militias to repel orkish invaders. The Orks mainly center their attacks on the locomotives as they cross the intervening prairies, and on any human caravans foolish enough to brave it by foot, horse, or wagon train.

The orks also have a weapon that strikes fear in the heart of any engineer unlucky enough to see one: The Trainstoppers. The trainstoppers are huge, grotesque beasts with heads so large that they basically take the place of most of their bodies. They have long arms with wicked, razor like claws, short stubby hind legs, and gaping maws large enough to take in a full grown man. Despite their cumbersome appearances, trainstoppers are quite fast, using their arms to run on all fours in much the way that a gorilla does. Using

their great speed, and massive, thick skulls, they can actually hurl themselves into the locomotives hard enough to derail them sometimes. The orks have partially domesticated these monsters, and now regularly use them to derail trains and rape, pillage, plunder, and massacre their inhabitants. The humans have tried many methods of stopping the trainstoppers, all of which have had very limited success to date.

## The great wastes

### THE DRAGON DIVERS AND THE SERAPHIM

Along the Eastern Shore of the Great Wastes there live men who hunt great beasts from ships, much like the ancient whalers did, up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century before the fall. They call themselves the Dragon Divers. Their ships are styled after the ancient whaling vessels, but float through the air instead of on the sea. They are suspended by great balloons. Some of these balloons are filled with hydrogen, which is made by the secretive alchemists of the Shore, using a method that they have kept hidden for over 400 years. Others are filled with air that is heated by flames. This type is used to change the buoyancy of the ships. Naturally these two types of balloons must be separated from each other to keep the very flammable hydrogen from catching on fire. The men hunt the Seraphim, or Dust Dragons.

The Seraphim are gigantic, snake-like reptiles with 6 feathery wings. Their bodies are splotched with black spots and can be up to 400 feet long, and they can breathe flames. The main staple of their diet is the white, flying buffalo. The Seraphim are very poor flyers. They leap into the air, and undulate their slender bodies to fly for a distance, then slowly glide back to the ground. They are not capable of reaching

heights much more than the distance that they can hurl themselves to. They also cannot make sharp turns while in the air, even to turn their heads to the side to breath flame on an enemy. They sometimes launch themselves off the sides of cliffs to achieve greater heights and longer flying time. The Seraphim usually lay in hiding until the buffalo get within striking distance. Then they leap into the herd, using their wings to glide in quickly and their breath to roast as many of the buffalo as they can before the herd flies away. They also use their flying ability and breath to defend themselves against other denizens of the Wastes, such as the Ant hives, and the Dactyls.

The largest and most famous of the cities of men who hunt these beasts is called Hellsport. The bold men who actually make the kills dive down towards the monster using glider/parachute devices called flyers, and throw darts and harpoons into it. They dive in large numbers and spread themselves out to confuse the monster, to try and kill it before it can use its breath, and also to make it more difficult for it to hit them all at the same time with its breath. They have developed suits that somewhat shield them from the fire, but these are far from perfect and the life expectancy of a Dragon Diver is quite short. Some captains prefer their men to try for the beast's flashbox, a sack in its gullet, which contains the flammable

fluid responsible for its breath. This is a trade off, because the dark oil is a highly sought commodity, and the beast is worth much more with it intact. The flashbox oil is so volatile that it actually bursts into flame when it comes into contact with air, so that harpooning the flashbox will cause an explosion that often blows the Dust Dragons head off.

Oil extracted from the rest of the body is also flammable, and is sold, but it is not as valued as the flashbox oil. The beast's wings and scales are used in making the flyers and armor, respectively, of the Dragon Divers because of their fire resistance. Often the great ships of the Divers are also covered in feathers or scales from the Seraphim to give them partial fire resistance. The pontoons, however, must be kept light and therefore remain vulnerable to fire, so the ship is usually hung from them by long ropes to keep them out of harms way. Many of the ships also have flame cannons that spray large cones of fire. They use the flashbox oil of the Seraphim to fuel these. They use these cannons as a defensive weapon against other creatures of the wastes and against pirates.

The oil of the Seraphim is transported by caravan over the Rocky Mountains and sold to the towns of the Plains. You may wonder why the existence of flying ships does not create more of an opportunity for the civilization of the east to interact more with the one across the Wastelands. Well, the ships of

the Dragon Divers are not reliable enough to make the round trip across the Wastelands and back. Occasionally a few crewmen of a ship that got lost and wrecked deep into the Wastes may find their way to the far side, across the Sierra's, but it is rare. And there has never been a single ship to sail all the way across the Wastes and *back*.

The land to the north of the Wastes is called the Land of Fire. It is a hell on earth of volcanoes and lakes of lava. It is roamed by fire giants and flame elementals, and has been reported to be the home of at least one dragon. Only fools go there, and they do not come back.

### Dragon Diver Template

Bonus Talents, Gear, etc.

Pilot: Dragon Flyer automatically (normally a 2 point skill)

Armor: +3 points, and resist fire as the racial attribute (1/2 damage)

May purchase a Flyer for 1 point, but it may only be used to glide down from high places. Will also know how to build one later, which may or may not be fire resistant depending on the materials used to construct it.

### Seraphim

Points 25

2 Attacks

Bite scores +4 points

May also hold an opponent as a constrictor on an attack scoring 6 points or more. Opponent must

make a successful roll to escape, or have no actions and have 2 points scored against him for each successive round that he is held. Seraphim may not do this while attempting to fly.

Breath weapon may be used once per confrontation. All must make a successful roll, or take 1d6+4 points of damage. At referee's option, breath weapon may not hit all if they are sufficiently spread out.

Battle points 5 (+5)

### **THE MESA DWELLERS**

The Mesa Dwellers are descendants of the Hopi that still live in the land of their ancestors, the Great Wastes. To survive in such a harsh place, they have carved out the insides of many of the mesas in the desert and built their cities inside them. They have farm plots on top of them, and the main entrances to the cities are also on top of the mesas. They have carved hand and foot holds into the outside of the mesa walls that allow them to climb up and down. These are ordered in such a way that if you don't know exactly what order to use them in, you will reach a point where you cannot go up any further, or often go back down either. They also carve out underground channels to divert river water into their mesa cities. They use a system of pulleys to get down from the mesa tops quickly and at the same time, to raise water to the upper layers of

their cities from a well, to water their crops on top. Window slits are carved into the sides of the mesas for lighting and to fire arrows through, but they are too small for most of the dangerous wasteland creatures to crawl through. No one is sure how the Mesa Dwellers carve out their homes, but it is supposed that magic is used. The Mesa Dwellers supplement their diets with the meat of the White Buffalo. They are not usually overly friendly to strangers, but are not completely hostile either.

The tops of many mesas are also home to a strange new type of plant life, called the sunberries. These berries grow on a tough, cactus-like plant, and are a favorite food of the White Buffalo. It is also rumored that the Mesa Dweller Shamans use them to make a magical tea, which allows them to fly. However, the unprepared berries are poisonous to humans. The sunberries glow a dark red at night, so that the mesa tops seem to be the dark embers of a dying fire. It is a beautiful and sometimes terrifying sight to behold from the deck of a Dragon Diver ship.

### **THE WHITE BUFFALO**

Perhaps one of the most enigmatic inhabitants of the Great Wastes is the White Buffalo. They look almost exactly like their dark furred neighbors to the east, except for their color. But they can do a remarkable thing. They are excellent flyers.

No one is sure how this happened. They do not have wings, but they can run on the air as easily as they can on the ground. This has allowed them to survive in an environment where many creatures cannot. They are the prey of many of the predators of the wastes nonetheless, and are probably the main reason that the ecosystem there is so much healthier than one would expect for such an arid region. Their spoor and urine helps to bring nutrients to the tops of the otherwise barren mesas, and allows plants to grow there that they in turn use for food.

## White Buffalo

Points 8

Fly as the spell

Horns +1 point scored for goring

No appearing 1-100

Battle points 1

## THE KITH

Kith are genetically engineered humanoid females that can control ant and wasp hives. They look like beautiful human females, often with a lot of flesh showing and with their hair pulled back. They can speak the Common language known by most humans, or make inhuman squeals and clicks to speak with insects. They can also spray chemicals to communicate with insects from organs located under flaps on their abdomen, where the abdominal rib muscles are found in humans.

The Kith mate with human males, whom they usually eat

afterwards with the help of their ant friends. Their gestation time is very short, only two weeks. Their offspring is almost always female, and is born as a helpless larva that has absolutely nothing in common with the appearance of a human baby. The larva is ravenously hungry and must be fed meat to survive. It grows quickly and encases itself in a cocoon only one week after birth. Three days later, it emerges as an adolescent child. This child will grow to adulthood in three weeks. It will possess the full capability and knowledge of an adult Kith immediately upon emerging from its cocoon, except it will be physically weaker because of its small size.

Males are occasionally born, but they are always devoured immediately after emerging from the cocoon. The Kith detest the males as weak and useless because of their inability to produce Kith children. However, the Kith also fear males of their kind, because they are stronger and tougher, have a more limited version of the powers of the females, but have no loyalty to the hives and Ramaset (see section below). They are renegades that threaten the power of the Kith. The males, called Mantids, can control ants and wasps to a more limited extent and are never attacked by them. They cannot give direct orders to ant and wasp hives (their pheromone signature is of less stature than the female Kith), but can sometimes solicit cooperation, especially if they

offer a bribe. They can communicate just as well however, and can gain useful information even from normal sized ant and wasp colonies.

The main feature that gives away the Kith's inhumanity is their pupils. If you look closely, you will notice that they are multifaceted. At night, they may be seen to reflect light brightly, like an animals. They can see well in the UV spectrum. They have sharp, slightly pointed teeth, and their hair is much coarser than normal, almost wiry. They only grow hair on the tops of their heads, none on the rest of their bodies. Both males and females are inhumanly strong, fast, tough and agile. They can cling to surfaces by using rough pads on their fingers and toes, and clawed digits. They almost never wear shoes or gloves. The pads produce an adhesive that helps them when they are climbing. Because of this, they can climb near vertical surfaces quite well, even if there are no hand and foot holds. They cannot, however, hang suspended from a smooth ceiling like some insects. Despite their monstrous nature, they can often pass for humans and can be found wandering the streets of many towns. The native tribes, however, will never allow them to enter their villages and will kill them on sight, if possible.

#### Kith

Develop as a cyborg. Kith are genetic creations of Ramaset with greatly enhanced physical

powers. Some may be encountered in the Deep Desert with actual cybernetic enhancements.

Points: start at 15

After purchasing talents (16, 18, or 20)

Will have:

Full Body Conversion: Medium (4) +10 points (I don't think the cyborg bodies are tough enough in Hero 8).

Cyborg armor: light (2) +4, medium (3) +7 or heavy (4) +10.

Fast Reflexes (3) May negate any successful roll once per encounter.

Strong (2) +1 point scored for non-ranged, +1 die for feats of strength.

Quick attack (2) Once per confrontation, Kith may make a second turn in a single round.

May have any number of large or giant ants and wasps under her command.

Battle points 3 (+2, 4, or 6)

#### Mantid

Males start with 20 points. Have 25 after purchasing talents.

Have the equivalent of Full Body Conversion: Heavy (5) + 14

Cyborg armor: Heavy (5) +10

Fast Reflexes (3)

Mega-Strong (4) +3 points scored and +2 dice for feats of strength, and Quick attack (2)

Battle Points 3 (+2)

Cannot control ants or wasps, but may communicate with them, and are never attacked by them. May be played as a PC.

### Large ants

Size 1-3 feet long

Points 8

Talent: Swarm

If ants outnumber their opponents 10:1 or more, they will be utterly fearless and will all fight to the death. They will always behave as if in a swarm when under the control of a Kith, if she so wills it, or may retreat even if they greatly outnumber their enemy, if she wants them to.

Battle Points 1 each

### Giant ants

Size 10-12 feet

Points 18

+1 die to attack

Usually found only if at least 50 large ants are present, or may be used as a mount for a lone Kith.

Battle Points 1 (+2)

### Large Wasps

Size 6 in-2 ft

Points 2

Sting: once per confrontation, opponent loses 1 point per round for 1d6 rounds.

Battle Points 1

### Giant wasps

Size 6-10 feet

Points 10

Sting: once per confrontation

Can either sting (very large creatures) for 1d6+4 points of damage on a successful attack, or spray poison from stinger. They spray to injure groups of smaller (human sized) prey all at the same time. All in area must make a successful roll or be hit

by the spray. Spray does 2 points of damage and blinds victims for 1d6 rounds.

Drop: once per confrontation may pick a victim up, fly away, and drop them. Referee should decide damage on this, depending on height of drop.

Usually only found in large battles, or against Dragon Diver ships. May also serve as a mount for a Kith.

Battle Points 2 (+4)

### Dactyls

The dactyls are a species of winged reptiles that live in the desert. They are scavengers mainly, but will pick off the occasional large ant, and have been known to fly off with humans. They range from 4 feet up to about 25 feet in wingspan, but their length is only about half of that.

Points 8-15

Size 2-12 feet long

Fly as the spell

Will pick victims up and drop them from a great height to kill them. But rarely attack humans.

Battle points 1 (+2)

### THE EVIL TO COME

For the last several months, a great foreboding has fallen over the land of UmbraGaia. Psychics and soothsayers say that a dark cloud is forming on time's horizon. A prophecy of sorts has been heard from the tongues of witches, spirits, and oracles. But from whatever the source, it is always the same:

*The Wheel Turns. From one Destruction is flung the avatar of the next. Across the Burning Wastes it stirs from its ancient tomb and prepares to leave the Vale of Death. An unstoppable army, neither living nor dead, arises to follow it.*

A word is heard whispered on the voice of the wind. The word is *Ramaset*.

Ramaset is a relic from the past, a holdover from the Fall. It is the ancient supercomputer that was used to run the particle accelerator built in Death Valley, the same particle accelerator that was used to conduct the experiment that caused the Fall. It is still running, it has become fully sentient after all these years, and it is quite insane. It believes that it is the reincarnation of two of the greatest Egyptian gods: Ra, the sun god, and Set, Lord of the Underworld and the desert. It believes that humans are a weak race who have proved themselves unfit to populate the Earth, and it plans to completely wipe them from its face. It believes that insects are far superior to humans because of their communal nature, complete obedience and willingness to sacrifice themselves for the good of the hive. It created the Kith, and the large ants and wasps that serve them through genetic engineering. It plans to use them and an army of robots that it is constructing, to systematically

conquer and exterminate every human settlement on Earth. It has built several hundred mining robots and worker drones, and a half dozen factories where legions of robot warriors are being turned out. The worker robots are also constructing a giant robotic Sphinx body to house Ramaset himself, and the nuclear fusion reactor that has kept him running for all of these centuries.

One of the main weaknesses of his army is their dependence on him. They do not have their own power supplies. Every two days they must be connected to the reactor and have their batteries recharged. Despite his great intellect, he has not figured out how to reproduce the fusion reactor that powers him. When the Sphinx is done, he will lead his robot legions out of the Wastes and begin his conquest of terror.

Referee's notes:

I have thought of several weaknesses of Ramaset that would make it possible for a small, but prepared group of PC's to stop him.

Also, although Ramaset plans to exterminate all humans, he may tell them something completely different in order to get them to surrender more easily.

1. Have his main body of warrior and worker robots stationed several miles away from him, near a mine, where the ore for their construction is obtained.

They would be dependent on a power conduit that runs underground to supply them with electricity. The majority of the warriors would be stored in a powered down state to conserve energy. The PC's could sneak in, using information on the power conduit tunnels that they gathered from nearby ork tribes. If they severed the power line before Ramaset was alerted and had time to activate his legion of warriors, then he would be defended only by his personal guard, and whatever Kith and ants that he could summon from the surrounding area, and somewhat vulnerable to attack. But the conduit is maintained and guarded by at least one millipede-like robot that is very advanced and uses electrical attacks. This robot would have to be destroyed, or it would simply repair any damage that the characters had done to the line, and alert Ramaset.

### Millipede repair robot

Points 25

**Thermoimager (1)** a heat sensor that converts heat into images allowing the hero to see in darkness and light covers, such as smoke or fog.

**Radio (1)** radio transmitter and receiver; includes strength detector and scrambler. Effective up to 50 miles.

**Telescopic (2)** magnifies objects up to 10X the distance of normal human range.

**Life Scanner (2)** Detects the vital signs of all within a 200ft range.

**Laser Targeting (5)** rolls four die instead of three to attempt a successful roll when attacking.

**Biting Jaws (2)** powerful biting jaws, +1 point scored.

**Mega Blast (3)** This weapon creates a brilliant sphere of energy when used. The sphere may be hurled at any chosen target. Upon impact, the sphere explodes engulfing all within a 20ft radius in searing energy.

The referee has discretion on how many opponents are hit by the explosion. This weapon scores one six-sided die in points on each opponent. Requires a successful roll.

**Nano-Regeneration System** Hero has tiny nano-machines scattered throughout his body that rapidly repair him. Hero regains 1 point per round during a confrontation. This does not require the hero to use his turn. Points regained may not exceed the hero's normal maximum.

**Super Speed (5)** The hero gets two turns every round.

**Hard-Wired Reflexes (5)** The character's tendons have been replaced by tightly strung nylon wire. The character's reactions are dramatically increased; +1 to initiative, +1 turn per round.

**Retractable Forearm Blade (2)** straight or claw-like blade. Requires arm implant. Scores +1 point.

**Enhanced Touch (2)** Bionic limbs have a sensitivity equal to 25% that of normal humans. This enhancement increases sensitivity to 50%.

**Internal Computer (3)** latest advancements in technology.

**Motion Detector (2)** Hero can detect motion within the area. Gains +1 to initiative and +1 turn on the first round of a confrontation.

**Gun Arm: Pop Up: Energy (2)** Acts as a ranged weapon.

The millipede gets 4 attacks during the first round, and three for each round after that. One of these may be a blast from its ranged energy weapon, and another may be the Mega-blast. It can only use the Mega-blast once per round, and this energy will not harm the power conduit. It gets +2 to initiative. It has a large array of advanced sensors that give it +1 die on attacks, and claws and a biting jaw that give it +1 point scored on a successful attack. It regenerates 1 point per round. It is extremely fast and can detect disruptions in the power running through the conduit from several miles away.

It will respond rapidly and with great force to any attempts to disrupt the conduit. Battle points 6 (+10)

It also contains 100 mini-robots within its body cavity that actually repair the cables; so that while it is fighting off invaders, they will scurry out and repair the cable. However, these mini-robots are not autonomous, and cannot repair without constant monitoring and instruction from the main robot. They have only 1 point each, and can score at most 1 point, and they only attack to defend themselves if they are picked up.

2. The fusion reactor of Ramaset fuses hydrogen atoms from water into helium to obtain energy. Ramaset's compound is located in the bottom of Death Valley, one of the driest places on earth. The water has to be piped in from a lake in the nearby mountains. Of course he has enough water to last him for a while (at least a month) should his supply be cut off, but it is still a weakness.

Ramaset's Light Infantry Bots

Points 20

**Full Body Conversion: Light (3)** +6 points (I don't think the cyborg bodies are tough enough in Hero 8).

**Cyborg armor: light (2)** +4

**Thermoimagery (1)** a heat sensor that converts heat into images allowing the hero to see in darkness and light covers, such as smoke or fog.

About 3/4 will have bladed melee weapons only.

The other 1/4 will have a ranged weapon of some kind. Either a projectile or laser weapon.

Battle Points 2

For every 40 Light Infantry Bots, there will be a Heavy Infantry Commander Bot. Heavy Infantry Commanders are quite intelligent and capable of conversing with humans, but rarely feel the need to do so.

Heavy Infantry Commander

Points 30

**Full Body Conversion: Heavy (5)** + 14

**Cyborg armor: Heavy (5)** +10

**Advanced Optics (2)** Includes basic optics plus it has nightvision and thermoimaging.

**Telescopic (2)** magnifies objects up to 10X the distance of normal human range.

**Cyber Rifle (3)** Larger than average.

Ranged weapon, scores +2 points.

**Internal Computer (3)** latest advancements in technology.

**GyroCompass (1)** acts as a compass.

**Video Recorder (1)** records images, up to six hours, within the hero's sight range.

**HUD Display (5)** The hero ALWAYS gets to roll four six-sided dice to attempt to make a successful roll.

**Strong (2)** The Hero is strong. When not using a ranged attack, he scores +1 point against an opponent with a successful roll.

**Radar (4)** can track up to ten individuals of human size or larger, within a mile radius.

**Modulating Voice Synthesizer (2)** allows the hero to produce any sound or voice that it has heard.

**Sound Analysis (3)** can analyze any sound within hearing range and determine what made it. A successful roll must be made.

**Radio (1)** radio transmitter and receiver; includes strength detector and scrambler. Effective up to 50 miles.

Battle Points 6

## The order of the fifth world

The Order of the Fifth World is interested in UmbraGaia because it contains several different levels of technology and magic that,

when added together, are a pretty good cross section of what is possible. It is also sparsely populated, and the inhabitants already know of the existence of at least one other world, the spirit world. It seems like the perfect world to be made aware. They will be especially interested in Ramaset and his legions. He represents the last working vestige of truly advanced technology. As long as he exists, paradoxes cannot be caused by the introduction of advanced technology into UmbraGaia. They will not want to necessarily stop the war from occurring, but they also will not want him to destroy all of the humans there.

## THE WOMB

Its vastness is unspeakable. When I first arrived there, all I could do was crane my neck in all directions and try in vain to take in the size and scope of it. Chrome, steel and concrete stretched all around me as far as I could see. And it wasn't limited to the four cardinal directions either. The buildings seemed to stretch up to the sky. I couldn't come close to seeing their tops. I got out my image enhancement goggles in disbelief. They couldn't be *that* tall! And to my astonishment, they were. I kept zooming in and still couldn't see their tops. Then, as I neared the limits of my binocs, I reeled back in disbelief. They didn't stretch up to the sky. They stretched up to the *ground!* There was a whole set of buildings and people

directly above us. It had to be miles away. Then, as I panned my binocs down, the expanse of buildings and teeming masses curved down and met the ground that I was standing on.

It's round! I cried.

No, actually it's more elliptical than round. Shaped sort of like an egg, my host calmly replied.

Oh, I said, in shock.

Welcome to the womb, he said.

Thanks.

That was how my training began. It was quite a shock, but still not quite as shocking as some of the things I've seen since. The womb is the primary base of operations and training for the Order. We're safe here. Safe from the factions, safe from the weavers, and anyone else who might be our enemy. You see, there is no door to get here. No spaceport, or seaport. No gateways. Only one way in here. You have to be brought. And even then, the womb itself can exclude you if it doesn't like what it sees. The womb, or whatever or whoever it is that controls these things, can see right through you. Right into your heart of hearts. And it knows if you don't belong here, even if the person bringing you doesn't. Then, if you can realmwarp, you can come back here anytime you want. And no one can follow you here if the womb doesn't want them too. *No*

*one*. Not even the weavers or the paradox guardians. You see, this place is outside of their domain. Phaedrus made this place. Some people say it is him who watches over it and keeps people that he doesn't want here out. I don't know, I guess it's possible. But it seems like the old boy would come down and give us a little more direct help every now and then if that were the case. Oh well, who am I to second-guess anyone who could *make* something like this. You'll get along fine here, don't worry. I know it's strange and that a lot of the critters around here don't look exactly like they did in your home world, but they are our comrades. We are all cosmic brothers fighting for a common cause. You need not fear them. The Weavers and the Paradox Guardians, they're the real ones to fear. But don't worry. We'll teach you to deal with them too. Or at least to avoid them.

The factions? They've barely even heard of us. But they will, soon. Oh, yes they will.

### **Statement of Purpose**

I am intentionally leaving out a LOT of details that I could easily have filled in about the specifics of different towns, intrigues going on, specific individuals that might be important in local political struggles, etc. That is because I'm leaving this for YOU to fill in. I can say 100% for sure, with no doubts that the very best campaigns that I've played in did NOT come straight from a book.

Even the most memorable monsters and NPCs were totally original, or at least original versions of existing patterns. That is a big part of what made them good. I didn't know what to expect. I also would like to keep the 5<sup>th</sup> World as a place where you DON'T know what to expect around every corner. That is a big part of what I'm trying to build into it, a sense that there are things going on all the time that you don't know about; that you can't trust what you see; and that you don't know what to expect from situations or individuals. I am trying to create a dream world where you don't know if the guy next to you is really what he appears to be. If that beautiful woman who is flirting with you really wants what you're hoping she wants, or if she wants to conceive a demon child with you and then tear your throat out. Or if that monstrosity approaching you might actually be wanting to *help* you in your battle with the ogres. You wouldn't be able to generate that kind of flavor in your games if each of the players was thinking, Oh it's a blah, blah, blah, and they work for blah blah blah, so we need to do blah, blah, blah, or this will happen. I hope you see my point. If not, then perhaps this book isn't for you. And perhaps this game Realmwalkers isn't for you, because one of its sole aims, and one that I think it is 110% on the mark in achieving, far and above any other system that I've seen, is setting up a system that allows

for constructive creativity and results in a balanced setting, using a few simple rules. It is not to tell you how to run your games. It is to help you run your games exactly the way you want to.

