

DARWIN'S WORLD:

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

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# THE FERTILE CRESCENT



## INTRODUCTION

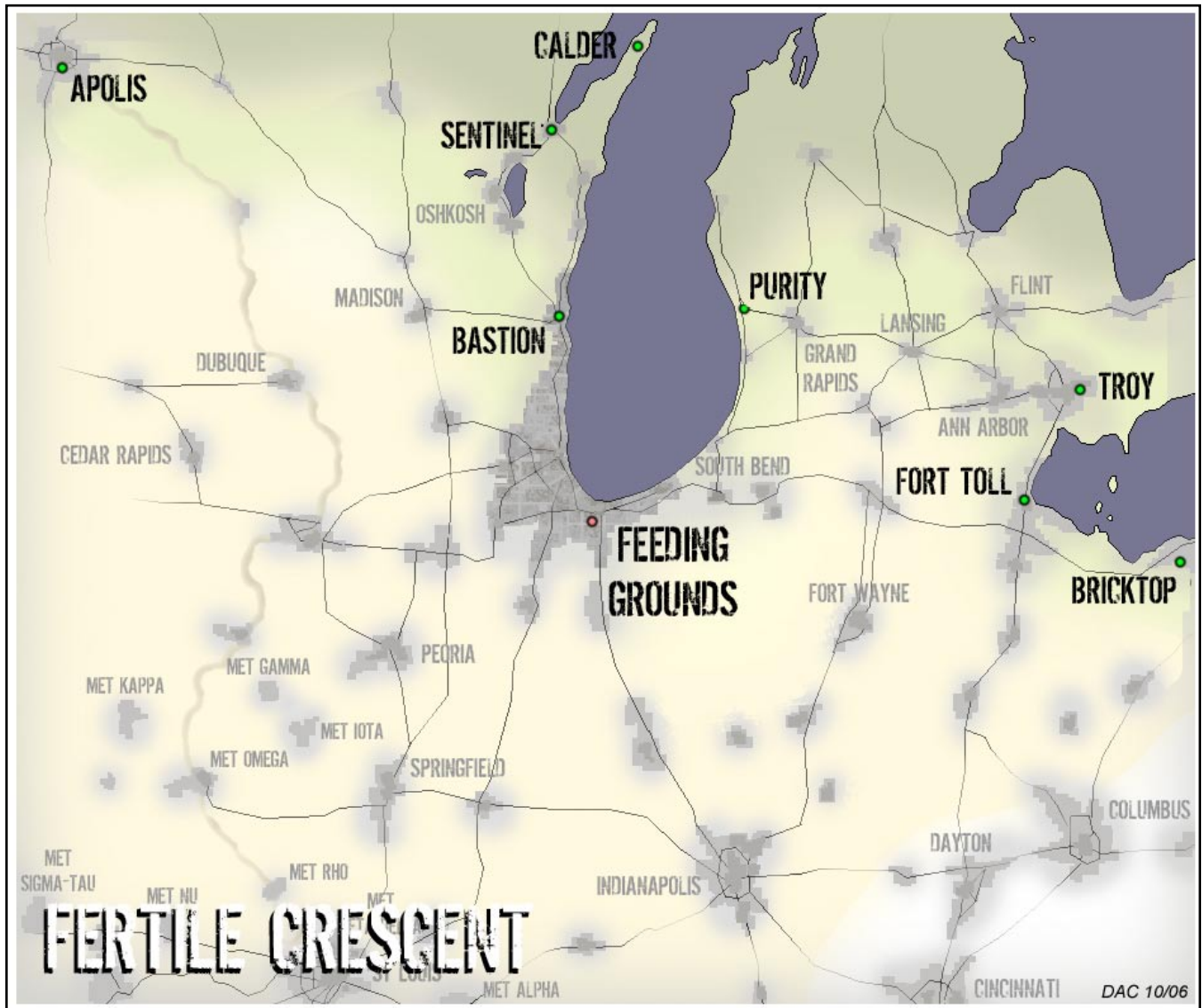
Welcome to The Fertile Crescent, my own personal corner of Dominic Covey's magnificent Twisted Earth setting for *Darwin's World*. Since this book has been (more or less) in the works for a few years, I thought a little history might be in order as we prepare to explore a new area of the world after the Fall.

In 2002 I discovered RPGNow. Here the word "discover" is used in the same way in which Columbus "discovered" America. RPGNow was already around, making products and selling PDFs. I just had no idea it was there. I was on my way to India. Actually, I was looking for a good post-apocalyptic game for d20, something to allow me to run the Gamma World campaign of my dreams. I came across

RPGNow and a book called *Darwin's World*. My first PDF seriously spoiled me and my campaign was up and running.

The mainline campaign setting was a little grimmer than what I had in mind, so I decided to get all "do it yourself" and homebrew. I picked the area around the Great Lakes, which hadn't really been covered by any books to date as the location for my campaign. I decided to leave the lakes more or less intact, making the campaign area a relatively fertile region, a place where civilization might be reborn. Once I decided to get all historical and call the region the Fertile Crescent, after Mesopotamia, I knew I had a place where heroes could make a difference. Maybe even rebuild.

Around this time, I started talking to Dominic and Chris at RPGObjects about my campaign and bugging them to release it. They liked the idea and although a lot of ideas went back and forth, I ended up doing other things for them, including providing some editorial help on *Terrors of the*



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*Twisted Earth* and *Metal Gods*. Eventually I would make a book with RPGObjects, then another, then dozens more, starting with *Blood and Space*. The Fertile Crescent was always just on the horizon but it never seemed to float up to the top of the list. In short we got busy.

When it came time for *Darwin's World 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, I provided some mechanical help and figured that was that. When I saw the map for the game though, Dominic had marked the Fertile Crescent to Great Lakes region. That was my first signal that a gazetteer of the area would eventually need to be done. Eventually, Chris and I just decided to do it and the area was fleshed out. Since we needed an adventure for GenCon, I decided to use that adventure (*Feeding Grounds*) as an introduction to the setting. The ball was rolling.

So here we are, nearly four years later and the sun is finally rising on the Fertile Crescent. Will it be an anecdote lost to history, uncovered by future explorers? Or will it be a new beginning. That's up to you. Beyond the occasional adventure, my part is mostly done. The Fertile Crescent is yours now and I hope it brings you as much gaming fun as it did me.



## ABOUT THE REGION

### CLIMATE

Although the Fertile Crescent was spared less direct nuclear strikes, the region is still heavily irradiated and affected by the overall warmer, drier climate of the Twisted Earth. The closest analog in modern Earth to the climate of the Fertile Crescent is that of the modern African steppe with long cycles of drought followed by short intense rains. A short season of powerful rains swept through the region fed by the massive lakes. This creates many large waterholes throughout the region as well as feeding the numerous small lakes scattered through the area. As the dry season wears on, these watering holes gradually disappear leading the many grunts and wild fraxx in the area to gather in great numbers around the lakes, allowing hunters and top predators to pick off the slow or the inattentive. The top predators in the region are the Howlcats, Buzzbees and Lake Dragons.

### RAD BLIZZARDS

Despite the overall warming of the climate, winter does come to the Fertile Crescent and when it does, it hits *hard*. Just as rainstorms sweep off the mighty lakes during the warmer months, during winter massive storms bringing blinding snow pound the region. Worse these choking blankets of white and cold bear extremely high rad content, making winter a time of sickness and death, with a blanket of radiation visited on the region.

When accompanied by winds (when the snow is falling or blowing) a Rad Blizzard bears a radiation intensity of

*moderate to high* (depending on the strength and severity of the snowfall). Walking through a snowfall has a radiation intensity of *light to moderate* (one category lower than the storm that deposited it).



## NOTABLE FEATURES

### CROSSLAKE FERRY

This ferry ran between Bastion and Purity before the Fall and the governments of the two cities have maintained the ancient craft as a quick means of travel between the two communities. A single passenger with one pack can ride the ferry for as little as 25 cp. Traders can transport up to 1,000 lbs of cargo for 250 cp. The ferry can cross Lake Michigan in under 3 hours, avoiding the quite dangerous trek south through Chicago. The ferry is a massive boat, capable of carrying 250 passengers and 44 tons of cargo.

### OLD 31

This road serves as Purity's link to the Old 94 and is exclusively maintained by the CrystalTime.

### OLD 41

The ancient highway heads north from Bastion, connecting it to the small villages of the Black Wolf tribe, continuing further north to the town of Sentinel.

### OLD 94

This ancient road has been actively maintained by the people of the Fertile Crescent (most notably the governments of Bastion and Purity) since the time of the Fall and serves as the main land trade artery in the region. It connects Bastion to the Feeding Grounds in the south and it connects Bastion to Apolis in the West. The Old 94 also curves around the southern edge of Lake Michigan and continues to Troy.



## PLACES

### APOLIS

*Pre-war name: Minneapolis*

**Estimated Population:** 1,500

Nyr Men, 500 human craftsmen and tradesmen

**Ruling Faction:** Nyr Men

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist

**Skinball team:** Apolis Silverbacks

For much of the history of the Fertile Crescent, the Nyr Men lived as nomadic tribals, hunting, gathering and raiding the occasional town for supplies. All of that changed when they encountered the Oracle. By all accounts a human girl,

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her ability to predict the future awed the Nyr Men, who follow her every directive, serving her willingly. At her direction not only have these brutes made peace with the surrounding villages, they have taken the abandoned dome of Apolis, cleared out the creatures that used to inhabit the city and made it their own.

Recently artifacts and corium have been offered in trade for local craftsmen to come and improve the technology of the city and a growing number have accepted these calls. The largest ongoing project being supervised by these craftsmen (with the Nyr Men providing the labor) is the repair of the Old 94. This main artery of the Fertile Crescent region will bring in a flood of trade from Bastion and Purity and make Apolis a major center for exploring areas further west.

Another recent step taken by the Nyr Men at the behest of their mysterious Oracle is the formation of a Skin Ball team: the Apolis Silverbacks.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: BOMBING RUN

As one of the northernmost cities in the region, Apolis sees more than its share of conflict with the buzzbees when they emerge from their winter hibernation. This summer has been especially bad, with the buzzers pulling down parts of the dome to drop on farmers in order to scare them away from their fields, so the buzzers can go in and steal the ripening crops. The city has put out a bounty on buzzers, offering 50 cp for each carcass delivered as well as 500 cp for proof that a nest has been destroyed.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: KING'S HIGHWAY

Increased traffic along the northern stretch of the Old 94 also means increased raider activity. The Highwaymen are recruiting, looking to increase their presence on this newly reopened section of the Old 94. Do you have what it takes to be one of the few? The Proud? The Highwaymen?

## BASTION

*Pre-war name: Milwaukee*

**Estimated Population:** 3,000 (2,000 transients during the best of times, swelling to an estimated 10,000 transients during times of severe drought)

**Ruling Faction:** Guardsmen

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor

**Skinball team:** Bastion Gronts

The guiding light of the western side of the Great Lakes, this city, along with Purity to east brought the Fertile Crescent through the dark times in much better shape than most regions of the Twisted Earth. The fact that the two cities have ceased to cooperate and seem to preparing to turn against one another is like a dark cloud on the horizon for the entire region.

The modern history of Bastion begins when the city was still called Milwaukee, in the days immediately after the Fall. A young Wisconsin National Guardsman, Pfc. William Whittaker, was sent to take temporary military command of

police and emergency services in Milwaukee until such time as reinforcements could be sent. They never came. In the orgy of destruction that was the Fall, the Midwest seemed spared almost by the hand of God. No nuclear weapons struck the shores of the Great Lakes or its mighty cities and the leaders themselves seemed to forget about these cities as they concentrated on the battles taking place at the edges of the country over the east and west coasts. The android round-ups and executions that were a fact of life in so many other areas of the country simply did not happen in the Midwest. This isn't to say that there were no threats to the region as the country fell apart around it. Those threats came from without and within: the chaos of war, the Pariahs and the Ghouls being those best remembered from the city's earliest days.

## EARLY HISTORY: WHITTAKER TAKES COMMAND

No one knows why the Midwest was spared so many of the ravages suffered by the rest of the country. The missiles did not target the great cities. The android commanders and combat walkers all mysteriously shut down in the early days of the conflict. Rather than commanding the armies of man to their destruction with "brilliant" battle strategies that used human beings as cannon fodder or becoming the threat themselves (more details on these events can be found in the *Metal Gods* sourcebooks) the robots of the Midwest went dormant early during the Fall and remained that way for the length of the conflict. The humans had to fend for themselves.

When Whittaker arrived to take command of Milwaukee, he found the city in chaos. Local authorities were ill-equipped to manage fire and other emergency services during the best of times, used to leaving such things to their android city managers. During a crisis, they were worse than useless. As fires raged uncontrolled through the city, (most the result of civilian rioting) the Mayor would stand before the city manager AI pleading like a child for it to do something. Whittaker advocated forgetting the robots, even stripping them of their pumps to allow humans to fight the fires. Such lunacy was not going to be tolerated by the inebriated Mayor however. Stripping the robots was madness! Any minute they would reboot and begin to help the city recover from the devastation. Whittaker was to be placed under arrest.

Stories vary about who it was that actually killed the Mayor in those dark, early days. Many say it was Whittaker himself while other writers, who see Whittaker as a more benevolent figure, place the blame at the feet of his second in command, Officer Growell of the local police (a somewhat menacing, Iago-like conspirator in the stories that have come down from those days). In reality who killed the Mayor is moot. He was killed and Whittaker took command. The dormant robots were stripped for parts, water pumps, and energy cells, dismantled to create cover or simply pushed into place to hide behind. The decision had been made that humans were *not* weak and did not need the robots to defend them.



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Over the course of several bloody weeks rioting was put down by any means necessary. The jails and asylums were emptied. Everyone, regardless of their past histories would be given an equal chance to help put down the chaos gripping the city. Anyone who was found to be a destabilizing influence was summarily sentenced to death and hung (bullets being far too valuable to waste on an execution). Oddly, the criminals and the insane were some of the most effective men in Whittaker's early regime. It seemed these individuals were not cut out to fit in with the placid, drug-induced stupor preferred by the governments of the day. They adapted quickly to the vitality and decisiveness demanded by these new times much more quickly than many of the "stable" members of society who cracked under the strain.

Soon it seemed the entire city had been divided into two camps: those who followed Whittaker and those who followed the Pariahs. After a few tense days of calm following the end of the last riot, with the last rape gang swinging from the light poles on East Clybourn Street that a confrontation was sparked when the leader of the Pariahs demanded Whittaker cede control of the government to God (meaning the Pariahs). The federal government, represented by Whittaker, had to be punished for bringing about the apocalypse. Whittaker responded with his usual reserve. His soldiers followed him as they always had, without question. They had decided long ago to follow him to their deaths and fulfill his promise of no surrender and no defeat. He would rule until relieved by a lawful representative of the government of the United States and that was all there was to it.

## THE PARIAS

The Pariahs had begun as a televangelist network in the days before the Fall. Society had become debased and debauched, they warned and soon God would strike it down as he had Sodom and Gomorrah. Once laughing stocks, the ranks of this group swelled in the time of the Fall. They were proven right, it seemed. God was back and he was angry. The Pariahs took it upon themselves to punish the wicked, who consisted of every man, woman and child. Sinners were stoned to death. The faithful were to flog themselves in eternal penitence and all had to live by the Word of God, according to the old laws of sacrifice and fidelity.

Having succeeded in putting an end to the initial chaos and panic that gripped the city when he arrived, Whittaker, along with his federalized police, fire and highway patrol units was not about to turn control of the city over to religious fanatics. The fight was quick but brutal, with the Pariahs possessing an inhuman glee about dying in support of their cause, believing it guaranteed them entrance to Paradise and escape from the hell of the world. Whittaker's soldiers, for their part, took no joy in their duty as they drove the Pariahs out, hanging the thousands who preferred death to exile.

## WARRIORS

Despite all their success, unifying the people of Milwaukee into a bastion of order against the tide of chaos sweeping all around them and driving out the religious fanatics of the Pariahs, it soon seemed that Milwaukee was to be dragged under like the rest of the world. The soldiers on top of the newly-erected walls built to defend the city watched tensely as enormous troop formations of Chinese and Russian soldiers headed into the area. This would be the battle they could not win. Some swore, some gritted their teeth in quiet desperation still others openly wept. They had fought so hard, come so far and now it was to be all for naught. Whittaker's army that had seemed so invincible against the rioting mobs and the Pariahs looked like the ragtag force that it was compared to this troop formation, tens of thousands strong. They wore combat armor and carried automatic rifles, while Whittaker's men carried axes, crowbars, pistols, even the occasional hunting rifle. But as these hardened soldiers watched, each knew in his heart that they were no match for this massive wave of much-better armed soldiers. Still, they were determined to fight to the bitter end.

Just when it seemed that all was lost, the massive troop formation moved south, sparing Milwaukee as it headed toward a much larger objective, Chicago. Again the reasons that the invading Chinese and Russian forces had not used tactics they used in other areas (breaching the dome using crude but effective orbital weapons platforms) and the reason that the cyborg run defenders did not employ nuclear weapons to vaporize the massive troop formations as they had done in the cities of the east and west coast is unknown. What is known is the aftermath, an event that spelled doom for the armies seeking to capture Chicago and almost spelled the end for the brave defenders of Milwaukee: Ghouls.

## THE GHOULS

Whittaker and his guardians watched in tense silence as the attackers penetrated the dome using heavy industrial cutters and went inside. Since the dome had not been directly attacked until that point the populace within was like a ripe fruit ready to be plucked. Advance scouts who had moved south far enough to see what was happening described the atrocities of the attackers as they raped, burned and pillaged the residents of the dome city, helpless without their robot defenders. And then something happened. The scouts reported that the attacking armies had gone from predator to prey. Something was not only attacking them, it was *eating them*.

For days the orgy of cannibalism continued as the ghouls preyed on anyone unable or unwilling to run. Unfortunately for the residents of Chicago this was more apt to be them than their Chinese and Russian attackers. The scouts reported grimly that a large component of the Chinese forces had broken north, heading up Highway 94 with a huge mob of ghouls in pursuit. Soon it became evident, like a tidal wave approaching from the sea, that Milwaukee, with the walls of burnt out cars and stripped robot husks was going to either be the shore which either broke that wave or was swallowed

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by it.

Scouts were ordered to make contact with the Chinese forces and offer them a deal: sanctuary within the walls of Bastion in return for a joint defense against the ghouls. There was considerable debate about the wisdom of this decision, but Whittaker knew that the city's defenders, most already fighting exhaustion, starvation as well as serious mental ailments related to post-traumatic stress, stood absolutely no chance against the combined numbers of the Chinese forces and the ghouls. At any rate he had brought them this far and the city's beleaguered defenders were prepared to follow him to the end.

## THE SIEGE

And so the gates were left open as the Chinese retreat broke into a full gallop, attempting to gain as much distance as possible from their pursuers. Soldiers who fell behind were left behind and when it was noticed that the ghouls would stop to mindlessly feed on those who fell behind a number of rear-guard soldiers suffered leg wounds inflicted by their fellow soldiers. Still the lead was narrow and by the time all the remaining Chinese soldiers were inside the crude gate that protected the city the ghouls, frustrated and seemingly mad with hunger began to clamber over the walls behind them.

Accounts of this battle, known to history as the Siege of Milwaukee are scarce. Not many of the city's residents survived and most of those who did spent their remaining days attempting to forget the battle rather than recount it. It was not a battle of glory or victory or strategy but one of simple survival. In the early days fighting the rape gangs,

the raiders and the insane Whittaker and his men had constructed several concentric rings of defense, walls that would allow them to retreat toward the city center when they were outmanned or outgunned, to force the enemy through narrow choke points where ambushes could be arranged or simply to sleep in peace while the chaos raged outside the areas they controlled.

During the siege the defenders lost one wall after another, retreating ever further into the interior of the city. Eventually the defenders stood atop city hall, their last wall breached, firing down on the ghouls that surrounded the building, climbing up its walls, attempting no maneuver or strategy, simply filled with a hunger that could not be slaked, a desire to drag a single defender down to the street to be consumed.

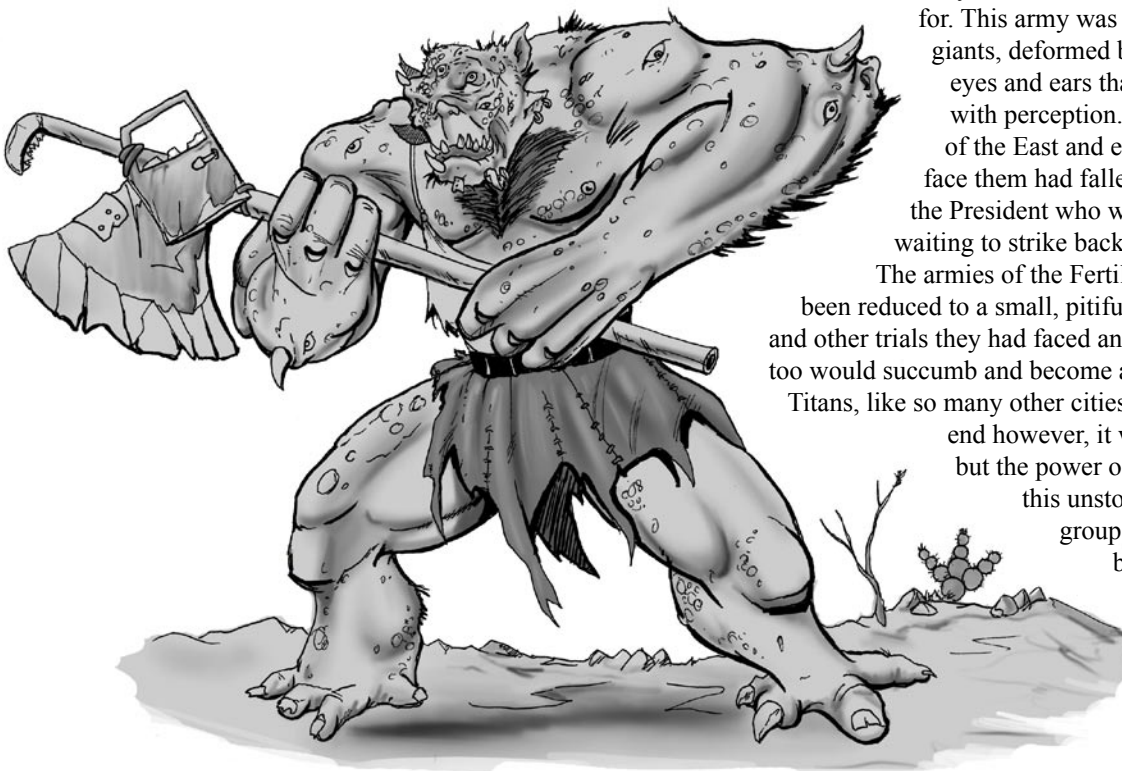
In the end it was only this mindless hunger that allowed the city's defenders to prevail as brave men whose names have been lost to history willingly jumped into the mass of ghouls, waiting until the teeth were in their flesh before exploding grenades they carried, or simply allowing their comrades above to kill a dozen ghouls for every one martyr who jumped to the street below. Still, it was a near thing and in the words of one veteran "if the dynamite had run out God help us all".

Finally the ghouls had had enough and those who did not die slipped away. Many moved into the sewers or out into the surrounding countryside where they remain a persistent problem to this day.

## RISE OF THE MONGOLIANT HORDE

As the city recovered from the siege, it seemed for a time as if all their successes would lead to nothing. For from the east came an army, just not the Army of the Potomac led by the President they had been hoping for. This army was composed of twisted giants, deformed bodies covered with eyes and ears that blinked and twitched with perception. They were the Titans of the East and everyone that tried to face them had fallen (though of course not the President who was lying in wait and waiting to strike back).

The armies of the Fertile Crescent region had been reduced to a small, pitiful band by the siege and other trials they had faced and it seemed now they too would succumb and become a client state of the Titans, like so many other cities further east. In the end however, it was not military might but the power of peace that resisted this unstoppable force. A new group entered the area, led by a "fallen god" that preached peace.



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This “movement” was able to resist the Titans where others had failed.

And though their prophet would return to heaven as mysteriously as he arrived, the movement would stay in the area, tending the sick and protecting the weak and the Titans’ power was broken forever.

## THE LONG QUIET

The fact that the succeeding decades could be referred to as “quiet” can only be understood in relation to what had come before. Raider gangs were a persistent problem as were the influx of refugees who had heard about a “bastion” against the chaos and savagery the broken and twisted land had regressed to.

Politics within the city were as fluid as they were savage, with many of the region’s most powerful groups calling Bastion home: the Guardsmen, the Highwaymen, the Black Hand, the Coiled Dragon and the Red Ladies all call the city home. At time the competition between these groups throws the city into turmoil despite the power and wealth that they contribute to the city.

To the south Chicago was still overrun with ghouls, whose numbers only seemed to grow rather than dwindle as time went on. The scouts watched the city for decades, expecting the ghouls’ food supply to dwindle and for them to turn on each other, reducing their numbers to the point that valuable technology could be looted from the city. But their numbers inexplicably continued to grow and the city was eventually permanently placed off-limits.

The environment too was an increasing problem during the city’s infancy. Although spared a direct nuclear strike which left it in much better condition than most areas of the Twisted Earth, the Midwest still suffered a “death by a thousand cuts” to its environment as winds deposited fallout on the land and the lakes with every storm. Soon the water was unsafe to drink and only used by the desperate. The city itself would have surely died had not contact been established with the CrystalTime across the lake, who seemed to control an almost limitless supply of fresh water that they traded with the city.

## CURRENT EVENTS

Fast friends for many years, considered the twin leaders of the Fertile Crescent, relations between the CrystalTime and Bastion have suffered in recent years. Bastion’s resident scientists, the Learned discovered a way to repair the largely intact water treatment plant in the city. This allowed them to run the plant in reverse of the way it was intended. Originally the plant was designed to filter impurities from the city’s waste to allow the water to be safely dumped into the lake. Now the radiation-poisoned water is let into the sewers from the lake and purified so it can be used for the city’s needs.

The CrystalTime argued that the plant should be administered by them and any excess water beyond the city’s needs be theirs to sell. They pointed out the many times they had provided the city with water when it could

not pay, sometimes for decades until the city would have a large crop or make a large find of technology that it could trade to the CrystalTime as a “partial payment”. The leaders of Bastion counter-offered to agree on an amount of corium or technology that the CrystalTime would find sufficient to clear up any “back debt” and run the plant themselves. The CrystalTime agreed to the payments but were outraged when they learned the city planned to make its payments by selling excess water to the surrounding communities for less than the CrystalTime charged, cutting the cartel out of more than half its business.

Since this falling out, which the residents of Purity see as a betrayal and the residents of Bastion see as simple survival, relations between the two cities have become almost non-existent. Where citizens once traveled freely across the bay to enjoy the idyllic surroundings of Purity now only “official” traffic of traders and diplomats (and very little of either) travel on the ferry across the lake between the two cities. Each side has severely restricted traffic of *any* kind from across the lake and some caravans of each city have been attacked for being on the “wrong side” of the lake. Cities across the Fertile Crescent are being pressured to pick sides and it seems conflict is inevitable.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

Bastion is home to many of the Fertile Crescent’s wonders. Some sights that should be on any visitor’s “must see” list are described below.

## THE TOWER OF LEARNING

The home of the Learned, one of the most influential factions of the region, the tower of learning is an impressive display of their knowledge, wealth and influence in the region. This mighty structure extends hundreds of feet taller than the largest building in the city, using architectural techniques beyond the grasp of the city’s craftsmen. It houses the most extensive library in the area, boasting written works hundreds of years old and countless thousands more archived in the massive computers that make up the upper floors, which are strictly for the Learned elite.

The tower boasts impressive defenses to protect the Learned and their great library from both attack and theft. The tower is surrounded by a high wall. Guards patrol inside the wall and intruders are detected as if by magic as soon as they scale the wall. Once inside, any intruder who manages to avoid detection finds that the doors to the tower are impossible to open. The only way in seems to be open windows high above the city. A few intrepid, would-be thieves have made the climb without detection only to be burned to a crisp by some unknown weapon.

Although the upper levels boast benefits only for the organization’s members, the lower levels are open to all during the day, for the Learned pride themselves on helping their fellow man. Inside the wall is a small park, maintained during the harshest drought by unknown means. Children are encouraged to come here and play, or attend the many classes offered by Learned instructors inside the lower levels



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of the tower. The teachings of the Learned contribute greatly to the overall literacy of the Fertile Crescent, as the Learned have established centers of learning, called universities in many other cities throughout the region.

## STATUE OF ALLEGIANCE

This statue of William Whittaker, the city's most famous resident shows him facing east, toward the capitol of the quasi-mythical United States. He holds his right hand over his heart, pledging allegiance to the nation he fought and died for and forever awaiting the return of his commander, the President. The statue stands behind the Signal Monitoring Station, as if Whittaker, even immortalized in stone, cannot be very far from the source of any signal that his revered leader might send.

## SIGNAL MONITORING STATION

The SMS is maintained jointly by the Guardsmen and the Highwaymen. This impressive radio receiving station, carefully maintained since the days after the Fall, waits for word from Whittaker's leader, the President of the United States. Unlike other military leaders in the days since the Fall, Whittaker held dear to the ideals of his nation to the end of his days and always maintained that the return of a stable government would find him eager to relinquish control of the city. The areas east of the Fertile Crescent, where the President was said to reside, were turned into a nuclear nightmare during the Fall.

Initially a flood of refugees came from the east but their numbers quickly diminished over time. Most of those who did make it as far as Bastion had to be killed. Either they bore radiation sickness or diseases so horrifying putting them out of their misery was a courtesy or they had been twisted beyond recognition into something less than human. Those who were deemed safe to enter the city told horror stories that seemed ripped from a madman's musings, leaving even less hope of a return to power by the government.

Over time the flow of refugees stopped altogether and soon even the radio signals on the military frequencies monitored by the station ceased. Now, inestimable years later, there is only static.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: SABOTAGE

An attempt to sabotage the city's water treatment plant has narrowly failed. The early evidence points to agents of the CrystalTime as the likely culprit. An investigation will reveal it to be the work of the Pariahs, trying to set the two great cities against one another. Can the PCs deliver the evidence to Bastion's ruling council in time?

## ADVENTURE HOOK: WATER WARS

A vital filtration unit has been found by a scav in the ruins of Troy. This would allow Bastion to activate a second water treatment plant, doubling the amount of excess water the city can produce. Knowing the agents of the CrystalTime would stop him and seize the item, he hid it and came to Bastion to

ask for guards to help him smuggle it back to the city. Can the PCs help the scav smuggle the artifact through the heart of CrystalTime territory and bring it safely to Bastion?

## ADVENTURE HOOK: FRIENDLY COMPETITION

The increased wealth flowing into the city has raised the competition between Bastion's many factions to a fever pitch. A bar fight between the Guardsmen and the Coiled Dragon results in the death of one of the Guardsmen. Later on, the killer, a young impetuous member of the Coiled Dragon is found not guilty due to a lack of evidence of malice (deaths during bar fights being a not uncommon occurrence in the region - the law requires proof of malice or intent to kill before the fight begins for it to be murder), the Guardsmen and Highwaymen vow revenge. When the killer, along with 6 members of his faction are found hanging in the gallows, the Coiled Dragon take to the streets and soon the city is in chaos as members of the three factions, *all* of whom are charged with keeping order in the city, engage in open warfare.

## BRICKTOP

*Pre-war name: Cleveland*

**Estimated Population:** 300

**Ruling Faction:** Hospitlars

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist

**Skinball team:** Bricktop Radwolves

*All the ghoulish chicks with the blood on their lips know, Bricktop rocks!*

*-Chant of the Bricktop Radwolves*

Bricktop is known for the squat, flat brick buildings the citizens live in. These bricks are made from the mud and radioactive silt of the might Clee Lake that the city sits on the shores of. Apparently Clee Lake was once smaller, as the ruins of the city Bricktop used to extend into the water for almost two miles. Bricktop has a large community of Mariners who provide fish from the lakes to the city. The citizens of the town make their living through hunting and also through "mining" the intact railroad tracks that litter the city. They trade these to the nearby town of Fort Toll either by road or over the water (for the heavier sections).

The citizens of Bricktop were simple hunter-gatherers, tribals like so many of the communities throughout the Fertile Crescent until the arrival a generation ago of the Hospitlars. It seemed Bricktop possessed an almost completely intact hospital that had been protected from looting by a powerful security barrier. After securing the hospital they offered the local tribesman healing in exchange for food, and the health of the locals improved so much that the tribe began to worship the "tower priests" and begged them to take control of the community.

Although they did not wish to lead the community, the Hospitlar priests feared the reaction of the locals if they refused. Not that they had anything to fear from them but



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they had no desire to use force to stay and administrate the city's hospital. Finally a compromise was reached and the Hospitlars signed a compact with the city. They would administrate until such time as the local elders felt they were ready to lead themselves. To hurry this process along, the Learned were offered space in the hospital, where they attempt to educate the tribals.

Recently the Hospitlars introduced the Bricktoppers to the sport of Skinball, hoping that traveling and interacting with the other cities in the region would speed their development. They have taken to the sport with great relish and it is impossible to travel through the city during the day without seeing a group of children playing the game in an empty field or the ruins of an abandoned parking lot.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

The recent discovery of a large deposit of Corium will put this sleepy village on the map, if the small town can defend it from more powerful cities that surround it. Purity, Fort Toll and Troy have all offered to help "administrate" the mine, a thinly veiled threat letting the residents know they can allow one of the larger cities to take most of the Corium peacefully, or have all of it taken by force. Only threats by the Learned and the Hospitlars to withhold their services from the threatening cities have stopped them from seizing the mine already. Laborers to work the mines and warriors to defend the corium are needed in large numbers.

## CALDER

*Pre-war name: None (Rock Island, Newport and Peninsula State Parks)*

**Estimated Population:** 500

**Ruling Faction:** Mariners

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist

**Skinball team:** Calder Fraxx

Calder is one of the only two ground settlements of the Mariners (the other being North Shore), used as a meeting place to share their catch with the merchant clans of the Fertile Crescent. Although both cities are run by the Mariner faction, they consider themselves independent and deal with different merchant cartels. Calder deals with the factions from the south, the Fertile Crescent proper while North Shore is the southern-most stop of caravans that serve the great Canadian wilds.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: THE BIG ONE

The largest Lake Dragon in recent memory has recently moved into the area. Even though the mariners make their living hunting and harpooning the huge beasts, this one has been the hunter, not the prey. Several boats have disappeared and the remaining mariners refuse to leave

the shore, bringing the economy of the small town to a halt. Worse, the creature has been moving closer and closer to shore in its drive to satisfy its insatiable hunger. Warriors with no fear (and some heavy firepower) are needed to bring the creature down and quickly.

## FEEDING GROUNDS

*Pre-war name: Chicago*

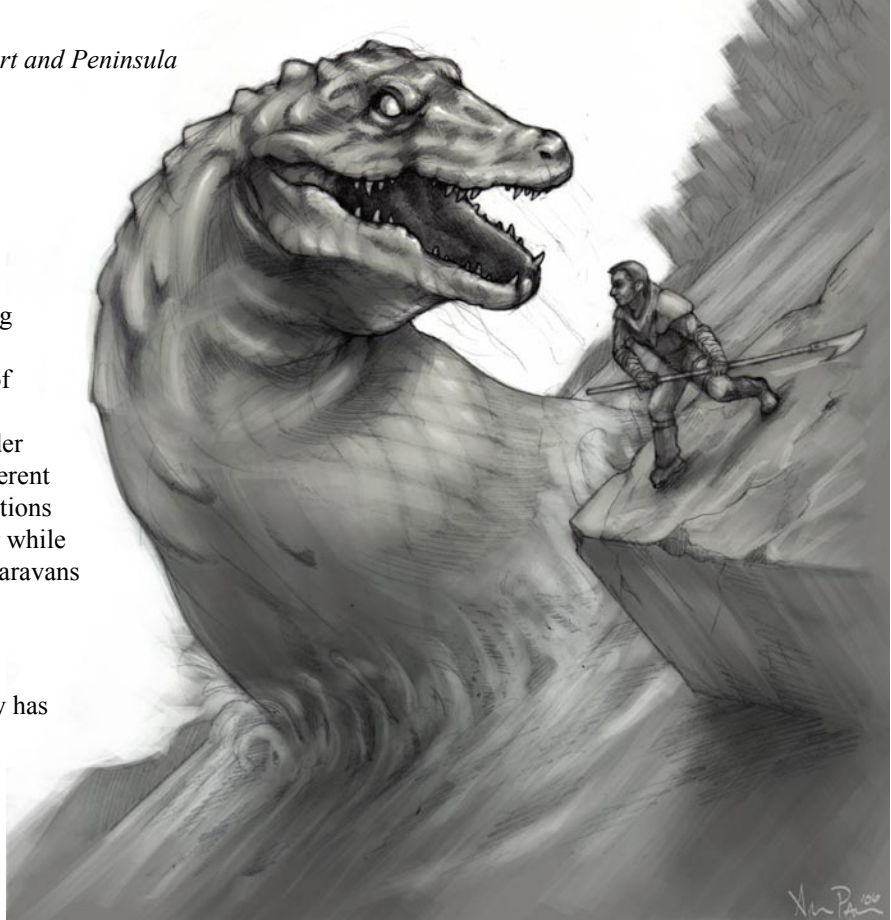
**Estimated Population:** From as low as 10,000 to as high as 100,000. Observers note that this city literally teems with ghouls. The question of how so many cannibals are feeding themselves and managing to maintain not only a stable, but a growing, population has not yet been answered.

**Ruling Faction:** Ghouls

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor

**Skinball team:** Dome Vultures

From the time of the Fall, the Feeding Grounds have been both a looming threat and a mystery to the people of the Fertile Crescent. Since the initial ghoul attack during the final war, the numbers of ghouls inhabiting the enormous metropolis to the south of Bastion have slowly grown in number. Scouts have attempted to slip into the city, determining how the ghouls are feeding themselves without resorting to cannibalizing their own but none have ever returned.



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Recently, the ghouls also seem to have been organizing, an event that sent a stir through the region and prompted Bastion to step up recruitment of soldiers and highwayman patrols have been ordered to venture further south down the Old 94. For their part, the ghouls have begun sending envoys to Bastion, claiming to have civilized. Bastion has been receptive to these claims and has even talked the other cities in the region into allowing the ghouls to join in the local Skinball tournament. Despite a general distaste of the creatures, everyone understands the stakes. The ghouls have never had an interest in the technology left behind by the ancients, making the Feeding Grounds a bonanza of technological wonders. On the other hand if provoked it is unlikely that any city in the region could resist an attack by the savage creatures.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: DANGEROUS GAME

As part of their effort to integrate themselves into the region and be seen as just another sentient race, the ghouls have begun to play Skinball against the other cities of the Crescent. They have restored the ancient stadium in the Feeding Grounds and have offered many times to host a game, which the other cities have understandably refused (especially since merchants attempting to pass through the city disappear on a regular basis). But the ghouls have guaranteed the safety of any visiting teams and Bastion has agreed to play the Vultures at home. But the city has another agenda: they are sending a group of spies in during the game to determine the source of the ghouls food supply. It is hoped that the majority of the city's residents will be watching the game and that the streets will be relatively deserted. After completing their mission the PCs should leave the city themselves by the quickest means possible. The PCs will be given a radio to call for help but are warned that no assistance can be given while they are inside the city. It must not be discovered that they abused the ghouls' offer of hospitality; if the PCs are attacked or captured they must appear as scavengers attempting to plunder the city's riches.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: BIG GAME

As an alternate to *Dangerous game*, this hook casts the PCs as the intrepid Skinball team actually playing the game. In a massive stadium surrounded by thousands of shrieking ghouls, the PCs face off against a team of bloodthirsty opponents... literally. The ghouls play to win, using every dirty trick they can think of, including cheap shots when the referee is distracted and psychological head games ("did we mention the ghouls' tradition that the winning team dines on the losers").

## ADVENTURE HOOK: CAN'T STOP THE SIGNAL

This takes place during the *dangerous game* adventure. Should the PCs turn the radio on that they were given by Bastion while they are within the Feeding Grounds they will hear the following signal: *This is Eve. If anyone is out there, I am watching over the children while they sleep. Some are*

*changed and I try to keep them asleep. The others are in danger and there are fewer every day. Please help me. Help the children.* A smart PC can use the radio to home in on the general location of the signal with a Computer Use skill check (DC 25) but the signal is in the heart of the city, the last place the PCs are likely to want to go. Whether the PCs investigate themselves or simply pass on the information to Bastion is up to them.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: VOICES IN THE NIGHT

Following the events described in *Can't stop the signal*, the Signal Monitoring Station (see Bastion) has begun to monitor radio traffic coming out of the Feeding Grounds in an attempt to learn more about the mysterious message overheard spies sent to investigate the city. These attempts pay off through the interception of mysterious, eerie conversations between a man and woman that seem to date from before the Fall. Although the transmissions themselves are ordered kept secret, rumors about the "ghost lovers" begin to circulate around the city anyway. Establishing contact with one or more of the voices, or tracing them to their source (one comes from the Feeding Grounds, the other from somewhere north of the city) would prove a challenge for a technically gifted character or characters. The SMS itself needs to be modified first, not a politically easy task to accomplish when dealing with one of Bastion's most holy relics (even the diversion of the antenna away from the east for a few hours during the night is a sensitive topic among the city elders).

## FORT TOLL

*Pre-war name: Toledo*

**Estimated Population:** 1,000

**Ruling Faction:** Militiamen

**Background:** Radical

**Skinball team:** Fort Toll Missiles

Since the days of the Fall Fort Toll has been controlled by a group of militant radicals known as the Militiamen. For decades this faction would disappear behind the walls of Fort Toll for as long as a decade, only to reemerge and begin attacking caravans from the surrounding villages. Of all the settlements in the region, Fort Toll has a special enmity for Bastion (the reasons for this are given in the Militiamen faction information below).

In recent decades it seemed the Tollers were calming down, being more open, actually bartering for what they needed and even joining the local Skinball tournaments. But the growing tension between Purity and Bastion has reversed this trend, with Fort Toll joining Purity in the hopes of finally laying Bastion low.

The Tollers have not only been advocating all-out war between Bastion and Purity, they are also lobbying their new allies to take the Corium mines from Bricktop. In short, the militants of this community and its ruling faction are taking a bad situation and making it worse.

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## ADVENTURE HOOK: HAIL TO THE CHIEF?

The Bastion Guardsmen and Highwaymen pledge allegiance daily to a long forgotten land thought mythical by the majority of the residents of the Fertile Crescent: the United States. They also claim to serve the king of this mighty land known as the President. Now the Tollers, along with the White Knights claim to have *found* the President (or at least his rightful heir) who bears, they say proof of his office and his station. Even though the truth seems flimsy at best to any educated observer, it resonates powerfully among the majority of the residents of the Twisted Earth, fitting the tales they have heard of this mythical land and its king. In this difficult adventure the PCs must use their knowledge of the ancients and diplomatic skills to disprove this so-called President in a way that the common folk will believe and accept. But what do the PCs do if they realize this man really *is* the President?

## NORTH SHORE

*Pre-war name: None (Fayette State Park)*

**Estimated Population:** 250 (though this fluctuates widely from as low as 50 at the height of winter to as high as 500 at the height of trading season).

**Ruling Faction:** Mariners

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist

**Skinball team:** North Shore Nessies

This community, which marks the northernmost edge of the world as it is known the residents of the Fertile Crescent is even smaller than its sister village, Calder. This cold, desolate outpost is nall but abandoned during the harsh winter months, with only a few hardy hunters and ice fisherman huddling together in the warmest dwellings. At the height of the trading season, when the tribals from the far north venture down to trade pelts and furs for the well-designed boats of the Mariners, this village's population rivals that of its southern neighbor Calder (in fact it's a popular saying in North Shore that the population of North Shore during the warm trading season *is* the population of Calder).

## ADVENTURE HOOK: THE THING

The PCs travel to North Shore at the end of the winter season to make contact with a trader said to bear an artifact of great power found in the northern wastes. When they arrive in the village they find all those who stayed the winter horribly killed by a terrible creature (an Arctic Terror). While sorting through the slaughter and attempting to identify the dead, as well as give them a proper burial, the PCs discover that the creature is still hiding in the largely abandoned town. As the PCs try to track the creature through the empty houses and shops of the small town, will they be the hunter, or the hunted?

## PURITY

*Pre-war name: Muskegon*

**Estimated Population:** 5,000

**Ruling Faction:** CrystalTime

**Background:** Visionary Reinventors

**Skinball team:** Purity Whitecoats

*Purity, Clarity, Integrity. Crystal Clear Water.*

*-The motto of the Crystal Time before the Fall.*

As the headquarters of the feared CrystalTime, as well as the source of its power, Purity is one of the largest, most opulent cities in the entire known world. It may not be of the size of the legendary Styx, in fact some scholars contend that Purity is the third largest city in the region (behind the Feeding Grounds and Bastion). Still the city lives up to its name with brilliant white buildings, whitewashed monthly, clean streets and a pampered citizenry (it is said that slaves in Purity live as well as the wealthy of cities like Sentinel and Fort Toll).

Although perfectly capable of ruthlessness in the cause of wealth and power (witnessed by the many tribal clans that have been displaced from the small lakes that dot the eastern side of Lake Michigan), the CrystalTime has also done a lot of good for the region rebuilding it from the horrors of war. As the two cities move toward what seems to be an inevitable showdown over which will be the dominant power in the region, the normally calm leadership of both cities seems wrapped up in "civic pride", wanting their home city to come out on top.

Knowing Bastion has been the dominant military power in the region for decades; Purity has made some unholy alliances, extending peace overtures to the White Knights and the Fort Toll militia. While this has strengthened their position relative to Bastion's militarily, it has also made it harder to negotiate, since Bastion has long-standing differences with the leaders of both cities.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: DEVIL'S BARGAIN

While working for the CrystalTime (perhaps as caravan guards) the PCs learn that the White Knights have slipped a genetically engineered disease in a water shipment bound for Bricktop designed to kill the entire mutant population of the region. The PCs must find a way to safely dispose of the water and then warn the CrystalTime about their new "allies".

## SENTINEL

*Pre-war name: Green Bay*

**Estimated Population:** 1,000 (growing very quickly)

**Ruling Faction:** None

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist

**Skinball team:** Sentinel Bay Radstorm



# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

Sentinel was a small, quiet fishing village until recently, nestled on the shores of Sentinel Bay. Although the town has its share of problems with raiders and the like, it was one of the most idyllic places to live in the entire region with a rich history extending back to before the Fall. Sentinel is renowned throughout the region as the inventor of Skinball and the townsfolk play the game with a passion that is second to none.

The recent discovery of the an unknown military complex beneath the ruins of the old city has sparked a flood of prospectors to the region, giving the city the air of a wild west boomtown, complete with a booming trade in furniture, saloon brawls, gunfights and even “claim jumping”. Some spectacular finds of technology have been discovered by these prospectors but the majority of the money is made by the brothels, saloons and hotels that seemed to spring up overnight.

While some citizens grumble about the “good old days” when the town was quiet and the most exciting talk centered on the upcoming Skinball season, the majority of citizens realize that the influx of wealth and new residents will ensure the city survives and prospers well into the future.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

Despite its small size, Sentinel had a couple of unique feature even *before* the discovery of the ruins under the city.

## THE FIELD

As the inventor of Skinball, Sentinel boasts the most impressive stadium in the entire Fertile Crescent, dating from before the Fall and meticulously preserved by the city’s residents, games are still played here, as are town meetings. The stadium is eerily empty even when every citizen of Sentinel is there to cheer on the Radstorms. Owing to the immense popularity of the sport before the Fall, the stadium is huge, designed to seat thousands.

## THE SAFEHOUSE

This ancient underground vault was once a complete mystery but is now believed to have been built to shelter the scientists working at the city’s secret research lab in the event of the end of the world. Ironically it seems that when the end did come they were unable to make it to this impressive shelter. The safehouse is used by the residents of Sentinel for shelter during harsh storms or during a raider attack. Even heavy weapons have proven useless against the shelter’s door. Although the town has been sacked by raider gangs many times, the citizens emerge when the bandits have gone and rebuild.

## ADVENTURE HOOK: VOICES IN THE NIGHT 2

While investigating the ruins beneath the city, the PCs come across a small receiver picking up signals from the mysterious “northern voice” described in the Feeding Grounds *Voices in the night* hook. This receiver draws the attention of both the Guardsmen and the Children of Adam

down on the PCs as the Guardsmen attempt to unravel the mysteries of the Feeding Grounds and the Children of Adam attempt to stop contact with their master from falling into the wrong hands.

## TROY

*Pre-war name: Detroit*

**Estimated Population:** 2,000

**Ruling Faction:** White Knights

**Background:** Visionary Reinventors

**Skinball team:** Troy Tornadoes

Troy has long been a sad story in the history of the Fertile Crescent. The city seemed to get an unusually heavy dose of fallout from the nightmarishly radioactive east coast, more even than Bricktop, a city further east. This led the city’s once great population to wither almost to nothing and the great city was almost left to the rats and the ghouls.

Eventually the radiation died down some and a small group of determined settlers emerged from vaults deep below the city. Determined not to abandon their home, these settlers made a go of reviving the city’s lost glory. Then the Aberrant came and conquered the city, ruling it with an iron fist and turning the human population into slaves. This faction was once very powerful in the Fertile Crescent and its teachings of mutant superiority openly followed by many mutants, leading to revolts in Bastion. Even Purity was affected by “disgruntled” mutants despite the loyalty and solidarity usually exhibited by the CrystalTime. The CrystalTime responded by expelling all mutants from the city of Purity (note however that mutants may still join the CrystalTime, especially in the capacity of traveling merchants).

With Troy as a base, the mutants seemed to grow more powerful with each passing day, using the city’s once great industrial capacity along with their human slaves to turn out war machines of increasingly sophisticated design. During a second attempt to take Bastion the mutants even managed to use some reactivated combat walkers. It seemed unless something gave way the combination of the powerful mutations and powerful technology possessed by the group would overwhelm the entire region, bringing the mutants under one black flag.

Something gave.

As the leaders of the Aberrant plotted the destruction of Purity and Bastion, they did not notice a threat lurking in their midst. A new, charismatic human had been born among the slaves. Quietly he preached the overthrow of their cruel masters, promising liberty to the residents of Troy. Far from being a liberator, however, this charismatic man, who called himself Miller Freeman, was a racist ideologue of the worst kind. The mutants were the problem, he said. It was they who had caused the Fall, using their mental abilities to turn the pure humans against one another, so they could rule over the ashes of a once great society. He told tales of forced labor camps like Troy, scattered all over the Twisted Earth, working humans to death to build war machines, which were

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used to further extend mutant domination.

Desperate for some form of hope, looking for any way out of their nightmarish existence of forced labor and abuse, the residents of Troy were easy prey for Miller's message. And despite his narrow minded views, Miller was a great tactician and leader. As the workers' unrest was fanned into a flame of rebellion, the humans outmaneuvered the much more powerful, better equipped mutants at every turn. Motivated by Miller's message of liberty, they laid down their lives by the thousands to drive the Aberrant out of Troy. It is ironic that the birth of an organization that preaches hate as a religion saved the Fertile Crescent and its peace-loving peoples but the rise of this new Troy, ruled by its White Knights proved to be just that.

In the days following the Aberrant's overthrow, sympathetic offers of help came in from cities all around the region. Bastion and Purity were sure that the government of Troy would be one it could deal with, using their manufacturing ability to help transform the region. They quickly learned that there was no help to be gained from Troy, however. The envoy from Bastion, a mutant, was crucified upon entering the city. Purity was offered friendship, since their ranks were now "pure" but they refused out of protest for the death of Bastion's envoy.

The White Knights, for their part, cared little about the friendship of the two cities. They had a mission: to rid the Earth of the twisted monsters that had seized control of it. The Aberrant were the main target of this hatred and the White Knights succeeded in driving the mutant faction underground and it is now unknown how many mutants still belong to this once powerful faction. Not willing to stop there, the White Knights have sent out hunting parties to track down and slaughter mutants. All over the region crosses bearing the crucified

victims of this group are found. The knights themselves are usually long gone.

Until recently the only city willing to trade with Troy was Fort Toll, whose isolationist leaders have a policy of terminating any "deformed" children at birth. The recent tension between Bastion and Purity has given Troy a chance to further end its isolation. Seeking allies against the militarily powerful and more technologically advanced Bastion, Purity has sought increased contact with Troy and its ability to manufacture powerful weapons and vehicles. The White Knights have long wanted more contact with Purity and the two cities have quickly developed close ties of trade, with Troy's manufacturing capabilities and scientific expertise filling a much needed void in Purity once trade with Bastion was cut off. Troy's leaders long for a chance to finally rid the region of Bastion, which they describe as a "haven for the foul" mutants. They constantly advocate military action and Purity, stung by what it sees as a betrayal on the part of their old friends, seems to be listening.

## FACTIONS



### ABERRANT

**Background Options:** Radical

**Attitude:** Humanity was judged and found wanting. Mutantkind is destined to rule the Earth as his dominion.

**Symbol:** Red fist. Once worn proudly and displayed on the flag of Troy, this symbol is now furtively painted by the group on alley walls or painted on the bodies of victims. It is frequently left behind at crime scenes as well, though some mutants claim this is more often done to lead law enforcement to an easy suspect than from actual aberrant



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activity.

**Common Classes:** Barbarian, Demagogue, Juju Doctor, Psionic, Raider, Survivalist

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** All

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

Once a threat to entire region, the Aberrant came close to conquering the entire region with their combat walkers and powerful mutations. The failure of their imperial ambitions has led to not only increased mutant persecution through the entire region but has also unleashed the reactionary White Knights as an even greater threat on the region.

## THE REALITY

Although the Aberrant have been beaten and driven underground, they have not forgotten the many wrongs visited upon them and their kind. They now seek to move quietly, striking from the shadows whenever an opportunity presents itself to harm the humans and take their rightful place as the winners of the evolutionary game.

The Aberrant have been quietly working to increase divisions between Bastion and Purity, seeing Purity and their White Knight allies as the greatest threats to mutantkind in the region. Oddly this gives them the same agenda as the White Knights, who have been working to get Purity to go to war with Bastion. The two groups might finally get to settle their differences as part of a larger war that threatens to engulf the Fertile Crescent.

## EXAMPLE ABERRANT: TROLLO

Trollo pretends to be a junk merchant and scavenger. In reality he is a scout for the Aberrant in Bastion, working with his mutant brethren to overthrow the city. As part of his scavenging work, he collects materials and fashions them into weapons to arm his brethren in their planned attempt to take the city by force. As part of his cover, he frequently walks unarmed, leaving his crossbow hidden in his dwelling. Anyone who looks too closely into Trollo's claim that he is a simple junk dealer might find he is far more dangerous unarmed, with wickedly sharp retractable claws on each hand and the senses of a predator.

**Trollo (Mutant Strong Hero 3/Barbarian 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+9 plus 3d12+9; HP 52; Mas 16; Init -1; Spd 25 ft; Defense 18, touch 13, flatfooted 19 (-1 Dex, +4 class, +5 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +9 melee (1d10+4, Claws), or +5 ranged (1d10/19-20, Crossbow); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, claws, scent, posion; AL Aberrant; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12.

**Occupation:** Military (Survival)

**Background:** Tribal (Hide)

**Mutations and Defects:** Claws, Hyper Olfactory, Gamma-Ray Visual Sensitivity, Anaphylaxis, Dyslexia,

Negative Chemical Reaction

**Skills:** Climb +9, Computer Use -2, Craft (structural) +3, Decipher Script -2, Forgery -2, Handle Animal +4, Hide +6, Repair +3, Research -2, Spot +4, Survival +11

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Mutation Advancement, Mutation Advancement, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Barbarian):** Rage 1/day, Junk Armor

**Possessions:** Metal Junk Armor, Claws, Crossbow

## BLACK HAND

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Business is business. If someone wants to do business with you, do business with them. If someone harms your business, eliminate them.

**Symbol:** One black leather glove, worn on the right hand (known in the organization as the "killing hand"). Members wear this symbol of membership proudly throughout the region, making no bones about their loyalties. Not only did the Black Hand aid Bastion from the time of the Fall it is also regarded as just another trading cartel (not much more ruthless than the CrystalTime).

**Common Classes:** Skulk, Raider, Trader

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** All

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Black Hand is a militant trading cartel who's history stretches back well before the fall, even further back than the CrystalTime. They hold a proud series of traditions including their code of honor, Omerta. Members of the cartel do not seek assistance from outsiders, preferring to handle their problems "in house".

## THE REALITY

From the earliest days of the Fall, the Black Hand was one of Whittaker's strongest factions of supporters, standing by him when the city desperately needed anyone handy with a gun. They smuggled supplies into the city through riots and outright warfare and stood on the walls fighting side by side with the Guardsmen and the Highwaymen. This has greatly enhanced the reputation of their cartel and causes many citizens (especially in the faction's home city of Bastion) to turn a blind eye to some of the cartel's excesses. In particular any internecine strife where a member of the cartel kills another member to rise in the ranks is almost never investigated (and even then only if an innocent has been harmed). For their part the Black Hand strives to make sure "civilians" do *not* get harmed during their disagreements, preferring to keep the authorities from looking too hard at their operations.



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The Black Hand deals in a variety of businesses once considered illicit: drugs, gambling and prostitution. They also hire their members, many of whom are formidable combatants out as mercenaries to guard the caravans of other cartels (or raid those caravans for a rival cartel). They also engage in some time honored professions for their cartel, which are still illicit: assassination, blackmail and “protection”.

## EXAMPLE BLACK HAND: VINCENT

Vincent is the youngest son of Bastion’s oldest, most respected Don. The Don wanted Vincent to stay out of the family business, making sure he had the best tutors a vast fortune based on gambling and furniture could buy. Vincent had the potential to be one of the greatest healers in the history of the Twisted Earth but his ambitions lay elsewhere.

Four years ago, the Don and Vincent’s older brother both died under mysterious circumstances. The older capos suspected poison, but if that’s what it was, nothing could ever be proven. By the rather primitive medical standards of the Fertile Crescent, nothing was detectable. And of course they were all trying to decide which of them was going to succeed the Don, since no one thought Vincent had the stomach for it.

Soon, however, Vincent proved he *did* have the stomach for it. Several of the old capos disappeared, replaced by younger and more aggressive leaders handpicked by Vincent. And the capos who survived the transition stopped complaining as soon as the money started rolling in. The family was in a new business, more lucrative than gambling and furniture put together: designer drugs. Vincent had discovered several powerful synthetic drugs known to the Ancients. To these he added drugs of his own design, including drugs tailored to the physiology of mutants. The family was richer than ever.

**Vincent (Dedicated Hero 10/Medicine Man 5):** CR 15; Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d6+10 plus 5d6+5; HP 68; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 23, touch 20, flatfooted 21 (+2 Dex, +8 class, +3 equipment); BAB +9; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (weapon-1, weapon), or +12 ranged (2d6, Beretta 92F); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Black Hand; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +8; AP 7; Rep +4; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

**Occupation:** Doctor (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences], Knowledge [Technology])

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Knowledge [Mutant Lore])

**Skills:** Computer Use +7, Craft (pharmaceutical) +22, Diplomacy +13, Gamble +2, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Ancient Lore) +10, Knowledge (Business) +17, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +9, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +9, Knowledge (Streetwise) +15, Knowledge (Technology) +11, Listen +8, Read/Write Language +3 (Unislang, Gutter Talk, Ancient), Sense Motive +13, Speak Language +3 (Unislang, Gutter Talk, Ancient), Spot +6, Treat Injury +23

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Double Tap, Educated (Knowledge [Business], Knowledge [Technology]), Far Shot, Low Profile, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surgery, Trustworthy, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Dedicated Hero):** Healing Knack, Healing Touch 1, Healing Touch 2, Empathy, Intuition

**Talents (Medicine Man):** Ancient Drugs, Minor Medical Miracle, Medical Specialist +1, Mutant Treatment, Mutant Drugs

**Possessions:** Undercover Vest, Beretta 92F

## BLESSED LADIES

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Fertility is life. Fertile women can make the world anew, populating it with strong, good men and women to repopulate the Earth and make it whole once again.

**Symbol:** White cross on a red background.

**Common Classes:** Juju Doctor, Scholar

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** None (no female with a defect can be admitted as a full-fledged sister even if she is fertile). All (lay sister).

**Special:** To be a full member of the Blessed Ladies (as a sister), a character must be fertile and possess no defects. Any woman may join as a lay sister to protect and serve the faction as long as they share its ideals.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Blessed Ladies began as a convent of nuns who witnessed the end of the world. Rather than succumbing to the despair of those days, they sought to spread the worship of Our Blessed Lady, the Virgin Mary who bequeathed virtue and fertility on them in equal measure.

## THE REALITY

Applicants for the Blessed Ladies are carefully screened medically to ensure their fertility. Quasi-religious, they seek out fertile women, train and educate them, then pair them with fertile men, seeking to repopulate the Earth. They venerate fertility, child birth and the power of mothers to remake the world one child at a time.

Sisters join for life and are required to maintain virginity prior to marriage, wearing Black and White robes before marriage (representing separation of the male and the female) and gray robes after marriage (representing communion of the male and the female). During pregnancy the sisters wear red robes. The elder women of the Blessed Ladies (all of whom must have born at least one child to term and raised it to maturity) exert great control over the lives of young sisters, including the choice of potential husbands. While not *required* to marry men chosen by the elder sisters it is almost unheard of for a sister to refuse a “good pairing” as the sisters call it.

In reality, all potential male applicants who wish to marry

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

a Blessed Sister are screened for a variety of factors besides simple fertility. The elder sisters possess a great deal of genetic knowledge which they attempt to use to remake the human race into a superior breed, capable of taming the Earth and returning it to its former glory.

Harming a Blessed Lady (including rape) is one of the most severe offenses in the region. They are venerated and admired by almost everyone, including a large number of “lay sisters”, infertile women who swear lifetime vows of virginity and assist the sisters, acting as advisers, servants and midwives.

Of course their dual status of fertility and virginity make the sisters targets for raiders and other sick souls who inhabit the Twisted Earth but even hardened raiders calculate their odds of escaping such a crime undetected since the slow deaths visited on those captured after harming a blessed lady are daunting.

## EXAMPLE BLESSED LADIES: JULIA

Married to the largest drug dealer in Bastion, Vincent, Julia has no illusions about what he is, convinced that those who take his drugs are fools who deserve the consequences of their actions. She instead concentrates on the good Vincent does, encouraging him to provide better medical care for the “honest” citizens of Bastion.

**Julia (Dedicated Hero 3):** CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 12, touch 12, flatfooted 12 (+2 class); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (weapon), or +2 ranged (weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Blessed Ladies; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6; AP 1; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

**Occupation:** Academic (Knowledge [History], Knowledge [Streetwise], Research)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Knowledge [Theology and Philosophy])

**Skills:** Craft (pharmaceutical) +10, Gamble +4, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (Business) +5, Knowledge (History) +6, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +9, Listen +8, Research +8, Sense Motive +8, Treat Injury +13

**Feats:** Confident, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surgery

**Talents (Dedicated Hero):** Skill Emphasis (Treat Injury), Faith

**Possessions:** Medical Kit

## CHILDREN OF ADAM

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** The will of Adam must be obeyed in all things.

**Symbol:** A dove bearing an olive branch.

**Common Classes:** Child of the metal gods.

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** All

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Children of Adam are a religious cult seeking a return to paradise, which they call “Eden”. They claim to hear the words of Adam who calls them to his garden and have traveled from far in the west to the Fertile Crescent, drawing ever closer to him and the paradise they seek.

## THE REALITY

Adam is one of two large supercomputers in the Fertile Crescent (the other, named Eve, is deep in the heart of the Feeding Grounds). His followers are implanted with a transmitter that allows them to hear his voice any time of the day or night, receiving his instructions. The Children have flocked to Sentinel as part of its rush in great numbers, as they have learned that Adam is buried beneath that city in the large military research facility just uncovered. They are determined to find him themselves, but consider it even more important to prevent the “unfaithful” from gaining access to their god. They will go to any lengths to keep his location secret, restricting access only to those who truly serve him.

Although Adam is twisted and evil, he is also one of the few sources of direct contact with the region’s other supercomputer, Eve who knows many of the secrets hidden in the ghoul-infested Feeding Grounds.

## EXAMPLE CHILDREN OF ADAM: SEGAN

Named after a great ancient, Segan always loved exploring the vast ruins that dotted the Fertile Crescent. While in some ruins to the north of Bastion, something found *him*. Now he is a Child of Adam and serves the megalomaniacal computer in its efforts to take over the region. His love of finding technology and skill at repairing it has made him a valuable servant and leader of this group in the area.

**Segan (Smart Hero 3/Scholar 3/Child Of The Metal Gods 5):** CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 3d6+3 plus 5d10+5; HP 61; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 24, touch 18, flatfooted 22 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +6 equipment); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1/19-20, Metal Baton), or +7 ranged (3d12, Laser Rifle); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Children of Adam; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 5; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Academic (Computer Use, Knowledge [Physical Sciences], Research)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Knowledge [History])

**Skills:** Computer Use +18, Craft (electronic) +15, Craft (mechanical) +15, Craft (structural) +9, Decipher Script +9, Disable Device +15, Drive +8, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (History) +10, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +6, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +10, Knowledge (Technology) +12, Navigate +9, Repair +20, Research +10, Search +12, Spot +2

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

**Feats:** Advanced Technology, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Combat Expertise, Futuristic Firearms Proficiency, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Radiation Sense, Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Talents (Smart Hero):** Savant (Repair), Exploit Weakness

**Talents (Scholar):** Gossip, Ancient Technology (Advanced Electronics Discipline)

**Talents (Child Of The Metal Gods):** Frenzied Loyalty, Lobotomy, Bits and Pieces (Computer Link), Bits and Pieces (Targeting Computer, Flashbacks)

**Possessions:** Laser Rifle, Military Combat Suit

## COILED DRAGON

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventors

**Attitude:** The skills of our ancestors makes us mighty.

**Symbol:** A red dragon coiled on a black background.

**Common Classes:** Initiate, Weapon Master, Sensei (all from Wasteland Fury); those without Wasteland Fury can substitute the Martial Artist (from the core Modern rules) and the Warrior Monk from the Darwin's World core rules for these classes.

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** All

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Coiled Dragon were at one time a force sent to capture the Feeding Grounds during the Fall. When a surge of Ghouls forced them to retreat, they joined with the people of Bastion to defend the city from attack and have been honored residents ever since. They possess a secret method of hand to hand combat taught only to their members that they claim traces its lineage to thousands of years before the Fall.

## THE REALITY

The Coiled Dragon know several ancient Chinese martial arts which they pass down to their members. These techniques are represented by the martial arts feats listed below. In addition members of this faction can take levels in the Initiate class (provided they meet the normal prerequisite) or the Martial Artist class found in the Modern core rules.

They also tattoo themselves with dragons wrapping around their arms, which they believe gives them added power in combat. Any member found teaching the faction's sacred arts to outsiders will be killed.

## DRAGON

*New Feat*

**Prerequisite:** Combat Martial Arts or Defensive Martial Arts.

**Effect:** Dragon practitioners are proficient in Punching and Kicking attacks and are considered armed while making such attacks. You provoke no attacks of opportunity when making Grapple attacks. This feat adds Balance, Escape

Artist, and Intimidate to the character's list of class skills. Dragon is an External Style whose attacks are modified by Strength.

## KUNG FU

*New Feat*

**Prerequisite:** Combat Martial Arts or Defensive Martial Arts.

**Effect:** You are proficient in punch and kick attacks and are considered armed while making such attacks. This feat adds Balance, Concentration, and Tumble to your list of class skills. Kung-Fu is an external style whose attacks are modified by Dexterity.

## EXAMPLE COILED DRAGON: TANAKA

Tanaka is a young, streetwise member of the Coiled Dragon. He is very proud of his clan and can recite his history going back to before the Fall. He is also tough and knows Bastion like the back of his hand. This makes him a good contact for anyone needing a guide in the city, or a bodyguard or even someone looking for a (rather unlikely) storehouse of information about the Ancients. The first two are how Tanaka makes his living; the latter would be a welcome change for someone willing to pay for drinks for the evening.

**Tanaka (Strong Hero 3/Martial Artist 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d8+6; HP 40; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 15, flatfooted 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +1 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (2d6+4/19-20, Katana), or +7 ranged (2d6, Colt Python); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Coiled Dragon; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Drive)

**Skills:** Climb +5, Drive +4, Hide +8, Intimidate +2, Jump +5, Knowledge (Streetwise) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +3

**Feats:** Alertness, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Gladiator, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Martial Artist):** Living Weapon 1d6, Flying Kick

**Possessions:** Leather Jacket, Katana, Colt Python

## BLACK DRAGONS

The Black Dragons are the elite warriors of the Coiled Dragon clan. Scouts and assassins, these enigmatic figures draw on the ancient traditions of the orient to strike fear into the enemies of their faction.

## REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a black dragon a character must meet the following criteria.



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**TABLE 1: THE BLACK DRAGON**

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+1	+2	+2	+0	Ghost	+1	+1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+2	+3	+3	+0	Silent Kill +1d6	+2	+1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+3	+3	+3	+1	Dragon Kata	+2	+1
4 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+4	+4	+1	Silent Kill +2d6	+3	+2
5 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+4	+4	+1	Kata Specialization	+4	+2
6 <sup>th</sup>	+6	+5	+5	+2	Silent Kill +3d6	+4	+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	+7	+5	+5	+2	Improved Dragon Kata; Icewater for Blood	+5	+3
8 <sup>th</sup>	+8	+6	+6	+2	Silent Kill +4d6	+6	+3
9 <sup>th</sup>	+9	+6	+6	+3	Improved Kata Specialization	+6	+3
10 <sup>th</sup>	+10	+7	+7	+3	Silent Kill +5d6	+7	+4

**Feats:** Combat Martial Arts, Dragon or Kung Fu

**Skills:** Hide 10 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks, Move Silently 10 ranks

## CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the black dragon epic class.

**Hit Die:** 1d8

**Action Points:** 6+ one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character gains a new level in this class.

**Class Skills:** The black dragon's class skills (and the ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcane lore, behavioral sciences, history, streetwise, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str) and Tumble (Dex)

**Skill points at each level:** 5+ Int. modifier

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the black dragon epic class.

**Ghost:** The black dragon is a master of stealth and illicit entry. He adds his black dragon class level to all Hide and Move Silently skill checks.

**Silent kill:** The character gains the listed sneak attack damage against surprised, flat-footed, or flanked targets. If the victim of this attack is surprised and fails a Massive Damage Threshold saving throw, the character is eliminated in complete silence, requiring a Listen check (DC 30) for any nearby guard to notice something amiss. At the GM's discretion, Ordinaries may not receive a MDT save against this attack. See the Modern Core Rulebook for the definition of an Ordinary.

**Dragon Kata:** The black dragons are steeped in the lore of their clan, gaining a +1 bonus to unarmed attack rolls using both the Dragon and the Kung Fu martial arts styles.

**Kata Specialization:** Furthering his knowledge of the lore of his clan, at 5<sup>th</sup> level the black dragon gains a +2 damage bonus to all unarmed attacks made with the Dragon and Kung Fu martial arts styles.

**Improved Dragon Kata:** At 7<sup>th</sup> level the black dragon gains an additional +1 bonus to attack rolls with both the Dragon or Kung Fu martial arts styles.

**Icewater for Blood:** The black dragons have a reputation for ruthlessness that is deserved, granting a bonus to all Intimidate checks and level checks to resist intimidation equal to the character's Reputation bonus.

**Improved Kata Specialization:** At 9<sup>th</sup> level the black dragon gains an additional +2 damage bonus with both the Dragon and Kung Fu martial arts styles.

## CRYSTALTIME

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Water is the rarest and most valuable commodity in the Twisted Earth. Whoever controls water controls every aspect of business.

**Symbol:** An hour glass filled with clean, pure water, the symbol of the Crystal Clear Bottled Water Company before the Fall.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Skulk, Trader.

**Common Mutations:** Any. Note: Due to the actions of the Aberrant and the recent alliance with the White Knights, no mutants are allowed in the city of Purity. While mutants may join the CrystalTime they will not be allowed to enter the capital city of Purity.

**Common Defects:** Any

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

One of the most powerful groups in the region, the CrystalTime and the Guardsmen seem destined for a final confrontation over who will control the Fertile Crescent. The two groups, once great friends have ceased cooperating on almost everything now that Bastion no longer needs to buy water from the CrystalTime. The only joint project still maintained by the two groups is the maintenance of the cross-lake Ferry that allows quick and (relatively) safe journeys to the communities on the far side of the lakes.

Known for an age as one of the great forces for peace in the region, along with the Guardsmen and the Movement, the CrystalTime feel betrayed by Bastion setting themselves up as competitors. The CrystalTime have warred over water rights before with the Clean Water Clans and they see this conflict with Bastion as especially galling since they feel

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their prior merciful acts are being repaid with betrayal.

In addition to a large ground force, the CrystalTime also controls a navy of heavily armed patrol craft that prevent anyone from approaching too close to their shores (especially the isolated lakes they control). Fishing boats are warned away on a regular basis as are the Mariners. The only boat allowed to actually enter Musk Lake is the ferry from Bastion. Riders on the ferry have reported seeing a green, carpet-like plant being grown in Musk Lake, which the ferry-master reports is grown for livestock feed and is not healthy or nutritious to human or mutant.

## THE REALITY

CrystalTime control the city of Purity, which sits on the shores of Musk Lake, a small inlet connected to the Great Lakes. Musk Lake was the site of a pre-war experiment into genetically engineered algae that would purify water at an accelerated rate. The Crystal Clear Bottled Water Company won a government contract to bottle this water just before the Fall. In the months immediately after the Fall they traded their supply of water for security with the region, using it to hire mercenaries to protect Purity and protect the secret sources of their fresh water supply. Once the group allied itself with the more technologically advanced and militarily powerful Bastion, the city was never in danger again.

Now that relations with Bastion have fallen on hard times, the leaders of Purity know they are once again vulnerable and have sought a replacement for Bastion in the White Knights. Though the Knights provide Purity with the same sort of protection and access to technology that Bastion did, the price is high: mutants are forbidden from entering the city of Purity and the CrystalTime is being pressured to expel them from the ranks altogether. For the moment the CrystalTime have responded by placing their mutant members in charge of caravans trading with distant lands. This is a temporary fix however and soon they will have to choose between their loyal mutant members and the technology of the White Knights.

This group constantly works to extend its control over the many small lakes dotting the shores of the Great Lakes. When control over the area is assured, the algae are introduced into the lake in special enclosed filtering beds that let water in and out but prevent the algae from growing freely in the lake itself. Only contained bodies of water that are totally under the CrystalTime's control have the algae released into them. It is the CrystalTime's greatest secret so they take any steps necessary to ensure that the algae does not get released into the wild. The fact that this algae might spread and cleanse the radiation from the Twisted Earth at a much faster rate and possibly heal the world is not a concern to these merchants. Currently Mona Lake and Duck Lake have also been secured and purified.

Tribals on the shores of the much larger White Lake are being pressured to cede control of the lake to the CrystalTime. There has been no violence yet.

## EXAMPLE CRYSTALTIME: ABERDEN

Like many of the CrystalTime's "field operatives", Aberden was recruited out of the tribes that dot the countryside of the Fertile Crescent. The cartel learned long ago that tribals made better time through the wilds than those born in the whitewashed city of Purity. Despite his youth and despite only having one arm, Aberden has a quick wit and an uncanny knack for making his way through the wild. Able to go without water for days and eat anything, he frequently follows his stomach rather than the road, which means he often finds himself amid large herds of his fellow herbivores. These give him cover and have led to his shipments having one of the lowest rates of theft or banditry. He also makes amazingly good time with his plump pack animals. If the PCs need to get somewhere off the beaten track or just need to get somewhere quick, they could do far worse than to employ Aberden.

**Aberden (Mutant Charismatic Hero 3/Trader 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 3d6+3; HP 28; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 14, flatfooted 15 (+1 Dex, +3 class, +2 equipment); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8-1/19-20, Longsword), or +3 ranged (1d6, Hatchet); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, albinism; AL Crystaltime; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.

**Occupation:** Merchant (Diplomacy)

**Background:** Tribal (Navigate)

**Mutations and Defects:** Interior Moisture Reservoir, Multiple Stomachs, Serrated Dental Development, Bizarre Pigmentation, Terminal Limb Deficiency (Arm), Albinism

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +8, Gather Information +17, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Business) +11, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Navigate +14, Profession +6 (Trader), Ride +7, Speak Language +3 (Trader, Unislang, Gutter Talk), Survival +2

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Guide, Improved Disarm, Market, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trustworthy

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Fast-Talk, Dazzle

**Talents (Trader):** Ear to the Ground, Money Talks

**Possessions:** Pull-up pouch vest, Longsword, Hatchet

## GEEK SQUAD

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Technology can be found or made by the knowledgeable. Technology is knowledge and knowledge is power.

**Symbol:** A circuit board with electrical sparks coming from it.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Scav, Scholar, Tinker, Trader.

**Common Mutations:** Autism, Dual Cerebellum, Independent Cerebral Control, Multi-faceted eyes

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**Common Defects:** All but Atrophied Cerebellum, Attention Deficit, Dyslexia

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Geek Squad takes their name from an ancient word for scientist. They are a trading cartel that specializes in finding and restoring ancient technology or building new devices from scratch to sell. The smallest of the cartels in the region, the Geek Squad is still formidable because of their wealth and technological edge.

## THE REALITY

Although they are currently a prosperous trading cartel and nothing more, this faction has much larger ambitions. They believe that scientists should rule the masses and that knowledge should be the way to political power. While they sell a great deal of technology, they keep the best items for themselves. When they feel they have enough of an edge to seize power in the region they will.

They have planted spies in many other factions, especially the Guardsmen and the CrystalTime. In addition to supplying regular reports on the activities of these factions, their spies work both to improve the opinion toward the Geek Squad and increase tensions between Bastion and Purity. A major war that weakened one or both powers might make the Geeks feel strong enough to make their move and attempt to seize control of the entire region.

## EXAMPLE GEEK SQUAD: STATIC

The son of one of the city's best-known and most-colorful Guardians, from whom he inherited his Winchester, which has its name "big stick" carved on the stock. Static is something of an embarrassment to his family as well as something of a town nut in Bastion. He buys junk all the time from travelers, all with the hope one day of building the flying machines used by the ancients. He says a single one of these could protect the city better than 50 warriors. Of course most people don't even believe the stories of ancient flying machines but Static continues to build balloons and gliders that invariably crash. If the PCs are brave, they could volunteer as test pilots.

On a more serious note, Static was a good friend of Segan and is also looking to hire someone to find out what happened to him. He went exploring in the ruins to the south of Sentinel and hasn't been seen since.

Finally Static makes his living repairing ancient devices of all types and descriptions and he's quite good at it. If the PCs have a broken piece of junk they think might actually *do* something, Static is their man.

**Static (Smart Hero 3/Tinker 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3 plus 3d6+3; HP 28; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 17, touch 15, flatfooted 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class, +2 equipment); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/19-20, Metal Baton), or +4 ranged (2d10, Winchester 94); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Geek Squad; SV

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6; AP 3; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Academic (DW) (Knowledge [Mutant Lore], Knowledge [Twisted Earth])

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Computer Use)

**Skills:** Computer Use +11, Craft (chemical) +8, Craft (electronic) +13, Craft (mechanical) +13, Craft (structural) +11, Disable Device +11, Drive +5, Knowledge (Ancient Lore) +5, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +10, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +5, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +11, Knowledge (Twisted Earth) +5, Repair +16

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Builder (Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical]), Combat Expertise, Educated (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences], Knowledge [Physical Sciences]), Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Talents (Smart Hero):** Savant (Repair), Exploit Weakness

**Talents (Tinker):** Jury-rig +2, Tinkering

**Possessions:** Leather Armor, Metal Baton, Winchester 94

## GHOULS

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Ghouls are the future; humans are destined to be cattle.

**Symbol:** Dome vulture.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Raider, Skulk

**Common Mutations:** Chameleon Epidermis, Claws, Hyper Olfactory, Nocturnal, Sensitive Sight

**Common Defects:** Albinism, Cannibalism, Hunchback

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The ghouls have largely been confined to the Feeding Grounds through most of the history of the Fertile Crescent. While "wild" ghouls are still encountered in the region, most of their kind seems content to stay in the gigantic dome where their numbers continue to grow.

## THE REALITY

The secret of the ghouls existence in the Feeding Grounds is a number of underground complexes filled with thousands (perhaps much, much more) of cryogenically stored humans. For centuries the ghouls have been able to feed on these pods, eating both the humans inside but also the nutrient-rich "goo" the bodies were stored in for their hibernation.

The ghouls have a new leader, a self-styled "king" named Atraxus who has united the city under his rule through a campaign of violence and terror that would give the most hardened raider nightmares. He believes that ghouls are destined to be the true inheritors of the Earth and that mankind's legacy is to serve as cattle. His ultimate vision is humans herded in pens for "free range" food, while others are put into the cryogenics tubes to be stored for times of need.



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## EXAMPLE GHOULS: SLATHER

Slather has been sent by the leader of the Feeding Grounds to observe Bastion and make sure the city isn't planning some sort of attack. He stays in the sewers during the day but at night he comes out to crouch in alleyways and listen to conversations, waiting to hear if the humans plan to attack his "superior" race. He has been ordered not to hunt in the city so he also uses the cover of darkness to slip into the city's graveyards and slaughterhouses to feed. If he is caught feeding or discovered, his savage nature will come out and he will attack and try to kill.

### Slather (Mutant Post-Apocalyptic Hero 4/Barbarian 2):

CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d8+8 plus 2d12+4; HP 43; Mas 14; Init +4; Spd 30 ft; Defense 20, touch 16, flatfooted 18 (+2 Dex, +4 class, +4 natural); BAB +5; Grap +8; Atk +9 melee (1d10+3, Claws), or +7 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, claws, cannibalism, albinism; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 3; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Predator (Intimidate)

**Background:** Feral (Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently)

**Mutations and Defects:** Claws x2, Protective Dermal Development, Cannibalism x2, Albinism

**Skills:** Climb +5, Hide +12, Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Navigate +5, Spot +8, Survival +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Post-Apocalyptic Hero):** Necropoli Lore, Survival Sense

**Talents (Barbarian):** Rage 1/day, Junk Armor

**Possessions:** None

## GUARDSMEN

Former national guardsmen, kept together by Pfc. William Whittaker

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Humanity's future depends on cooperation.

United they will stand, divided they will fade from the Earth, leaving it to the animals.

**Symbol:** Green armor worn over olive drab fatigues as a military uniform.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Survivalist

**Common Mutations:** All

**Common Defects:** All

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The main defenders of the city of Bastion for centuries, the Guardsmen are one of the most respected, as well as one of the most powerful factions in the region. A true military organization, this faction prides itself on its unity and its training methods which have been handed down since the time of the fall. A finely-honed training regimen, coupled

with numerous books on tactics and strategy maintained since the war give this faction an edge in battle even when outnumbered or outgunned by their opponents.

## THE REALITY

A fragmentary group of survivors formed by members of the Wisconsin National Guard, the Guardsmen grew under the leadership of William Whittaker from a ragtag band of survivors and drafted civilians to a potent military force in less than 20 years. Whittaker formed the training regimens used by the group to this day, as well as leaving behind vast volumes of his thoughts on politics and strategy. A truly brilliant visionary, Whittaker's works, along with his collection of the works of Sun Tzu, Nietzsche, Julius Caesar and Machiavelli have allowed the Guardsmen to out think and out fight their opponents for centuries.

## EXAMPLE GUARDSMEN: GRATIN

Gratin is the best shot in Bastion. When there's trouble he will be on top of a high tower, raining accurate fire down on the city's enemies. As his reputation as a crack shot grows, he is also asked more and more to conduct demonstrations of skill with rifles, pistols and even darts.

**Gratin (Strong Hero 3/Guardian 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d10+6; HP 43; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 17, flatfooted 15 (+3 Dex, +4 class, +1 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+3, Knife), or +10 ranged (2d12, Barrett Light 50); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Guardsmen; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Military (DW) (Survival)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Drive)

**Skills:** Climb +4, Drive +6, Intimidate +2, Jump +4, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Spot +4, Survival +5, Swim +4

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Dead Aim, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Guardian):** Defender +2, Weapon Focus

**Possessions:** Leather Jacket, Knife, Barrett Light 50

## SENTINELS

The sentinels are the elite soldiers of the Guardsmen. There are two battalions of the sentinels (each consisting of 6 squads of 10 men each), one of which is always in Bastion to defend the city, code named "Home Team". The other unit, code named "Away Team" performs missions across the Fertile Crescent as deemed necessary by the ruling council of Bastion. The two teams rotate home and away status on a bi-monthly basis.

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

## REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a sentinel a character must meet the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** 7+

**Skills:** Knowledge (tactics) 13 ranks, Listen 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks

**Feats:** Personal Firearms Proficiency

## CLASS INFORMATION

The following information pertains to the sentinel epic class.

**Hit Die:** 1d10

**Action Points:** 6+ one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character gains a new level in this class.

**Class Skills:** The sentinel's class skills (and the ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (structural) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events, history, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Read/Write Language (all), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (all), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str)

**Skill points at each level:** 7+Int. modifier

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the sentinel epic class.

**Advanced Military Training:** Each time this ability is gained the sentinel picks an ability of his choice from the list below. Each squad of Sentinels

Advanced Infantry Tactics: Choose any one of the following feats even if you do not meet the prerequisite: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Far Shot or Power Attack. This training may be taken more than once, each time it is selected the character may choose an additional feat from the above list.

Assault: +1 morale bonus to melee damage rolls. This training may be taken up to three times.

Demolitions: +4 bonus to Demolitions and Disable Device skill checks. This training may be taken more than once, its effects stack.

Marksmanship: +2 bonus to ranged attack rolls, only to offset range penalties. This training may be taken more than once, its effects stack.

Recon: +2 bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot

skill checks. This training may be taken more than once, its effects stack.

Sniper: +1d6 damage to the target of a successful ranged attack when the attacker spends an action point and takes a full round action. This ability may only be used at ranges where the attacker suffers no range penalty. This training may be taken more than once, the damage bonus stacks.

Terrain Specialization: Choose one of the following terrains: Necropoli, Mountains or Wasteland. When in that terrain you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to the following skills: Balance, Climb, Demolitions, Drive, Hide, Knowledge (tactics), Spot and Survival. This training may be taken more than once, each time it is selected it applies to an additional terrain type.

**Mental Toughness:** he character adds his sentinel class levels to any saving throw to resist fatigue, hunger, torture, brainwashing, fear and to level checks to resist intimidation.

**Cat Nap:** Sentinels learn to sleep in short naps while in the field, never slipping into so deep a slumber as to leave them vulnerable. Characters with this ability can survive for long periods of time on four hours of sleep per day with no ill effects. This ability also allows a character to add his sentinel class levels to any Listen check made while asleep (characters normally make Listen checks at -10 while sleeping, so a character with 10 sentinel levels would make Listen checks normally while sleeping).

**Silent Kill:** This ability functions as the black dragon class ability of the same name.

**Fast Mover:** At 5<sup>th</sup> level the sentinel has his movement increased by +10'.

**Grace Under Pressure:** Sentinels are rare individuals who thrive under stress. When a character spends an action point to aid a skill check he adds all the dice he is entitled to roll to the skill check (characters normally add only the highest die).

## THE SWARM

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** The insect is the Earth's perfect lifeform. Our hive and our Queen will overrun the bipeds and our towers will rise from the deserted husks of their cities.

**Symbol:** None (the Swarm possesses no written language so far as is known).

TABLE 2: THE SENTINEL

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 <sup>st</sup>	+0	+1	+1	+1	Advanced Military Training (AMT); Mental Toughness	+1	+0
2 <sup>nd</sup>	+1	+2	+2	+2	AMT	+1	+0
3 <sup>rd</sup>	+2	+2	+2	+2	Cat Nap; Silent Kill +1d6	+2	+1
4 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+2	+2	+2	AMT	+2	+1
5 <sup>th</sup>	+3	+3	+3	+3	Fast Mover +10'	+3	+1
6 <sup>th</sup>	+4	+3	+3	+3	AMT; Silent Kill +2d6	+3	+2
7 <sup>th</sup>	+5	+4	+4	+4	Grace Under Pressure	+4	+2
8 <sup>th</sup>	+6	+4	+4	+4	AMT	+4	+2
9 <sup>th</sup>	+6	+4	+4	+4	Silent Kill +3d6	+5	+3
10 <sup>th</sup>	+7	+5	+5	+5	AMT	+5	+3

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

**Common Classes:** Barbarian, Guardian, Raider, Survivalist

**Common Mutations:** See below.

**Common Defects:** See below.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

Insectoids from the north, these creatures, living in their bizarre towers have been spreading further and further south. There seem to be many different varieties creatures and they breed rapidly. They are also able to tame, by unknown means the ferocious Buzzbee, one of the most terrifying predators in the region. They use these creatures as mounts.

## THE REALITY

The Swarm is a completely new race, spawned from the race of ants as humans sprung from the ape. These highly intelligent creatures live in massive collectives resembling termite mounds, towers made of mud, wood pulp and saliva. Their structures used to extend deep into the Earth for protection from extreme cold weather but with the domestication of the Buzzbee they are now able to build their towers higher and range further north. In the past these beings were more of a mystery than a threat but two developments have changed that: cooperation and domestication of animals.

In the past each Swarm tower was its own hierarchy and they spent more time fighting among themselves, leaving the humans and other creatures of the Twisted Earth to their own devices. They also shared territory with the fearsome Buzzbee, a ferocious predator. Recently however, the Queens of the different towers have forged a pact of peace, decreeing that they will only war and feed on the “lesser beings”. They have also learned how to use their potent pheromone abilities to domesticate the Buzzbee. This has not only given the Swarm soldiers the ability to fly, riding the Buzzbees (an ability formerly possessed only by the Swarm Queens), they were also able to render the once-feared predators almost entirely extinct in the wild by killing the adults and capturing the children, which are now bred in captivity within the Swarms. The Buzzbees also warm the Swarms in the winter, beating their wings to generate heat and circulate air. This has allowed the Swarms to grow larger and colonize areas further north.

## SWARM BESTIAL GENOTYPES

The Swarm is made up of three Bestial Genotypes, first introduced in the Darwin's World supplement *Beastmen*. A Bestial Genotype is like a template that replaces a character's starting three mutations with an ability modifier, a skill modifier and two pre-selected mutations. Two of the character's defects are also determined by his genotype, while a third varies from individual to individual.

## SWARM WORKER

**Ability Modifier:** Constitution +2

**Skill Modifier:** Handle Animal +2. Swarm worker beastmen add Handle Animal to their permanent class skill list.

**Mutations:** Hyper Olfactory, Pheromone emission (see below)

**Defects:** Exoskeletal form, Social animal (see below) and any one defect of the character's choice

## SWARM WARRIOR

**Ability Modifier:** Strength +2

**Skill Modifier:** Ride +2. Swarm warrior beastmen add Ride to their permanent class skill list.

**Mutations:** Hyper Olfactory, Serrated Dental Development

**Defects:** Exoskeletal form, Social Animal (see below) and any one defect of the character's choice

## SWARM QUEEN (NPC ONLY)

**Ability Modifier:** Charisma +4

**Skill modifier:** Diplomacy +2. Swarm queen beastmen add Diplomacy to their permanent class skill list.

**Mutations:** Complete Wing Development, Gigantism, Hyper Olfactory, Pheromone emission (advanced three times), Serrated Dental Development

**Defects:** Exoskeletal form (see below)

## NEW MUTATIONS

### PHEROMONE EMISSION

You emit chemicals that have a soothing effect. The more acute a character's sense of smell the more he will be affected by these chemicals.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information and Handle Animal skill checks. When dealing with a character or animal that possesses the Hyper Olfactory mutation or Scent feat, you gain double these bonuses.

Since you emit pheromones all the time, anyone with the Hyper Olfactory feat gains a +4 bonus on any skill check to track you.

In addition to the above benefits that are always in effect, once per day you may affect a creature or character with the Hyper Olfactory mutation or Scent feat with any of the following effects: Anxiety Trigger, Attraction Trigger, Charm Person or Fight Trigger. These effects work as described under the Neural feats of the same names except that the saving throw DC is 15+ your Charisma modifier rather than the usual 10.

**Advancement:** Each time you advance this mutation the skill bonus increases by +2 and the number of times each day you can influence the emotions of characters with the Hyper Olfactory or Scent mutation increases by one.



# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

## NEW DEFECTS

### EXOSKELETAL FORM

Although you have a hard exoskeleton to protect you, your internal organs are largely undefended, causing attacks which breach your shell to be all that much more deadly.

**Penalty:** You increase the damage multiplier of a critical by 1 (so a weapon that normally inflicted double damage would inflict triple).

**Advancement:** The damage multiplier increases by 1 each time this mutation is advanced (x4, x5 etc.)

### SOCIAL ANIMAL

You are uncomfortable alone and work much better in groups.

**Penalty:** When you are more than 60 ft. away from your nearest teammate (strangers do not count so a social animal could receive this penalty in the middle of a crowded square) you are considered shaken (-2 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws).

### EXAMPLE SWARM: KL'ACK'LY

Kl'ack'ly is a proud warrior of the Swarm. In any conflict against them he will be on the front line proving his loyalty to his hive mother.

**Kl'ack'ly (Mutant Strong Hero 3):** CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6; HP 20; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; Defense 18, touch 13, flatfooted 17 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +5 equipment); BAB +3; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d12+5, Greataxe), or +4 ranged (1d4, Sling); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, scent, social animal; AL Swarm Queen; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 1; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Military (Survival)

**Background:** Tribal (Navigate)

**Mutations and Defects:** Hyper Olfactory, Serrated Dental Development, Exoskeletal Form, Social Animal, Negative Chemical Reaction

**Skills:** Craft (structural) +6, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Survival +7

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Possessions:** Chainmail, Greataxe, Sling

## HIGHWAYMEN

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** The highways and roads of the Twisted Earth are ours to defend.

**Symbol:** Black armor worn over pale grey fatigues.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Road Warrior

**Common Mutations:** All.

**Common Defects:** All.

### WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Highwaymen were charged with defending the Old 94 and the other, lesser roads of the Fertile Crescent since the time of the Fall. These warriors have always stood side by side with the Guardsmen when Bastion was threatened but have since expanded their range to guard all traffic on the Old 94. They also conduct anti-raider operations, tracking raiders great distances on their motorcycles in order to exterminate the gangs. Lastly this group will hire its members out to protect rich merchant caravans and prides itself on having never lost a protected shipment to raiders.

### THE REALITY

The Highwaymen were once a fragment of the Wisconsin Highway Patrol and have patrolled the roads of the Fertile Crescent for centuries, waging a war against the many raider gangs in the area. They are so effective at this that the Fertile Crescent sees very little raider activity along the main artery, with the Old 94 (the main focus of Highwayman patrols) being exceptionally safe for travel and trade.

Today this faction is extremely powerful and almost universally respected and is seen as a strong force for stability and trade in the region. As their interests have expanded from protecting the immediate vicinity of Bastion (which they once did on horseback) to gas-powered vehicle patrols of the entire Old 94, the Highwaymen have begun to see themselves as stewards over the entire region.

As tensions between Purity and Bastion continue to increase, there is increasing tension within the Highwaymen as to whether or not they should pick sides if tensions burst into open hostilities. Many of the older members see themselves as protectors of Bastion first and advocate taking that role once again, even to the extent of using their powerful patrol vehicles to deny the Old 94 to the CrystalTime. Others, mostly the younger members think the faction should remain neutral and pursue its mission of protecting trade and travel. These tensions are not known outside the organization, since the Highwaymen see them as an internal matter, but the tensions in the faction are deep. It may be that a war between Bastion and Purity would rip this faction apart, with some protecting the roads and some fighting alongside the Guardsmen as they always have.

### EXAMPLE HIGHWAYMEN: TRAILRUNNER

Born in the Horseclans, Trailrunner felt the call of a different kind of steed, one faster than any horse. Turning his back on his people and on tradition, he joined the Highwaymen. Frequently this puts him in conflict with his brother, a leader of the Horseclans, Trailblazer but if a message needed to be sent to the Horseclans, Trailrunner would be a good person to contact to deliver that message. He also has a thorough knowledge of the wasteland regions of the Fertile Crescent and is a valuable scout for the patrol.

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## Trailrunner (Post-Apocalyptic Hero 3/Road Warrior 6):

CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 6d10+12; HP 65; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 18, flatfooted 18 (+3 Dex, +5 class, +3 equipment); BAB +8; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4, Knife), or +11 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Highwaymen; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +5; AP 4; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Military (DW) (Survival)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Drive)

**Skills:** Drive +18, Hide +4, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Tactics) +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Navigate +7, Pilot +5, Repair +14, Spot +8, Survival +15

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Driving, Double Tap, Drive-By Attack, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Vehicle Expert

**Talents (Post-Apocalyptic Hero):** Conserve, Wasteland Lore

**Talents (Road Warrior):** Boarding Party, Offensive Driving, Vehicular Evasion, Master Mechanic

**Possessions:** Undercover Vest, Knife, S&W M29, Dirtbike

## HORSE CLANS

**Background Options:** Tribal

**Attitude:** The desert horse is man's best friend. With a horse and an open range a man can defeat most opponents and elude those he cannot.

**Symbol:** A gold scimitar over a black background (usually worn as a flag that flies from the tail of the clansman's horse).

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Symbiont, Weapon Master (bow) [from Wasteland Fury]

**Common Mutations:** All.

**Common Defects:** All.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Horse Clans are known for three things: their bond with their hardy mounts, their shrewd (some would say dishonest) method of trading and their skill with the bow (especially from horseback). A truly unique faction, the Horse Clan is a cross between a large band of tribals and a trading cartel. They wander the Fertile Crescent to sell a product only they can provide that has proven extremely valuable to the residents of the region. When provoked to violence the tales of their savagery are quite well known, making even hardened raider gangs afraid to attack them or even get in the way of their large stampeding herds.

## THE REALITY

No one is sure how the modern clan structure of the Horse Clans came into existence, not even the clansmen themselves, as they have no writing, only an oral tradition. Although their histories of later times are remarkably accurate and complete, the years immediately following the

Fall have faded into the mists of the past. In the years after the Fall they came into the Fertile Crescent infrequently, seeking to escape the harshest winters of the Canadian north.

These were wild years, when the Fall was still fresh in the memories of man and the Earth herself lashed out from the damage she had suffered. Huge electrical disturbances, freak rain and snow storms and massive twisters all took their toll on America and the Horse Clans seemed content to wander the Canadian wilderness which, although relatively unscathed by the weapons of the Fall, is still said to be inhabited by some of the most terrible creatures in all of the Twisted Earth.

As the weather in the Fertile Crescent began to calm and the winters in the north seemed to last longer and longer, the clans gradually began spending more time on the rain swept steppes of the region which seemed almost perfectly suited to raising the horses that formed the center of their tribal structure. The clans also found a ready market for the hardy horses they raised, which they trade for food, water and technology. For a time it seemed the wandering clans had settled down, but with the increase in predators in the region such as buzzbees and howlcats, there some clansmen who suggest it is time to send scouts to the south and west.

As their number grow there are also population pressures being put on at least some of the clans to seek new grazing lands for their herds. Although it is doubtful that all the clans would move on, there are indications that the group plans to send explorers in every direction except the charred, irradiated east to look for new territory.

## EXAMPLE HORSE CLANS: STAR WANDERER

The brother of Trailrunner and leader of a large clan, Star Wanderer is very aggressive toward the more civilized folk, harboring resentment over his brother's abandonment of the clan. If he had stayed with the clan, Trailrunner would be the clan leader, a responsibility Star Wanderer does not want and has had thrust upon him. It is possible that the animosity between these two brothers will lead to much greater conflict between Bastion and the Horse Clans.

**Star Wanderer (Tough Hero 3/Symbiote 7):** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d10+9 plus 7d8+21 plus 3; HP 82; Mas 16; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; Defense 20, touch 18, flatfooted 18 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +2 equipment); BAB +7; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, Hatchet), or +10 ranged (1d8, Compound Bow); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Horse Clans; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +7; AP 5; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Herdsman (Handle Animal, Ride)

**Background:** Tribal (Spot)

**Skills:** Handle Animal +8, Listen +4, Navigate +7, Ride +17, Spot +10, Survival +15

**Feats:** Alertness, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Drive-By Attack, Far Shot, Guide, Improved Initiative, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Tough Hero):** Robust, Remain Conscious

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**Talents (Symbiote):** Animal Partner, Symbiote Opportunist, Bond Of Friendship

**Possessions:** Leather, Hatchet, Compound Bow, Desert Horse

## HOSPITLARS

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** The power to heal is the greatest power known to man. It was separates man from the animals and separates the advanced man from barbarism.

**Symbol:** A red cross on a white background

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Juju Doctor, Medicine Man

**Common Mutations:** All.

**Common Defects:** All.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Hospitlars are almost universally welcomed in the Fertile Crescent, bringing their knowledge of the medicine of the ancients to the cities of the region in an attempt to improve quality of life for all. Only in Troy and Fort Toll are they refused, since they will tend to a mutant as quickly as a human, providing aid based on need - not by race or wealth. Although they are healers the Hospitlars recognize that the world is a dangerous place and fully two-thirds of the group are members of the militant order, who protect the doctors and the valuable medicines they bring to the wasteland. Despite the potent firepower possessed by these militant Hospitlars, the organization is known to have never started a fight, engaging in battle only to protect themselves or their patients.

## THE REALITY

The Hospitlars are a rarity in the Twisted Earth: a truly benevolent group that seeks to help their fellow man. Preaching tolerance and hope, they have fought to keep the vast medical knowledge of the ancients intact and bring the fruits of that knowledge to those who need it the most. They also teach some of what they know to the tribes they encounter and are considered the inventors of the mysterious Juju by some of the Fertile Crescent's shaman.

Based out of Bastion for over a century, the Hospitlars recently discovered an amazingly intact ancient hospital in the ruins of Bricktop. After working their way past its defenses, the organization took over the large building, using the robots that kept the hospital so pristine to help protect their wondrous find. Although has made the faction even more powerful and influential, the worship and adoration of the primitive Bricktop locals has put the Hospitlars in the unwanted position of community leadership. In an effort to raise the citizens of Bricktop from barbarism, the Hospitlars have agreed to rule them temporarily and have brought in the renowned Learned to act as teachers, bringing the squalid community by leaps and bounds toward standing as equals with the more advanced cities of the region.

## EXAMPLE HOSPITLAR: SPONSOR

Sponsor is a young medic sent to tend to the "flock" in Calder following the death of the former Hospitlar representative there. The brother leading the Sentinel hospital has sent Sponsor to tend to the community until a new leader can be selected. Though talented and diligent, Sponsor is a bit out of his depth to actually run a hospital but will heal any injured to the best of his ability. Those who seem able to pay will be asked for a donation.

**Sponsor (Dedicated Hero 3):** CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; HP 14; Mas 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 12, touch 12, flatfooted 12 (+2 class); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (by weapon), or +2 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Hospitlars; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; AP 1; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

**Occupation:** Doctor (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences], Treat Injury)

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Knowledge [Mutant Lore])

**Skills:** Craft (pharmaceutical) +10, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +9, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +8, Knowledge (Technology) +8, Sense Motive +8, Survival +8, Treat Injury +13

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Medical Expert, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surgery

**Talents (Dedicated Hero):** Healing Knack, Healing Touch 1

**Possessions:** Medical Kit

## HOWLCATS (NPC ONLY)

**Background Options:** Feral

**Attitude:** Everyone who is not of us is food.

**Symbol:** Howlcats mark their territory with the skulls of creatures they have killed (especially the more dangerous ones). While this is intended as a sign to other males to avoid the howlcat's hunting grounds, the people of the Twisted Earth use these markers to avoid their territory as well whenever possible.

**Common Classes:** Since the howlcats are physically unable to use man made weapons they tend to take levels in Basic Classes only, concentrating on the physical classes (Strong, Fast and Tough Hero).

**Common Mutations:** See below.

**Common Defects:** See below.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

Outsiders consider the Howlcats just another of the regions fearsome predators, along with the Buzzbee and the Lake Dragon. They are avoided and even hunted whenever possible. The Howlcats are known for their fearsome nature, hunting in packs, with one male leading many females who are also his mates. They are also known for the odd shrieking



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noises they make to one another, both when at rest and when hunting to coordinate attacks.

## THE REALITY

What most of the residents of the region do not realize is that howlcats are in fact sentient, with their own language and culture. These creatures are mutated cheetahs that have achieved sentience but still lack the physical ability to speak human languages or use human implements. This prevents mankind from recognizing them as a sentient species (and indeed the Howlcats feel the same about humanity).

## HOWLCAT GENOTYPE

*Modified Cheetah Bestial Genotype*

**Ability modifier:** +2 Dexterity

**Skill modifier:** None.

**Special:** +2 Initiative

**Mutations:** Burst of Speed (advanced), Claws (advanced x2), Shriek (advanced x2)

**Defects:** Carnivore, Muzzle (advanced x2), Paws (advanced x2), Quadruped

## NEW MUTATIONS

### BURST OF SPEED

You move tremendously fast for short periods of time.

**Benefit:** You can double your Movement for 1-10 rounds plus a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier. After engaging in this burst of speed you are fatigued until you rest for one hour. After resting you may use this ability again.

**Advancement:** Advancing this mutation increases the movement multiplier (x3 Movement, x4 Movement etc.)

**Special:** The Endurance feat increases the duration of the burst of speed mutation for 4 rounds. Mutants with the Endurance feat only need to rest for 30 minutes between bursts of speed.

## NEW DEFECTS

### CARNIVORE

You eat only meat, a trait which can be sensed by herbivores and makes it difficult for them to trust you.

**Penalty:** You cannot digest any plant-based foods and only derive nourishment from the consumption of meat (a commodity that can be difficult to acquire in the Twisted Earth). In addition you cannot ride an herbivorous mount (the vast majority of mounted animals) and suffer a -6 penalty to Handle Animal and Ride skill checks when dealing with herbivorous animals.

When dealing with mutants (or sentient mutant animals), those with the herbivore defect also have trouble trusting you and you suffer a -2 penalty on Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information skill checks when dealing with them.

**Advancement:** Advancing this mutation once means you cannot get along with non-sentient herbivores at all (they will either flee you or attack if forced to remain close) and your penalty for dealing with sentient herbivores is increased to -4. Each additional time past the first this mutation is advanced grants all herbivores (sentient and non-sentient) a +1 morale bonus to melee damage against you.

## MUZZLE

Your face has a distinctly animal shape to it. This makes it difficult to hide your primal heritage as well as making it difficult for others to understand you when you speak. At higher levels of this defect characters might not realize they are listening to speech and think they are hearing the growls (or hisses, or whinnies) of an animal.

**Penalty:** You suffer a -5 penalty to disguise checks. When you speak, other characters must make a Listen check (DC 15) to understand you. Your speech impediment imposes a -2 penalty on all Diplomacy and Gather Information skill checks.

**Advancement:** Each time you advance this defect the DC of the Listen check to understand you increased by 5 and the penalty you suffer to Diplomacy and Gather Information skills worsens by 2.

## PAWS

You have paws rather than hands designed for manipulation. This makes it difficult for you to use weapons or tools.

**Penalty:** You suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls with non-natural weapons. You also suffer a -2 penalty on the following skill checks: Craft (all), Disable Device, Forgery, Open Lock, Sleight of Hand and Use Rope.

**Advancement:** Each time this defect is advanced the attack penalty worsens by -1 and the skill penalty worsens by -2.

## QUADRUPED

You have 4 legs rather than the usual biped 2 arms and 2 legs body type.

**Penalty:** You cannot take a move action and an attack action in the same round when attacking with a man-made weapon (anything that is not a natural weapon). To attack with a non-natural weapon (antlers, claws, teeth) you must rear back on your hind legs as a move action and suffer a -4 penalty on Balance skill checks. The Tumble skill is always a cross-class skill for you regardless of profession.

If you take the Dodge, Mobility or Spring Attack feats you may only use them when walking on all 4 legs.

## EXAMPLE HOWLCATS: OLD SNARL

From the files of Brother Willby, the Learned: *For almost 20 years this Old Snarl has led the largest, strongest pride in the Fertile Crescent. A shot from a hunter's gun removed part of the lip on the right side, giving the permanent appearance of a snarl and granting the creature at least*

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part of its name. Over the years this cunning creature has expanded the size of its herd with a brutality unheard of even for its kind, stalking any male that comes near his territory and taking control of his pride and territory. Based on the population studies of breeding Howlcat females conducted by my predecessor, Brother Ballantine, I estimate that Old Snarl controls exclusive breeding privileges with between 40 and 50% of all breeding females in the region. This has already resulted in an increase in the average size, strength and cunning of the Howlcat population of the entire region, with male offspring spreading north and west. Furthermore, these descendants of Old Snarl have, in almost every case, supplanted the breeding males in areas they have migrated to, increasing the genetic impact of this one magnificent animal on his race exponentially. As a final note in this entry, Old Snarl has entered the local mythology as a cautionary tale to youngsters to be mindful of their parents. It is said Old Snarl comes into the city at night and snatches disobedient children from their beds.

**Old Snarl (Cheetah Genotype Fast Hero 10/Strong Hero 5/Charismatic Hero 5):** CR 20; Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d8+20 plus 5d8+10 plus 5d6+10; HP 126; Mas 14; Init +7; Spd 45 ft; Defense 28, touch 28, flatfooted 23 (+5 Dex, +13 class); BAB +14; Grap +17; Atk +19 melee (1d10+6, Claws); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, burst of speed, claws, carnivore, muzzle, quadruped; AL Howlcats; SV Fort +11, Ref +14, Will +7; AP 10; Rep +10; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15.

**Occupation:** Predator (Intimidate)

**Background:** Feral (Hide, Move Silently, Survival)

**Mutations and Defects::** Bestial Genotype, Burst of Speed (x3), Claws (x3), Shriek (x2), Carnivore, Muzzle (x2), Paws (x3), Quadruped

**Skills:** Balance +18, Bluff +10, Climb +12, Hide +30, Intimidate +24, Jump +13, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Move Silently +30, Survival +24, Tumble +13

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Cleave, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Endurance, Frightful Presence, Mobility, Mutation Advancement (x2), Pack Tactics, Power Attack, Rend, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Spring Attack, Stealthy, Super Mutant, Track, Weapon Finesse (Claws)

**Talents (Fast Hero):** Increased Speed, Improved Increased Speed, Advanced Increased Speed, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash, Advanced Melee Smash

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Coordinate, Inspiration, Greater Inspiration

**Possessions:** None

## LEARNED

**Background Options:** Guardian

**Attitude:** The past must be preserved and studied so that its horrors are never again unleashed upon the world. Only by understanding the ancients can we avoid repeating their mistakes.

**Symbol:** A sun surrounded by nine planets. The third planet is foremost in the picture, a blue green world of water and clouds. The Learned claim this is the paradise that was Earth before the Fall.

**Common Classes:** Scholar, Tinker

**Common Mutations:** All.

**Common Defects:** All.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

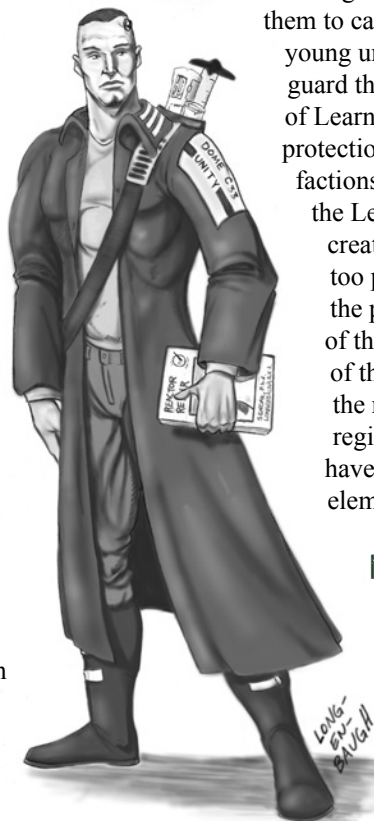
A peaceful faction, the Learned is dedicated to teaching the young of the Fertile Crescent and build schools in cities and villages across the region. Completely nonviolent, they are usually left alone even by the most hardened raider, since they care little for knowledge of ancient weapons or armor, spreading knowledge of the history of the world and teaching the young to read, write and perform basic mathematics.

## THE REALITY

Contrary to their carefully cultivated image, the Learned know a great deal about the nature of ancient weaponry and could build examples of many ancient weapons if they chose to. For the safety of their scientists, they have portrayed themselves as ignorant of “practical” science, allowing them to carry out their mission of educating the young unmolested. The Learned carefully guard their “great library”, located in the Hall of Learning in Bastion. Here, secure behind the protection of Bastion and its many powerful factions of warriors (especially the Guardsmen), the Learned have hidden many texts on the creation of ancient weapons that they feel are too powerful to fall into *anyone’s* hands. In the past there was a small but vocal minority of the faction who advocated sharing much of this knowledge with the Guardsmen, but the recent tensions over such silly issues as regional pride between Bastion and Purity have shown the wisdom of keeping some elements of the past unknown.

## EXAMPLE LEARNED: BROTHER WILLBY

Brother Willby is the foremost Learned expert on the flora and fauna of the Fertile Crescent. His particular passion is the region’s Howlcat population, especially Old Snarl, who he has studied for 20 years. Unknown to his brothers, Willby has been venturing into Old Snarl’s territory



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in an attempt to prove a radical theory: that the Howlcats have a language, which would prove their sentience. Although trespassing on the edge of Snarl's territory has yielded some information, Brother Willby needs to go deeper and has plans to build on a high hill deep in Snarl's territory where he can listen and attempt to piece together the bizarre patterns into language. He is quietly attempting to hire some intrepid, high level adventurers for this task but will make it clear he wants their protection to discourage the Howlcats, not harm them. Killing the creatures does nothing to prove his theories and Willby considers Old Snarl a friend in a bizarre way, having studied the creature from afar for so long.

**Brother Willby (Smart Hero 3/Scholar 7):** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+6 plus 7d6+14; HP 56; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 16, flatfooted 15 (+1 Dex, +5 class); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (weapon-1), or +5 ranged (weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Learned; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +11; AP 5; Rep +4; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Academic (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences], Knowledge [Physical Sciences], Research)

**Background:** Guardian (Knowledge [Mutant Lore])

**Skills:** Computer Use +15, Decipher Script +17, Knowledge (Ancient Lore) +13, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +8, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +21, Knowledge (History) +15, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +16, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +18, Navigate +15, Read/Write Language +3 (Unislang, Gutter Talk, Ancient), Research +18, Search +12, Speak Language +3 (Unislang, Gutter Talk, Ancient), Spot +7

**Feats:** Advanced Technology, Combat Expertise, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences], Knowledge [Physical Sciences]), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Vulture

**Talents (Smart Hero):** Savant (Knowledge [Earth and Life Sciences]), Linguist

**Talents (Scholar):** Gossip, Confusing Tirade, Ancient Technology, Ancient Knowledge (Knowledge [Mutant Lore]), Ancient Knowledge (Knowledge [Ancient Lore])

**Possessions:** Various books and scrolls

## MARINERS

**Background Options:** Ritual Preservationist

**Attitude:** The lakes are the key to survival.

**Symbol:** One of the large lake serpents the Mariners hunt laying in the sun.

**Common Classes:** Barbarian, Guardian, Survivalist

**Common Mutations:** All.

**Common Defects:** All.

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Mariners make their living on the lakes, fishing and hunting Lake Dragons in their custom designed craft. They

know the lakes better than anyone, and rumors persist that the Mariners have a secret city somewhere on the water unknown to those who are not part of their faction.

## THE REALITY

The lakes hold many secrets, and the Mariners use these secrets to aid their people in the cause for survival. In addition to their two commonly known land bases, the Mariners largest city is New Assail, built on an island far out in Lake Huron. Here the Mariners build their ships from parts scavenged from wrecks by Mariners all over the Great Lakes.

## EXAMPLE MARINER: NETTER

Netter is a guard on the cross-lake ferry, quite a promotion for someone who was hunting on the north edge of the lake 6 months ago. Having been rewarded with a rifle, his keen eye has allowed him to quickly develop into a natural marksman. He has been on the lake more of his life than dry land and could serve as a guide should the PCs need one.

**Netter (Post-Apocalyptic Hero 3/Survivalist 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d10+6; HP 43; Mas 15; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 17, touch 15, flatfooted 16 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +2 equipment); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, Spear), or +6 ranged (2d10, Pipe Rifle 7.62mm); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Mariners; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; AP 3; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Guide (Navigate, Survival)

**Background:** Ritual Preservationist (Drive)

**Skills:** Drive +10, Listen +11, Navigate +10, Spot +11, Survival +12

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Dead Aim, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track

**Talents (Post-Apocalyptic Hero):** Wasteland Lore, Survival Sense

**Talents (Survivalist):** Called Shot +1d6, Way of the Land

**Possessions:** Leather Armor, Spear, Pipe Rifle 7.62mm

## MILITIAMEN

Radical paramilitary group, control Fort Toll and "tax" the traffic that comes through (with the exception of the CrystalTime)

**Background Options:** Radical

**Attitude:** The citizens of Fort Toll are the only ones who matter. From the rest of the scum who "survived" the apocalypse we will take what we want.

**Symbol:** A fist holding a pistol, raised high as if in defiance.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Raider, Road Warrior

**Common Mutations:** None

**Common Defects:** None



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## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Militiamen have ruled Fort Toll since the Fall using a harsh code of “military justice”. Xenophobes and racists, they hate everything that the world has become, clinging to a (largely mythical) view of the paradise that came before. The community shuns outsiders and allows no one in. Only the Militiamen are allowed to leave the city and return. Anyone else who tries to leave is shot but if they do somehow manage to escape they will be killed if they try to return.

## THE REALITY

In many ways the Militiamen resemble the Guardsmen: rule by the military and a belief in the values of the old United States. That the two organizations could be so different, one embracing tolerance and looking to the future with the other clinging violently to a distorted view of the past might go further to explain the Fall than anything.

The Fort Toll militia was a group of radicals before the Fall, actively working to bring down what they saw as a corrupt and debauched government. When society began to unravel they attacked the city of Toledo in force and have ruled it with an iron fist since.

Recently the Militiamen have entered into an alliance with likeminded groups in a move that does not bode well for the peace loving peoples of the Fertile Crescent: the White Knights and the Pariahs. These three groups have offered their military might to Purity, encouraging it to raze the “weak and the free” cities on the far side of the lake.

## EXAMPLE MILITIAMAN: JEBEDIAH

A sergeant in the militia of Fort Toll, Jebediah sees himself as a great warrior destined to become a great general and then a king, like the warlords of the past he reads about constantly. In truth, while he is a talented warrior, the chainsword he found in a lucky strike while young has made him seem far more formidable which has caused him to become a little cocky. Still, he wields the chainsword well and as long as he has this powerful weapon at his side he is likely to go far.

**Jebediah (Strong Hero 3/Guardian 3):** CR 6; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d10+6; HP 43; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 25 ft; Defense 20, touch 15, flatfooted 19 (+1 Dex, +4 class, +5 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +9; Atk +10 melee (3d6+5/19-20, Chainsword), or +7 ranged (2d8, Pipe Rifle 7.62mmR); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Militiamen; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Military (DW) (Survival)

**Background:** Radical (Intimidate)

**Skills:** Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Tactics) +9, Repair +6, Spot +4

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons

Proficiency, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Guardian):** Defender +2, Weapon Focus

**Possessions:** Light Duty Vest, Chainsword, Pipe Rifle 7.62mmR

## NYR MEN

**Background Options:** Tribal

**Attitude:** The world has been magically transformed into a great arena of strength. Only the strong will survive to remake the world

**Symbol:** The nyr men love to paint on the walls of their dwellings. While these paintings vary greatly (with images of the Oracle and the game they hunt being the most common) they do serve to mark places where the nyr men have lived.

**Common Classes:** Barbarian, Symbiont

**Common Mutations:** Extreme Resilience, Gigantism, Increased Body Density, Protective Dermal Development

**Common Defects:** Attention Deficit, Atrophied Cerebellum, Hunchback

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Nyr men are huge primitive tribals. Once they lived in close proximity to the Horse Clans and the two groups fought bitterly. The nyr men were also known to attack nearby villages to seize resources or even simply to gain new access to hunting grounds. Recently these savages encountered a mysterious girl that they consider to be an Oracle and have made her their leader. Under her direction, they moved to the distant city of Apolis and have begun to clear the city of predators and repair the buildings.

## THE REALITY

Technically the nyr men are humans who have interbred so long they have many mutations in common. They consider themselves a distinct race however. Any mutant with any two of the common mutations or defects will be considered a Nyr Man not only by the residents of the Fertile Crescent but also by the Nyr Men themselves.

## EXAMPLE NYR MAN: SCRAPPER

Scrapper is a guard for the road crews attempting to repair the main road into Apolis. He knows the area around Apolis well and has even done some exploring further west. Mostly though, he devotes his attention with single-minded ferocity on his job of making sure the work goes undisturbed and will respond with shocking brutality to anyone who interrupts the wishes of his Oracle.

**Scrapper (Mutant Strong Hero 3/Barbarian 3):** CR 6; Large humanoid; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d12+6; HP 46; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 20 ft; Defense 23, touch 14, flatfooted 22 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 class, +4 natural, +5 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +13; Atk +8 melee (2d8+5/19-20, giant greatsword),

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or +7 ranged (1d10/19-20, giant crossbow); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 10 ft; SQ medical incompatibility, DR 5/- vs bludgeoning/concussion/slashing; AL Nyr men; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; AP 3; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6.

**Occupation:** Predator (Intimidate)

**Background:** Tribal (Craft [structural])

**Mutations and Defects:** Gigantism, Increased Body Density, Protective Dermal Development, Hunchback x2, Attention Deficit

**Skills:** Climb +4, Craft (structural) +6, Handle Animal +3, Jump +2, Knowledge (Tactics) +3, Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +6, Swim +2

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Great Cleave, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sunder, Withstand

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash

**Talents (Barbarian):** Rage 1/day, Junk Armor

**Possessions:** Medium Junk Armor, giant greatsword, giant crossbow

## PARIAHS

**Background Options:** Radical

**Attitude:** The Twisted Earth is hell, man's punishment for losing sight of the One True God. All are wicked and must be punished. Only those who admit that can be redeemed.

**Symbol:** A gold cross on a black flag.

**Common Classes:** Demagogue, Skulk

**Common Mutations:** None

**Common Defects:** None

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The Pariah is a group of religious fanatics who fought bitterly with the Guardsmen for control over Bastion in the days after the Fall. Their message of penitence, that the Fall is man's punishment and only by accepting this and moving on can he ever hope to be redeemed is a powerful one in the harsh environment the world has become. This racist group sees mutants as those whose evil is so great it has manifested physically and they will attempt to kill any encountered on sight.

## THE REALITY

The Pariah are known for their loud sermons and their groups of flagellants (poor souls who flog themselves bloody in an attempt to show their contrition for their "sins") but this group also has spies planted in most of the communities it seeks to destroy, especially Bastion.

## EXAMPLE PARIAH: SANDIN

Sandin is a pariah spy sent to watch and agitate in Bastion. Mostly he just keeps tabs on the city but if he meets a like-minded individual he will also begin to spew his extreme religious views in an attempt to gain a convert.

**Sandin (Charismatic Hero 3/Skulk 7):** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6 plus 7d8; HP 43; Mas 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 18, flatfooted 19 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +3 equipment); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+2, unarmed strike), or +8 ranged (2d6, colt python); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL Pariah; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +6; AP 5; Rep +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Occupation:** Criminal (Hide, Move Silently)

**Background:** Radical (Intimidate)

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +5, Disguise +4, Gather Information +7, Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +3

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Primitive Technology, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Spring Attack, Super-Charismatic

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Coordinate, Inspiration

**Talents (Skulk):** Sweep, Skill Mastery, Sneak Attack +2d6, Improved Sweep

**Possessions:** undercover vest , colt python

## RAIDERS

Like other areas of the Twisted Earth, the Fertile Crescent has its share of raider troubles. Some of the area's major raider gangs are listed below.

## APOCALYPSE HORSEMEN

This gang is an offshoot of the Pariahs and actually allows members of that faction to ride with them for short periods of time. They believe the world ended and that they are *in* hell. Not a hell on Earth, *the* hell. They ride and attack villages, leaving none alive.

## GOLDEN HORDE

This raider gang is an offshoot of the Horse Clans. These raiders revere Genghis Khan and emulate his tactics and strategies, using horse and rifle to raid the villages of the Fertile Crescent. They avoid areas that are well defended, especially by defenders with firearms, preferring to strike at the weak or tribals with limited access to technology. Lately this gang's numbers have swelled as young members of the Horse Clans grow impatient with their elders' preference to stay in the Fertile Crescent and trade, while the grazing lands get ever more crowded.

## NIGHTRIDERS

This bizarre group is quite effective in sacking villages and taking caravans because they only attack during the night. Mutants with the ability to see in the dark and humans wearing nightvision goggles, this group comes out of nowhere, destroying all light sources their opponents could use to see and mount a defense before moving in for the kill.

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The Highwaymen claim this gang was once a rogue unit of soldiers from the time of the Fall and have given their members shoot on sight orders when this gang is encountered.

## TRIBALS

In addition to the major factions and cities of the region, there are a number of small, primitive tribes that thrive in the Fertile Crescent due to its relatively mild climate and plentiful water.

### ALTOONA TRIBE

This small tribe lives in the ruins of Eau Claire. Sitting right on the Old 94, this tribe trades with both the Horse Clans and has frequent contact with Bastion as merchant caravans travel between Bastion and Apolis.

### BLACK WOLF TRIBE

Living peacefully on the shores of Lake Winnebago under the nominal protection of the Guardsmen, this tribe inhabits three small ancient cities that all serve as trade stops along the Old 41 between Bastion and Sentinel.

### CASCADE TRIBE

This large group of Ritual Preservationists lives along the Cascade River on the outskirts of what used to be Grand Rapids. Living between Purity and Troy this tribe maintains contact with both, revering the Purity as the bringers of “the shiny” (tiny bits of technology considered spiritual by the natives). They used to pay tribute to the Aberrant, and now they pay tribute to the White Knights in the form of fish and game.

They worship the nearby Gerald R. Ford airport, which is maintained and protected by a cadre of powerful robots, who for some reason were neither shut down as most of the robots in the area were before the war, nor were they ever given orders. They await their orders and conduct numerous tests to ensure that the small squadron of combat helicopters they protect are still in good working order.

### WHITE LAKE TRIBE

This large, peaceful tribe lives on the shores of the White Lake, about five miles north of Purity. Recently the CrystalTime have sought to expand to this lake and are trying to convince the natives to leave with offers of money, food and technology. So far the natives have refused and though tense, the contact between the two remains peaceful for now.

## WHITE KNIGHTS

**Background Options:** Visionary Reinventor

**Attitude:** Mutants are a stain on the gene pool. An aberration that must be cleansed before the world can ever be truly healed.

**Symbol:** Gold armor.

**Common Classes:** Guardian, Mutant Hunter, Road Warrior, Survivalist

**Common Mutations:** None

**Common Defects:** None

## WHAT OUTSIDERS KNOW

The White Knights were human slaves that rose up to throw off their cruel mutant masters, the Aberrant. After removing a threat to the entire region, the White Knights have become an even bigger threat, allying with the CrystalTime and pushing them for war with Bastion.

## THE REALITY

The White Knights possess the tremendous manufacturing base of Troy, which they use to manufacture everything from advanced armors to Combat Walkers (which they can make at the rate of one per year). Having had contact with the Cascade Tribesmen, the White Knights plan to attack the robots guarding the airport and seize the combat aircraft stored there for their faction. They believe if they can disassemble one of these aircraft and determine how they are made, allowing their automated factories to be configured to make more, that they will be invincible and will no longer need the CrystalTime or anyone else. They might be right.

### EXAMPLE WHITE KNIGHT: COUNCILOR MALBREY

The “councilor” is a brutal thug with the makings of a warlord. He sees his time as being close, when he and his “pure” brethren will sweep across the Fertile Crescent and take this land for God’s creation, man, not the twisted *thing* that has somehow inherited it.

**Councilor Malbrey (Post-Apocalyptic Hero 4/Survivalist 6/Mutant Hunter 4):** CR 14; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d8+8 plus 6d10+12 plus 4d10+8; HP 101; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 23, touch 20, flatfooted 21 (+2 Dex, +8 class, +3 equipment); BAB +13; Grap +14; Atk +14 melee (1d6+1, rifle butt), or +16 ranged (2d6, OC-14 Groza); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ ; AL White Knight; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +8; AP 7; Rep +4; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Military (DW) (Knowledge [Tactics])

**Background:** Visionary Reinventor (Drive)

**Skills:** Drive +6, Hide +2, Knowledge (Ancient Lore) +2, Knowledge (Mutant Lore) +16, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Knowledge (Technology) +4, Listen +9, Move Silently +4, Navigate +10, Repair +4, Search +2, Spot +13, Survival +19, Treat Injury +7

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Burst Fire, Double Tap, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Post-Apocalyptic Technology, Power Attack, Primitive Technology, Quick Draw, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus

**Talents (Post-Apocalyptic Hero):** Mutation Knowledge, Technologist



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**Talents (Survivalist):** Way of the Land, Hunter, Called Shot +2d6

**Talents (Mutant Hunter):** Smite Mutant, Mutant Hunter +1, Mutant Slayer

**Possessions:** undercover vest, OC-14 Groza assault rifle, 2 boxes 9mm ammunition.



## THINGS

### BUZZBEES

The buzzbee is an enormous mutated bee, one of the most dangerous predators in the Fertile Crescent because of its ability to fly and its extremely good eyesight. When wild these creatures work from a Hive like their ancestors from the past, serving a Queen and bringing meat back to the Hive for food. When a target is spotted they will communicate its location to their fellows and attack in groups. These creatures are also used as mounts by warriors from the Hive.

### SPECIES TRAITS

Buzzbees have the following traits.

**Maneuverable (Ex):** The Buzzbee has Good maneuverability and gains a +4 Dodge bonus to Defense when in flight.

**Poison (Ex):** Fortitude DC 13 plus the Buzzbee's Con modifier (15 for the standard buzzbee, 17 for the advanced), injury, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dexterity. The Buzzbee injects its victim with a powerful paralytic poison. Any creature with its Dexterity reduced to 0 by this poison is incapable of movement and will eventually die (10-20 minutes). The Buzzbee typically paralyzes its victim and then carries it back to its Hive to be devoured by the group.

**Scent (Ex):** The Buzzbee can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes and track by sense of smell.

**Sharp Eyes (Ex):** The Buzzbee has a +8 racial bonus on Spot skill checks and can make unmodified Spot checks at ranges of a mile or less when in the air.

**Buzzbee:** CR 3; Medium-size vermin; HD 5d8+10; HP 35; Mas 15; Init +8; Spd 20 ft, Fly 100 ft (Good); Defense 14 (18 when flying), touch 14 (18 when flying), flatfooted 10 (+0 size, +4 Dex); BAB +3; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 Sting plus poison); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SA Poison; SQ Maneuverable, Scent, Sharp Eyes; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Listen +7, Spot +14

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative

**Advancement:** 6-10 HD (Large)

**Advanced Buzzbee:** CR 5; Large-size vermin; HD 8d8+32; HP 72; Mas 14; Init +6; Spd 20 ft, Fly 80 ft (Good); Defense 13 (17 when flying), touch 11 (15 when flying), flatfooted 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural); BAB +6; Grap +17; Atk +13 melee (1d10+7 Sting plus poison); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach

5 ft; SA Poison; SQ Maneuverable, Scent, Sharp Eyes; AL none; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 24, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Listen +10, Spot +14

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Bite)

## LAKE DRAGONS (NESSIES)

Lake Dragons (called Nessies by the Mariners who live on the lakes) are enormous mutated crocodiles that prey on anything in the water or near its banks. Lake Dragons use the lake itself as both a weapon and a defense. When they have a good hold on prey, or when they are threatened, the Lake Dragon will dive deep into the cold dark waters of the lakes. This is why the Mariners hunt them with harpoons, to hold the creatures near the surface so that they can be killed.

### SPECIES TRAITS

Lake Dragons have the following traits.

**Amphibious (Ex):** The Lake Dragon gains a +8 bonus on Swim checks and can take 10 on Swim checks even when under pressure or endangered. It can also hold its breath as described in the Enhanced Respiration mutation. The Lake Dragon can use the run action while swimming so long as it swims in a straight line. The Lake Dragon also suffers no size penalty to Move Silently while swimming.

**Blood Lust (Ex):** The taste of blood drives the Lake Dragon into a frenzy. If it successfully hits with its bite attack, the Yeti gains a +4 morale bonus to hit and damage for the next 10 rounds.

**Camouflage (Ex):** The Lake Dragon can lay still in water with only its eyes and nostrils showing, gaining a +10 Cover bonus on Hide skill checks.

**Lockjaw (Ex):** If a Lake Dragon hits with its bite it may make a grapple check as a free action. A grappled creature suffers bite damage each round (the Lake Dragon does not need to make an attack roll). Lake Dragons will typically try to lock onto a creature then drag it below the surface, drowning it while they crush it with their powerful jaws.

**Low-Light Vision (Ex):** Lake Dragons possess low-light vision out to a range of 60 ft.

**Lake Dragon:** CR 5; Large-size animal; HD 8d8+32; HP 72; Mas 21; Init +0; Spd 20 ft, Swim 30 ft; Defense 19, touch 9, flatfooted 19 (-1 size, +0 Dex, +10 natural); BAB +6; Grap +18; Atk +14 melee (2d8+8 bite); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 5 ft; SA Lockjaw; SQ Amphibious, Blood Lust, Camouflage, Lowlight vision; AL none; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3; AP n/a; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Hide +2 (+12 when lying submerged), Listen +3, Move Silently +1 (+5 in the water), Spot +3, Swim +16

**Feats:** Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (Bite)

**Advancement:** 10-14 HD (Huge)

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**Lake Dragon:** CR 9; Huge-size animal; HD 14d8+112; HP 182; Mas 26; Init -1; Spd 20 ft, Swim 30 ft; Defense 20, touch 7, flatfooted 20 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +13 natural); BAB +10; Grap +30; Atk +20 melee (2d10+12 bite); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 10 ft; SA Lockjaw; SQ Amphibious, Blood Lust, Camouflage, Lowlight vision; AL none; SV Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +5; AP n/a; Rep +0; Str 35, Dex 8, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Hide +1 (+11 when lying submerged), Listen +5, Move Silently +0 (+8 in the water), Spot +5, Swim +16

**Feats:** Alertness (x2), Run, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (Bite)

## YETI

The Yeti is a creature of the far north, an example of the terrifying and dangerous process of natural selection that has taken place in the Canadian wilderness since the Fall. A mutated polar bear, these killing machines thankfully only travel south to the Fertile Crescent during the worst winters.

## SPECIES TRAITS

Yeti have the following traits.

**Blood Lust (Ex):** The taste of blood drives the Yeti into a frenzy. If it successfully hits with its bite attack, the Yeti gains a +4 morale bonus to hit and damage for the next 10 rounds.

**Camouflage (Ex):** The Yeti gains a +12 bonus to Hide checks in arctic or snow-covered terrain.

**Padded feet (Ex):** The Yeti's soft, padded feet grant it a +6 bonus to Move Silently skill checks and a +8 bonus to Swim skill checks.

**Immunity to cold (Ex):** The Yeti is completely immune to all cold damage and never needs to make a saving throw to resist environmental damage from the cold, even in the harshest winter. It is vulnerable to fire and suffers an additional +50% damage from fire attacks.

**Low-Light Vision (Ex):** Yeti possess low-light vision out to a range of 60 ft.

**Rend (Ex):** If a Yeti hits with both claws it automatically grapples its target. A grappled target suffers claw damage from the Yeti each round automatically and is considered flat-footed against the Yeti's bite attack.

**Scent (Ex):** The Yeti can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes and track by sense of smell. These voracious carnivores have been known to follow a blood trail for miles.

**Yeti:** CR 7; Large-size animal; HD 10d8+40; HP 90; Mas 19; Init +1; Spd 40 ft, Swim 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 10, flatfooted 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); BAB +7; Grap +19; Atk +14 melee (1d8+8 claw); Full Atk +14/+14 melee (1d6+8 Claws) and +14 melee (2d6+8 bite); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 5 ft; SA Rend; SQ Blood Lust, Camouflage, Immunity to Cold, Low-light Vision, Scent; AL none; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +4; AP n/a; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Hide +2 (+14 in arctic conditions), Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Swim +16

**Feats:** Alertness, Multiattack, Run, Stealthy

**Advancement:** 11-14 HD (Large)

**Advanced Yeti:** CR 10; Large-size animal; HD 14d8+70; HP 140; Mas 20; Init +1; Spd 40 ft, Swim 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 10, flatfooted 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); BAB +10; Grap +22; Atk +17 melee (1d8+8 claw); Full Atk +17/+17 melee (1d6+8 Claws) and +17 melee (2d6+8 bite); FS 10 ft by 10 ft; Reach 5 ft; SA Rend; SQ Blood Lust, Camouflage, Immunity to Cold, Low-light Vision, Scent; AL none; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +5; AP n/a; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Hide +4 (+16 in arctic conditions), Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +9, Swim +16

**Feats:** Alertness, Multiattack, Run, Stealthy

## GAMES

Games are an important part of even the most primitive societies. At the time of the Fall, sports were still popular viewing events but were played by robots, rather than man. It seemed in their decadence mankind had lost the desire for physical activity. Many games that predate the Fall are now as popular, if not more than they ever were. For the most part these games will serve as a backdrop for adventures rather than the adventure itself. While a brief synopsis is given for the first two games popular in the Fertile Crescent, the last game, Skinball is given the full mini-game treatment, allowing the game to serve not as the backdrop to an adventure but the adventure itself.

## HARDBALL

*Pre-war name: Baseball*

Also known as "stickball" in many areas, Hardball is a popular, non-contact sport that can be played by anyone with a ball and a stick. The emphasis in stickball is on hand-eye coordination and speed (there no home runs, so even exceptionally long hits can result in outs if the hitter does not hustle around the bases).

## HORSEBALL

*Pre-war name: Polo*

Horseball is the favored sport of the Horse Clans and has only been witnessed by a handful of outsiders. Played on horseback, this team sport involves players striking a ball with a long stick along the ground until they score by placing it in a goal. Since this sport requires substantial skill at horsemanship it is unlikely that a non-clansmen would be able to play it successfully.

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## SKINBALL

*Pre-war name: Football*

The most important game in the Fertile Crescent, Skinball has become a standard of pride between cities, with teams traveling across the region to earn bragging rights. Each team plays every other team in the league once, and after all the teams have played one another, the teams with the most wins play each other one last time, on neutral ground, for the Crescent Cup.

The following are the Skinball teams located in the Fertile Crescent along with each team's general proficiency at offense and defense:

Apolis Silverbacks (Offense 5, Defense 15)  
Bastion Gronts (Offense 12, Defense 13)  
Bricktop Radwolves (Offense 10, Defense 10)  
Calder Fraxx (Offense 14, Defense 6)  
Feeding Ground Dome Vultures (Offense 8, Defense 17)  
Fort Toll Missiles (Offense 15, Defense 7)  
North Shore Nessies (Offense 10, Defense 14)  
Purity Whitecoats (Offense 12, Defense 10)  
Sentinel Radstorm (Offense 13, Defense 13)  
Troy Tornadoes (Offense 12, Defense 8)

A season is nine games, with the two top teams then playing a 10<sup>th</sup> game. The final game is chosen among cities did not finish in the top two positions, making the final game a neutral site game. Games are played at the rate of one per month, meaning the entire season takes 10 months of the year, with a brief two-month stint to rest and regroup before it all starts again.

## DETERMINING A SCORE

Most often a game will occur in the background of an adventure, be a simple point of interest for a character (did their home team win or lose that week) or the character will have bet money on the game. In these cases all that is needed is a final score for the game, or perhaps a quarter by quarter score if the character is close enough to keep track of the game while it is happening.

To determine the score of a game at halftime, make one offense roll for each team, with the opposition making an opposed roll for their defense. To determine the final score, perform these opposed rolls again for the second half, then add the scores together. The only score that is impossible in a game of Skinball is one point, so results of one point can be ignored. Scores of 2 or higher are possible in any combination.

If a negative number is rolled on a team's offense check this means the opposing defense has scored, adding the result of the points to the opposing team's score.

**Example of play:** For example the characters are adventuring in Apolis during a game between the Apolis Silverbacks and the Troy Tornadoes. A mutant character in the party always bets against the Tornadoes on principle and puts down 100 cp on the Silverbacks.

The GM decides to let the player with money on the game roll for the Silverbacks while he rolls for the Tornadoes. For the Silverbacks make an offense check, and rolls a 12, adding 5 for the Apolis Offense for a total of 17. The Tornadoes make a defense check, rolling a 4, adding 8 for the Troy defense for a total of 12. The Apolis team scores 5 points (17-12).

Then the Tornadoes make their offense check. The GM rolls an 18 and adds the Troy offense of 12 for a total of 30. The Silverbacks make a Defense check rolling a 4, adding 15 for the Silverback defense for a total of 19. The Troy team scores 11 points (30-19).

The score at halftime is Troy 11, Apolis 5.

For the second half the process is repeated. The Silverbacks make an offense check, rolling a 7, plus 5 for their offense for a total of 12. The Tornadoes roll a 13 plus 8 for their Defense for a total of 21. This means that the Troy defense scores 9 points in the second half on defense alone (12-21 for a total of -9).

The Troy Tornadoes make an offense check, rolling a 12 adding 12 for their offense for a total of 24. The Silverbacks roll a 4 plus 15 for their Defense for a total of 19. This means Troy scores an additional 5 points on offense (24-19).

The final score is a blowout, Troy 25, Apolis 5.

**Outcome of play:** Having lost his 100 cp and into his 4<sup>th</sup> drink, the player is happy to see the Troy Tornadoes come in for a drink after the game to celebrate "human superiority". Looks like a friendly fight might be in the offing.

## OPTIONAL RULES

For those characters who find Skinball an enjoyable part of their game, they may want more detail added to the game.

**Fluctuation of ratings:** After each season the GM should roll for each team to determine if they got better or worse. Roll a d20 for each team's offense and defense. If the roll is equal to the team's rating then the team's rating stays the same. If the roll is below the team's rating then that rating is reduced by -1. If the roll is above the team's rating that rating is increased by +1.

For example in the off season the GM rolls for the Apolis Silverbacks to see if they have improved or reduced their rating. He rolls a 3 for the offense, meaning the woeful Silverback offense actually gets worse, being reduced from a 5 to a 4. Rolling for the defense he rolls an 18 meaning the Silverbacks already good defense gets better going from a 15 to a 16.



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**Breakthroughs:** If a 1 is rolled that score is reduced by -2 instead of -1. If a 20 is rolled that rating is increased by +2 instead of +1.

**Winning the Cup:** In addition to the normal improvement or reduction of ratings, the team that wins the Crescent Cup adds +1 to both its offense and defense ratings.

**Injuries:** If a team rolls a 1 on any offense or defense roll it has suffered a serious injury, losing a player for the year. Reduce the offense or defense of the team (whichever was being rolled at the time) by one for the rest of the season.

## JOINING A TEAM

Some players won't be content to watch or bet on their favorite team, they will want to play. The following rules show the modifiers PCs can grant a team by signing up to play.

## PICKING A POSITION

Each position in the game has one or more abilities and skills that affect it. For each of the skills or abilities listed, the player will improve his team's rating if he brings more to the team than they currently have. The requirements to improve the team are based on the team's ratings vs. the player's attributes and are listed below.

In order to have an effect the player must be better at the listed requirement than the team's rating. For example if a position ability is based on Strength, a character playing Quarterback with a 14 or higher Strength would increase the offense of a team with an offense of 13 or lower.

The bonuses granted by a PC playing are temporary meaning that one PC joining a team does not make it harder for a second PC who joins to increase the team's ratings. A PC joining a team also has no effect on whether a team improves or decreases its ratings in the off-season (though the changes in those ratings might increase or lessen a PC's impact on his team as it changes around him).

Finally there is every possibility that a PC playing for one team will see NPCs playing for the opposition.

## OFFENSIVE POSITIONS

These positions concentrate on scoring points and improve the team's offense rating.

### Quarterback

Arguably the most important offensive position, the quarterback can run with the ball or throw it. A multi-talented individual at this position can carry a team's offense all by himself.

**Throwing Power:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Throwing Accuracy:** Wisdom. If the player's Wisdom is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Running Power:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Running Speed and Elusiveness:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Coach on the Field:** Intelligence. If the player's Intelligence score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Field General:** Charisma. If the player's Charisma score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Running Back

Another important position, the running back will handle the ball more often than anyone but the quarterback. He can run and catch equally well.

**Running Power:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Running Speed and Elusiveness:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Receiving:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Receiver

Strictly a pass receiver, this character goes out and tries to catch balls thrown by the Quarterback.

**Go Long:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Over the middle:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Jump Ball:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Offensive Line

Though usually unrecognized, the offensive line is a huge key to any team's success. A team with a better offensive line will find it easier to run or pass.

**Pass Protection:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Run Blocking:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Fullback

A "heavy running back", the fullback provides a number of useful skills to his team.

**Running Power:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

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**Receiving:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Run Blocking:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

## Tight End

A "heavy receiver" the tight end provides both pass receiving and blocking for his team.

**Over the middle:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Pass Protection:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Run Blocking:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

## DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

These positions concentrate on preventing the other team from scoring and increase the team's defense rating.

### Defensive Line

This position concentrates on stopping the run and the pass and basically works to offset the opposing team's offensive line.

**Power Rush:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Speed Rush:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Stuff the Run:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Outside Linebacker

A fast linebacker that concentrates on preventing the pass.

**Pass Defense:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Power Rush:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Speed Rush:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

### Middle Linebacker

A heavy linebacker that concentrates on stopping the run, this player is also the leader of the defense because of his central location (opposite the quarterback to read whether a play is run or pass and central enough to shout that information to the entire defense).

**Power Rush:** Strength. If the player's Strength score is

higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Speed Rush:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Stuff the Run:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Coach on the Field:** Intelligence. If the player's Intelligence score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Read the Offense:** Wisdom. If the player's Wisdom score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Field General:** Charisma. If the player's Charisma score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

## Corner

These players work to counter the opposing team's receivers.

**Pass Defense:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Read the Offense:** Wisdom. If the player's Wisdom score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

## Safety

These players cover the middle of the field and can be called upon to play against the run or the pass.

**Pass Defense:** Dexterity. If the player's Dexterity score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Stuff the Run:** Constitution. If the player's Constitution score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

**Read the Offense:** Wisdom. If the player's Wisdom score is higher than the team's offense rating increase offense by +1 when the character is playing.

# THE FERTILE CRESCENT

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