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BEST EVER

AN EIGHTH WORLD ADVENTURE

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DAWN OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

BEST EVER

AN EIGHTH WORLD ADVENTURE

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As *BattleTech* celebrates its 25th anniversary and *Shadowrun* celebrates its 20th, the visionaries at Catalyst Game Labs have, for the first time ever, brought these two worlds together! Join us in a universe that combines the best of two fantastic game universes in a tournament to decide who is the best warrior of all time!

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The Best Ever is kind of compatible with *Shadowrun, 4th edtion*, and *A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG*, elbow grease to make fully compatible not included.

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BEST EVER™

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...BEST EVER...

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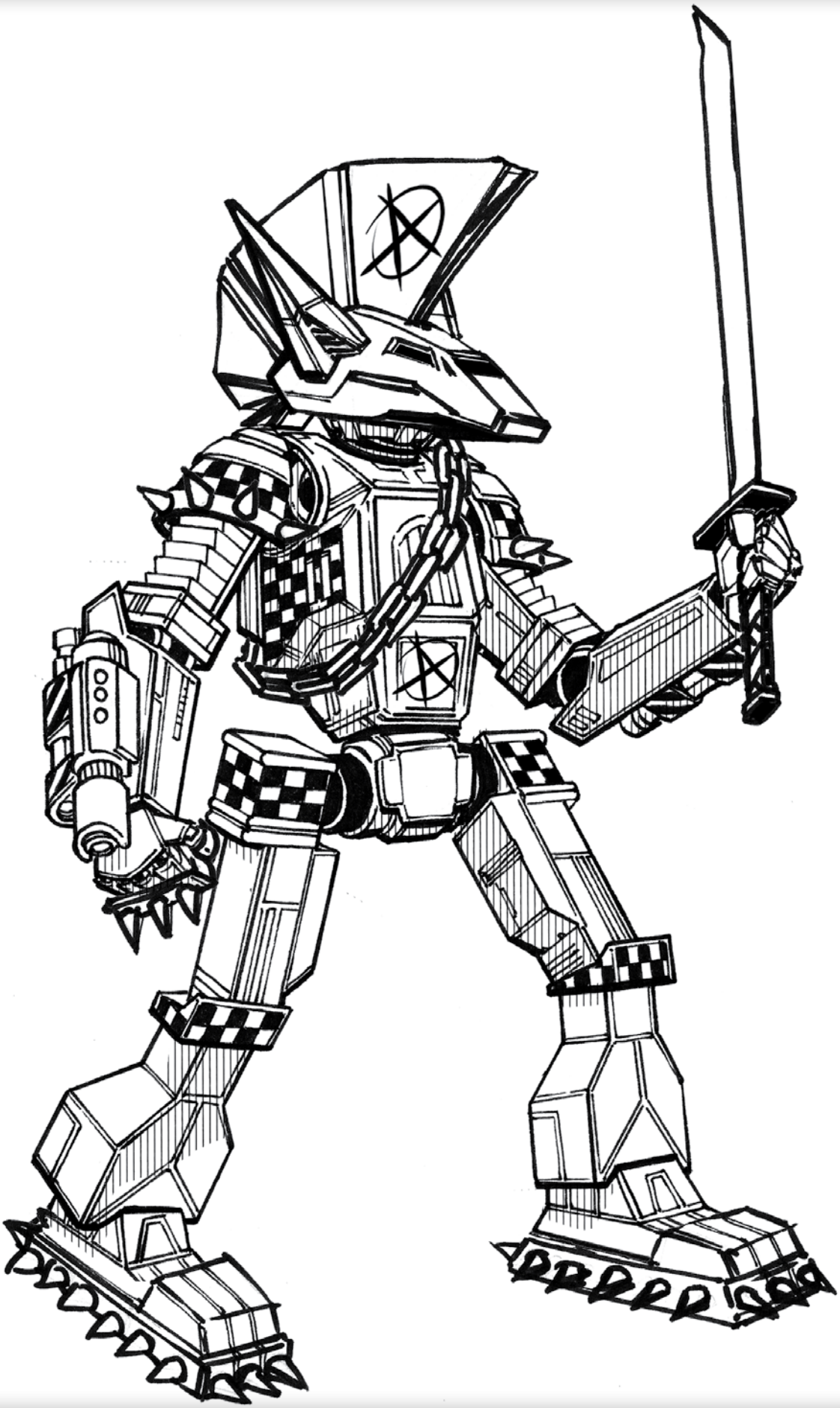


EIGHTH WORLD: ONE-THIRD BETTER THAN THE SIXTH WORLD

Urgent Message...

<<Transcript from *Countdown to the Best Ever*, airdate 30 March 3076, Solaris VII>>

Rich Robertson: This going to be big. Bigger than an *Atlas*. Bigger than a Great Dragon. Bigger than Sun-Tzu Liao's ego after a procession of ancestral spirits have told him how awesome *Xin Sheng* is. I mean *big*.

Dirk Diedrick: That's right, Rich. In a universe that has more ways to kill you than the number of outstanding warrants on interstellar pirate Kane XXIV, this is going to tell us who—or what—is the *most* deadly. We've been through four rounds already, and already seen enough lethal force to turn a whole legion of ComStar adepts into harmless, hooded ghosts. But it's just going to get wilder at the end!

RR: We've got four contestants left, the best of the best, and they've had to defeat people and things from every nation in the Inner Sphere to get where they are. But let's back up for a minute—I think you'll agree that the only people who could understand the magnitude of what are finalists have achieved are people who know the scope and history of our little corner of the universe and how it got to be that way. Like, by reading some sort of write-up or something.

DD: Who has time for that?

THE WORLD YOU LIVE IN, THOUGH WHY WE HAVE TO DESCRIBE IT TO YOU WHEN YOU'RE LIVING IN IT IS SOMEWHAT OF A MYSTERY TO US

A free publication from INN

The Eighth World has an incredible range of wonders to offer its citizens: bleeding-edge technology capable of automating entire worlds except for times when other bleeding-edge tech interferes with it and brings everything to a screeching halt; powerful magic that makes otherwise invisible lasers shine in pretty, gem-like colors and can help build armor that repels brutal assaults from ballistic weapons even though it is ridiculously thin; and Great Houses and megacorporations who assure you that there is great wealth and power in the Inner Sphere and regret the fact that they haven't gotten around to sharing any of it with you.

Truly understanding how the Eighth world came to be requires academic rigor and excessive patience, neither of which the authors of this publication possess. What we can do is provide you a quick-and-dirty sketch and hope that will be enough.

The most important things to understand about the Eighth World and why it is the way it is are the central rules of power: 1) Power is always looking for a chance to grow; and 2) Power attracts power.

It came as no surprise to anyone when the megacorporations of Terra's 21st century looked to expand their empires beyond the relatively paltry solar system where they were born, and once the Kearney-Fuchida drive was perfected, the corporations gobbled up spacecraft like breath mints. The only thing that kept the AAAs from completely controlling all aspects of interstellar colonization was the sheer number of available planets—while it didn't take much for the megacorps to have a presence everywhere on Terra, being everywhere in the Inner Sphere was far more difficult. So while colonization and expansion made the rich even richer, the process also gave some new powers the chance to enter the fray. Some of these powers eventually became known as the Great Houses.

We're not going to go through all the ins and outs that the Inner Sphere went through to reach our present state of constant disequilibrium. If you couldn't be bothered to pay attention in history class when you were young, it's not our fault. But since the current alliances between Houses and corps play such a dominant role in making our lives what they are, a brief overview may be in order. We'll cover the big boys, maybe glance at the little guys, and make sure to emphasize how nations are operating in our current era of perpetual, profitable war.

Urgent Message...

THE ERA OF PROFITABLE WAR

There was a time when leaders of Great Houses and corporations paid lip service to the idea of peace being a good thing, and they pretended that most of the military efforts they embarked upon had the ultimate goal of providing peace and security and stuff like that.[1] The simple fact, though, is that corporations and governments tend to like war. War builds patriotism, keeps people busy, and can be quite profitable.[2]

The signature development of the Eighth World was when the megacorps helped all Great House leaders[3] understand that peace was wasteful and stagnant, while war truly helped everyone. Industries benefit from increased production, government benefits from the need for strong leadership, and the general public benefits from the stirring patriotism that often builds in wartime.[4]

There was one hitch to the idea of continual, profitable war—sometimes industrial facilities are damaged in warfare, thus putting a dent in both production capabilities and profitability. This has given rise to what many political and business leaders refer to as "Gentlemanly Warfare," where infantry units fire rubber bullets and "laser" weapons are nothing more than pretty beams of light that tag targets as being hit. Wealthy industrialists who continually produce new, higher-tech units for this type of warfare without losing manufacturing capabilities call this a new breakthrough in the science of war, while darker elements of society, particularly those that live in the shadows, refer to it as "Let's Pretend War" or "Dainty Doily Soaked in Perfume War."

Derisive as some elements may be about this newer, gentler brand of total war, it has led directly to the genesis of the Best Ever Tournament. In the past, winners of the tournaments at Solaris VII were often criticized by those in the actual battlefield who felt their game skills were completely different from the abilities needed to survive the heat of actual war. Now that war more resembles a game, however, it only makes sense to crown the greatest warrior of all time in the arenas of the game planet.

So while there will always be those who grumble, for the most part the new age has been accepted and embraced. Governments and corporations alike have often talked enthusiastically about no longer feeling the pressure to make peace and being able to look forward to decades, or even centuries, of continued warfare. INN correspondent Bertram Habeas perhaps summed up the situation best when he said, "War sells. It's more interesting than peace. I mean, let's say this universe was as game—would you buy it if it was caused PeaceTech? Get real."

1 The Clans, bless their brutal little hearts, never pretended any such thing.

2 As long as you win.

3 Who, honestly, were not that difficult to convince.

4 Some of the general public suffers from the minor inconvenience of dying and what not, but progress is never free.

Urgent Message...

HORIZON'S PR COUPS AND MISFIRES

The maneuverings of the Great Houses provide constant opportunity for skilled PR professionals, and Horizon has often been ready and willing to take advantage of as many of these opportunities as possible. Their *Let's Replace World Leaders with a Double!* program alone has generated millions of c-bills in revenue, though its success has been somewhat mixed. Their campaign on behalf of Katrina Steiner Davion ("She's no Amaris!") was well received, though their *What the Hell Is It About You People and Contractions?* outreach plan to the Clans was regrettably tone deaf.

The most important Horizon efforts have, of course, happened within the Federated Suns, and no client has been more important than Victor Steiner-Davion.[1] Their slogan "Victor Steiner-Davion: Just Short of Greatness" didn't rally many people to the First Prince's cause, but the "Victor Steiner-Davion: Who Else You Got Right Now?" campaign was widely credited with rallying the Inner Sphere behind Victor as he prepared to crush Clan BattleMages at Tukayyid.

1 A Horizon exec was once asked about the ethics of representing Victor Steiner-Davion while another branch of the corp was representing his estranged sister, and he proceeded to laugh until chardonnay came out his nose.

The Federated Suns: Don't Hate Us Because We're Beautiful

Okay, see, someone has to be the good guys, right? It's not like everybody in the Inner Sphere is equal. In any situation, one person is better than another, and that person is the good guy. So there's always a good guy, even if in a purely relative sense. It's just the way the universe works.

House Davion and Horizon didn't invent this rule. Is it their fault that they function in a universe where such a rule exists? If they happen to be demonstrably better than their peers, is *that* their fault? Of course not. They may not have meant to be better than everyone else, but that's the way they ended up. Someone has to be the best, and it turned out to be these guys.

The union between House Davion and Horizon was a natural match, a case of water seeking its own level when that level happens to be an exalted plateau. House Davion, soon after its inception, established itself as a force for freedom in the Inner Sphere. Again, though, this is a relative term. House Davion does not support the Communist, hippie, let's-all-take-care-of-each-other kind of freedom. No. They have always worked more along the lines of the we-will-occasionally-need-to-invade-your-nation-because-you-don't-strike-us-as-freedom-loving-enough kind of freedom. To their credit, House Davion leaders occasionally mention the concept of "freedom" as a positive thing, which puts them a ways ahead of peer, say, House Liao and House Kurita.[1]

On the other side of the major powers in the Federated Suns

1 Not to mention ahead of the Legion of the Batshit Insane, but we'll get to them later.

is the Horizon Corp, which, when it rose to AAA status, represented all that was good in the Sixth World.[1] Horizon made a smooth transition into the Seventh World of colonization and the current Eighth World because its forte, public relations, is more necessary now than ever.

Horizon has become so deeply intermingled in the Federated Suns that almost all government communications have been outsourced to the corp. That often makes it difficult to see where the line between House Davion and Horizon is, but Horizon insists that the overlap is not really a problem. Both House Davion and Horizon are so virtuous, they say, that trying to separate one from the other is pointless.[2]

No discussion of the Federated Suns is complete without a mention of the gloved fist that protects the soft, aloe-scented hand of freedom. Ares, one of the predominant weapons manufacturers of the Sixth World, maintains their headquarters in the Federated Suns, and House Davion is their biggest customer. Ares is the big gun that keeps other nations from wiping the stupid smile of the Federated Suns' face, and as such they are well cared for by the leaders of House Davion.

The Federated Suns and Profitable War: Exercising Old Grudges to New Music

Despite their claimed virtue, both House Davion and Horizon have both enthusiastically embraced the modern concept of profitable war. Horizon toyed with several ways to brand House Davion's ongoing war effort, including "Operation Enforced Freedom" and "Operation Paint Their Asses with Freedom's Brush" before settling on "Operation Supremacy," which suited the Suns' view of itself while also being easy for Horizon-affiliated corps to adapt to fit any other Great House clients.

As is the case with most nations, House Davion's conquest efforts have been slowed by the LBI[3] Jihad, but it's still believed that the Federated Suns maintains a strong desire to strike against House Liao and House Kurita. Rumors persist that they might also harbor desires to strike the Outworlds Alliance, assuming the Suns doesn't forget that they're there.

1 Prior to Horizon's emergence, all that was good in the Sixth World was represented by a box of graham crackers and a few slices of cheese.

2 Several workers in Horizon-owned sweatshops in the Outback laugh darkly every time the execs say this, then plop over dead because the effort of laughing made their overworked, poorly maintained hearts seize up.

3 Yes, that's "Legion of the Batshit Insane." We mentioned them before, remember?

THE LYRAN FUTURES MARKET

Lyrans trade *everything*. If you can find two people willing to swap money over some concept or another, someone in the Lyran Alliance has a way to make that transaction happen.

The Lyran Futures Market has grown in popularity in recent years, despite the fact that few people involved in it are totally clear on just what they are trading. Whatever the mechanism, the Lyran Futures Market shows how people across the Inner Sphere[1] believe future events will unfold. Below is a list of some heavily traded items in the market, along with their price change over the past year. All figures are given in c-bills.

Item	*Current price*	*Change*
Devlin Stone is actually a Blakist plant	1,238	+536
Devlin Stone is an insect spirit	427	+82
Devlin Stone and Nadja Daviar will totally hook up	2,837	+2,837
A troll will beat the hell out of a ProtoMech	535	+138
The Clans and elves will finally realize they are soulmates	233	+6
Dunkelzahn will return	135	–27
Victor Kerensky will somehow return	24	–134
People in the Eighth World who die/disappear will remain dead/gone	1	No Change

1 Of *course* it accepts money from all nations and peoples. Have you *met* a Lyran before?

EIGHTH WORLD: ONE-THIRD BETTER THAN THE SIXTH WORLD

While House Davion has lent some support to rising star Devlin Stone, and Horizon has been all over Stone's PR efforts.[1] Stone is clearly emerging as the hero of the Jihad, and many expect a high degree of pressure on Stone to change his name to "Davion" so that everyone can be sure he's a good guy.

House Steiner and Saeder-Krupp:
Smooth German Engineering

If the Lyran Alliance had an engine, it would purr. If it had a Kearny-Fuchida drive, it would leap across the entire Inner Sphere without harming a single component. The Lyran Alliance just works—as long as we define "works" as "rakes in obscene amounts of money." And in the Lyran Alliance, there are precious few people who would acknowledge that any other definition exists.

Certainly the Great Dragon Lofwyr doesn't recognize any other legitimate definition. The transition from the Sixth World to the Eighth World was not always easy for the Great Dragons. They had a simple time dominating Terra—nothing was bigger than them, nothing was faster, and if anyone forgot these facts it wasn't hard for the dragons to reach out to them and gently remind them how easy it was to turn them into cinder. The dragons didn't become any less powerful in the Eighth World—they're still the toughest thing around,[2] but reaching out to people and reminding them how tough they are became much more difficult. Crossing interstellar distances is slow, even for a dragon, and intimidating people via HPG often isn't enough.

While the transition had some downsides, Lofwyr quickly recognized that the more planets and people there were, the more money there was to make. And the more money he made, the more Lofwyr and others realized that personal visits were not always necessary—sometimes, the ability to buy and sell someone's ass[3] is just as good.

Buying and selling asses is the leading industry in the Lyran Alliance. Sure, they manufacture things like 'Mechs, DropShips, and large mobile shaman lodges, but their main business is helping people they like and hindering those they don't. Buying into the profitable war concept was simple for the Lyran Alliance, because it just put a name on the kind of thing they'd been doing for years anyway.

There is little in the way of formal alliance or even overlap between House Steiner and Saeder-Krupp. They're more like the people who keep going to the same parties and always end up talking together—they have so much in common, why *wouldn't* they hang out? At the moment, Lofwyr and the rest of Saeder-Krupp are happy to benefit from the commerce regulations in the Alliance, and the Alliance is happy to collect tax revenues from S-K and get the occasional discount on S-K vehicles and 'Mechs (giving them the most reliable vehicle fleet in the Eighth World). They view their relationship the same way a couple who has been living together a long time looks at marriage—why mess up a good thing by encumbering it with a lot of formal rules and legalities?

The Lyran Alliance and Profitable War:
You Had Them at "Profitable"

Possibly the best thing about Saeder-Krupp's effect on the Lyran Alliance in the era of profitable war is that military actions are decided solely on the basis of cost-benefit analysis. Gone are the days of hot-blooded feuds and long-standing grudges—no matter how much people in the Lyran Alliance may hate you, they'll only attack you if the ROI is right.[4] Of course, that door swings both ways—you could be the Alliance's oldest, most loyal friend, but if it makes economic sense to attack you, they'll be lining up combat-mage-piloted 'Mechs faster than you can say "Scorch my ass with fire."

The biggest losers in the Lyran Alliance's war strategy are the Free Rasalhague Republic and the Free Worlds League,[5] both of whom have resource-rich worlds without adequate or sufficiently organized armies to defend them. Were it not for the LBI Jihad, both nations would likely be sporting gouges on their Lyran borders that would make moon craters look like potholes.

The Capellan Confederation:
You Will Be Our People, and We Will Be Your God

For a small nation who has regularly gotten the crap kicked out of them every time a Davion leader decides he needs to be more popular back home, the Capellan Confederation has never been excessively humble. Indeed, their leaders talk about

1 To the point where many people believe Stone is not a real person, but rather a military uniform stuffed with PR briefings.
2 Though a company of *Atlas*es might at least give them pause.
3 Several times over, even.
4 Which explains how planets like All Dawn and Galdarium regularly get away with being unbearable pricks.
5 It's been suggested that price-conscious Lyrans find the word "Free" to be morally offensive.

EIGHTH WORLD: ONE-THIRD BETTER THAN THE SIXTH WORLD

Urgent Message...

EVO AND WUXING: CORPORATE BUBBLE TEA HOUSES

To many people with a knowledge of the Sixth World, the notion of powerful corporations like Evo and Wuxing subsuming their will to someone else, no matter who it was, seems ridiculous. These were among the most powerful forces on Terra back in the day—why would they take marching orders from an exterior power?

There's no one explanation for this—there's two, one per corp. The first one is the planet Yunnah. While no single planet is enough to occupy an entire megacorp, Yunnah was so important to Wuxing that they would do just about anything the Confederation wanted as long as they kept unfettered access to Yunnah.

There are a lot of cults in the Inner Sphere, and most of them are harmless, but then most of them aren't sitting on a motherlode of orichalcum. The Skipping Happy Butterfly church of Yunnah would be pretty easy to ignore in most circumstances, but the power under their feet has given them far more power than a bunch of tree-huggers[1] should have. Still, magic powers or not, megacorps have several mushroom-cloud shaped ways to deal with people standing in their way, and it's likely Wuxing would have taken this option up long ago except for the fact that, many years ago, a remote branch of the Liao family settled into the cult.

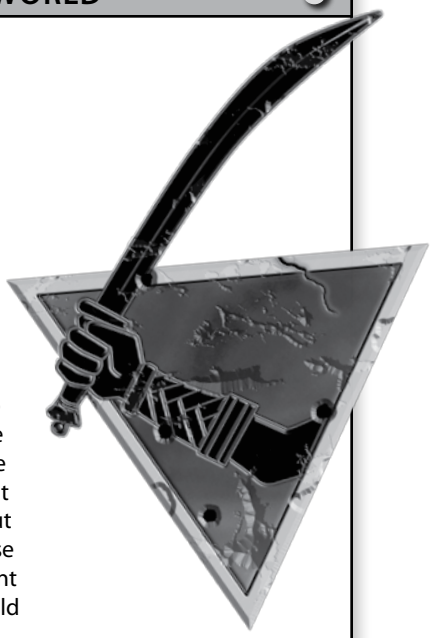
While most members of House Liao disavow knowledge of this minor branch, that does not mean their comfortable with having them offed. So Wuxing had been in a multi-decade dance, extracting as much orichalcum as they please while trying to avoid interference from few thousand cult members, some of whom could evaporate Wuxing mining equipment on sight and keeping the top members of House Liao happy enough to let their Yunnah mining continue.

The Evo alliance is somewhat different. It seems that Evo serves the Capellan Confederation for one reason and one reason only—because longtime senior stockholder, the free spirit called Buttercup, thinks it would be funny.[2] House Liao is grateful for the relationship—Buttercup has been very helpful in introducing spirits, ancestral and otherwise, to House Liao—but they know that the wind could change any day and unmoor the relationship at Buttercup's whim.

These are not the firmest bases on which to build interplanetary alliances, but if House Marik (see below) has taught the world anything, it's the importance of skilled, largely competent friends.

1 Given Yunnah's rocky surface, the Skipping Happy Butterfly church would better be described as rock huggers.

2 Buttercup's sense of humor is oblique and often not appreciated by mere humans.



Inner Sphere domination so much that it's best never to engage them in conversation unless you have a map handy so you can constantly remind them about their relative size in the Inner Sphere.

Capellan leaders have delusions of grandeur in the same way that babies have hiccups: frequently and for no outwardly identifiable reason. It often seems that their leadership should get out more, if only to be exposed to other elements in the Inner Sphere besides the ones that blow sunshine up their asses, but when they *do* go out, everyone else finds them so obnoxiously arrogant that they quickly wish they would go the hell back home.

One of the abiding mysteries of the Capellan Confederation is how its leaders tamed two mighty megacorps, Evo and Wuxing, and twisted them to their bidding. These corps are not insignificant or weak—left to their own devices, they could be as powerful as any corporate bodies in the Inner Sphere. But for some reason the Capellan "charm" works on them, and they happily subvert their will to that of the glorious leader, bending their commercial might, their industrial power, and their substantial inventiveness to tasks like finding ways to make the Chancellor levitate through the streets so he doesn't have to walk.

The single most damaging aspect of the relationship between the corps and the Capellan government has been the corps' ability to call on ancestor spirits. Sun-Tzu Liao[1] firmly believes he is carrying out the will of his ancestors and that, had they a chance to talk to him in person, they would thank him and glorify his name. Most of us in the Inner Sphere were secretly hoping that if his ancestors ever met him, they'd slap him around a bit,[2] call him a dick, and get him to behave better. But no. The magic divisions of the Capellan's mega-lackeys summoned up some ancestor spirits,[3] brought them to Sun-Tzu, and these spirits proceed to lay it on thick, letting Sun-Tzu know how great his work was, how he needed to stand firm in

1 Yeah, that's right, Sun-Tzu Liao. You thought he was dead? Not in this timeline!

2 Even if only astrally.

3 Or things they claimed were ancestral spirits—it's entirely possible that what they actually summoned were just some random spirits who were bored and didn't have anything better to do than pretend they really liked Sun-Tzu and *Xin Sheng* and all, and that once they were done they retired to some distant corner of the astral plane, checked out how people reacted to them, and laughed themselves sick.

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the face of his many enemies, how he would eventually triumph, and how he would be brought to glory after his death to rejoice in the greatness of his deeds.

The words of his ancestors had a predictable and unfortunate effect on Sun-Tzu, and he now believes that he is essentially infallible and no choice he makes, no matter how risky or untenable it may seem, is wrong.[1]

The Capellan Confederation and Profitable War:
Destiny is Our Mistress, and She's a Pretty Good Lay

To listen to the Capellan leadership talk, no one in the Inner Sphere is safe. The Confederation is on the verge of launching an offensive that will make the Clan Invasion look like elvish fertility rite.[2] In truth, though, the Capellans do not have the personnel or war materiel for an extended invasion, and they likely will have to focus all of their arrogance and lust for power on a single target.

As usual, this means bad things for the Magistracy of Canopus. In anticipation of this, the Magistracy has been flooding the Confederation with elven pornography for years, hoping that when the Confederation inevitably attacks, the site of so many elves in the Magistracy will replace the Confederation soldier's warlike feelings with pure lust, stopping them in their tracks. It's a long shot, but the day the Magistracy stops trying to use sex as a weapon is the day that humans finally figure out how to asexually reproduce.[3]

While the Magistracy will likely bear the brunt of the Capellan's initial wave of assaults, House Liao will not overlook their old friends in the Federated Suns. Even if all they can do is send a DropShip of toxic spirits to go skipping through FedSuns farmlands, you can be assured that something will be heading the Federated Suns' way as soon as the Capellans put it together.

The Free Worlds League:
The Batshit Insane Don't Make the Most Reliable Friends

The Seventh World was a time of scrambling and rearranging, as Houses and megacorps sought to find allies who would enhance their respective positions. Some chose to enter partnerships on the basis of shared background or common interests, while others found they could form a bond based on little more than their hatred of the rest of the metahumanity.

Then there was the Free Worlds League, who made friends the same way that nerdy twelve-year-olds do—desperately lunging after anyone who exchanged more than a few words with them. Megacorp after megacorp spurned them, somehow believing that stable governments offered better prospects than a handful of quarrelling fiefdoms. But when the League complained about how they were being treated to the Legion of the Batshit Insane, the LBI did not immediately run away[4] And so a friendship was born.

It will take many years to unravel the depth of the Legion of the Batshit Insane's involvement with the Free Worlds League, but certainly it dates back to the time when League President Thomas Marik disappeared and was replaced by an ork claiming he was the "real" Thomas Marik.[5] The ork then embarked on the puzzling policy of "extremism in defense of insanity is no vice," and the Legion of the Batshit Insane were invited to set up bases across Free Worlds Space.[6] Ork Marik also offered a regular procession of League citizen's to the LBI's sacrifice altars, because he claimed the LBI promised to use its blood magic to benefit the League. Unfortunately, it turned out the batshit insane are not always truthful.[7]

When the LBI Jihad erupted, the League was its launching point, and ork Thomas Marik was the LBI's cabana boy. This might not have been a bad position to be in except for three things: 1) The LBI is not really that good of a friend, and even though the Marik ork is their ostensible ally, they have not treated the Free Worlds League much more gently than the rest of the Inner Sphere; 2) The LBI is looking like they won't win this thing after all, putting any who supported them in a bad position; and 3) It turns out citizens get angry when their leaders align themselves with the batshit insane, and some of them decide to go ahead and find new rulers or nations to ally themselves with. Thus, the Free Worlds League has fractured and descended into territorial infighting fueled by grudges and deeply felt spite.[8]

It is likely that having a good megacorp partner would have lent some stability to the Free Worlds League, but that's all hindsight. The League cast their lot with the LBI, and most diviners have confirmed that the nation will be reaping the whirlwind of that decision for many years to come.

The Free Worlds League and Profitable War:
Thank You, Sir, May I Have Another

There's a secret hitch to the profitable war concept that most participants don't talk about, and it is this: Resources are not infinite. Economics is often referred to as "the dismal science" because in the end, it's all about how there aren't enough resources to go around and eventually somebody is going to get it in the shorts.[9] While all megacorps and many lesser corps are raking in money hand over fist, there are not enough new resources in the Inner Sphere to explain their economic expansion. If their profits are growing, it's because the nations are getting resources from somewhere else.

These days, the Free Worlds League is that "somewhere else." The nation has been kicked in the head so often that its citizens have begun to develop a taste for boot leather. House Steiner is positively jubilant over the circumstances, as they tend to view the League as a giant ATM machine. If anyone in the Lyran Alliance is feeling poor, they just pop over to the Free Worlds League, conquer a planet, and suddenly everything's fine again. From their point of view, of course.

The Capellan border is not much better. For some inexplicable

1 Which, in all honesty, is not that different from Sun-Tzu before the spirits visited.
2 Have you ever been to one? You totally should go.
3 NeoNET's R&D department predicts that will happen by 3084.
4 Likely because they were wondering if League leadership had tasty brains.
5 Yes, in hindsight his story that he was hit by an "orc mutation ray" during the explosion didn't make much sense, but you could have told us that a decade or so ago when it really would have helped.
6 In return, Thomas Marik and his family received a summer home on Terra.
7 It might have been a warning sign when the LBI insisted that top League military officers and combat mages would probably make really good sacrifices.
8 In other words, business as usual.
9 It doesn't help that economists are, as a group, no fun at all.

EIGHTH WORLD: ONE-THIRD BETTER THAN THE SIXTH WO

reason, Capellan troops that aren't even capable of keeping a 'Mech from tripping over tree roots when they go up against House Davion become unstoppable dervishes when they face House Marik.[1] Perhaps the most telling sign of the Free Worlds League's status is this: The League topped *Shadowrunner's Monthly*'s annual list of Top Dystopias That Bring Back Fond Memories of the 2070s.[2]

The Draconis Combine: They Used All Their Love on Themselves, So They Have None Left for You

You didn't have to be a genius to see this one coming. I mean, some lazy hack writer who barely knows anything about the Inner Sphere or military warfare or the ins and outs of shadowrunning would still be savvy enough to have seen this one coming. That's how obvious it was.

House Kurita was being propped up by the AAAs that were once known as the Japanacorps even before most of the Inner Sphere had even heard of the not-yet-Great House. It was a mutual admiration society—each of the groups involved truly loved the way the others adored themselves and hated everything different.

Self-worship is not always enough of a foundation upon which to build an empire, but when you have three megacorps worth of resources combined with some ferocious martial skill, you can build all sorts of neat shrines to yourself and get lots of people dancing behind you shouting hallelujah. The Draconis Combine melded the resources and abilities of House Kurita with Mitsuhama, Renraku, and Shiawese, making an empire whose self-regard is so bright that everyone else in the Inner Sphere is waiting for it to go supernova and then collapse into a giant sucking black hole of pure ego.[3] There are plenty of people in the Inner Sphere who would rather not deal with the Combine, but they are simply too big and powerful to be ignored. Besides, you may not always be pleased with the way they behave, but does that mean you're willing to not have the latest Renraku *Hatamoto-Chi*, the bitchin' one with the extendable virbo-blade in its right-arm and the triple spell-enhanced armor? I didn't think so.

The Draconis Combine had long been pulled between two tensions—the desire to celebrate and advance their own culture, and the desire to lash out at all the things they hated because they were different. This tension was finally resolved in the 3050s, when Renraku CEO Inazo Aneki[4] said that the tension would be solved if they all decided that the core of Combine culture should be hating things that are different. Thus, working out their hatred serves the double purpose of advancing their culture, and everything's fine.

Aneki's realization was a breakthrough that united the Combine like never before. The disparate parties had always had certain things in common, but now they could talk about those things openly and act on them without shame. Also, they could randomly beat on any Clanners,[5] orcs, trolls, elves, or dwarves they saw, which they claimed was good for their blood pressure.

This means, of course, that large segments of metahumanity are not exactly beating a path to the Combine's door. While some say this has weakened the Combine, depriving them of the brains, magical skill, and muscle that many metahumans possess, the Combine's leaders swear they are better off being pure. Then they finger their katanas with that certain glint in their eyes that makes you slowly back away.

RACISM IN THE COMBINE: SURELY IT'S NOT AS BAD AS ALL THAT?

The hell it's not.

Urgent Message...

1 And no, before you ask, we have never heard of anyone named Arthur Fiat.

2 The Outworlds Alliance was totally robbed.

3 Which, coincidentally, is the Great Dragon Lung's nickname for the Great Dragon Ryumyo.

4 Yeah, that's right, *Inazo Aneki*. For those of you who were wondering where the hell he went back in 2060, there's your answer—he went to 3050.

5 Except, of course, for Clan Nova Cat, but we're not going to review that whole thing for you now. Just go read *Path of Glory* or something.

EIGHTH WORLD: ON

The Draconis Combine and Profitable War: Riding on the Freeway of Hate in a Pink Cadillac

Given that Combine leaders hate everyone who is not them, the era of perpetual war has been a very comfortable fit. Finding an excuse to go to war is not the problem—narrowing it down to a single target is.

Unsurprisingly, when evaluating which of their neighbors pose the greatest threat to the Combine way of life, Combine leaders inevitably focus on the Federated Suns. Publicly, the Combine has a long list of grievances against the Suns that they always pull out when they need to justify their latest aggressive action, such as the facts that far too many Combine children have been corrupted by ork thrash metal played by Suns-based bands and that Sus trideo programs always portray Combine people as cold, suit-wearing, meglomaniacal villains.[1] The Combine is often making runs or outright invasions into Davion territory, to the point where Shiawese Armaments, Inc. has made a bundle of cash by selling bullets that say "House Davion" on them. Combine soldiers never tire of squinting at Davion troops across enemy lines and grumbling "I've got a bullet with your name on it, you bastards."

While the Federated Suns is a major preoccupation of the Draconis Combine, that doesn't mean that they have forgotten about the nearby Swedish meatball that is the Free Rasalhague Republic. They send regular sorties into their former territory, but most observers agree that their efforts seem somewhat half-hearted, more like slapping their neighbors with a glove than engaging in real combat.[2]

ComStar and NeoNET: Dude, I Put Together a Real, Working K-F Drive in My Basement!

Does anyone else think it's a little weird that the single most significant religious movement of our time is built around technology rather than, I don't know, helping your neighbor and doing good or something like that? No? Okay, it's just me. Anyway, whether it's weird or not, it's what we've got, and in the Eighth World, people[3] who fetishize technology have an entire major, interstellar order to get lost in—an order that is also backed by a megacorp. There is no greater time to be a technology geek than now.

NeoNET existed long before ComStar came into being, and their pre-ComStar wanderings through the Inner Sphere were not always sure-footed. NeoNET's far-distant roots lie with a company called Matrix Systems. To make a long story somewhat shorter, Matrix got hosed and watched their stock drop, they were picked up and merged into something called Fuchi Electroics, Fuchi owners acquired a piece of Renraku and pretty much pulled a brain muscle in their efforts to screw Renraku, the stock market crashed and Fuchi morphed into a new company called Novatech, which was stumbling along okay until whoops, its IPO helped bring about the big crash of 2064, at which point the company shifted again and became NeoNET. How it managed to stay NeoNET for the next thousand years is anybody's guess.[4]

The point of all this is that while geeks are awfully good at building machines and making cool gear, asking them to do things that involve large groups of people, like running a corporation or attending a cocktail party, is pretty much inviting disaster. Sometimes geeks need to be left to do what they're good at and leave the other stuff alone.

1 Federated Suns representatives usually respond to this latter point by saying that the truth can't be libel, and then they give that superior smirk that makes you want to slap them.

2 By contrast, the Combine's efforts against the Suns could be compared to smacking the Davions with a glove that has been filled with concrete and studded with railroad spikes.

3 Okay, we're saying "people" here," but we all know that we pretty much mean "men."

4 There are rumors that this newfound stability has to do with that Arthur Fiat person, but we still insist that we have never heard of him.

Urgent Message...

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE WHITE ROBES?

Honestly. ComStar wants to be taken seriously and respected, yet they keep insisting on wearing those white-hooded robes. Why? Couldn't they just wear a nice, dark jumpsuit or something? Well, nothing can happen in the Eighth World without some sort of theory being developed to explain it, so we've collected a few explanations of why ComStar loves their robes.

- The robes conveniently conceal the ginormous pocket protectors that all ComStar adepts wear.
- It scares their enemies by making them think they're the ghosts of Shiloh.
- ComStar adepts like to be ready to take a *schvitz* at all times.
- Since when to tech people *not* like loose-fitting, easy-to-put-on garments?
- Black is so last millennium.
- If you pull your hood down far enough, you can fall asleep when boring people are talking and no one will notice.

EIGHTH WORLD: ONE-THIRD BETTER THAN THE SIXTH WORLD

Enter ComStar. There had long been fables of someone who would be able to combine suburb technological know-how with great showmanship and charisma. On ancient Terra, the phrase used to describe such a person was "a combination of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak," though no one is sure these days just what that means. The real Jerome Blake was not necessarily that person, but the Jerome Blake envisioned and described by Conrad Toyama—ah, he was the real deal.

The ComStar that Toyama built was an extension of every IT guy's dream, an organization that has all the tech, all the answers, and is worshipped rather than resented because of it. In truth, the "worshipped" part of the equation works out better inside ComStar than outside it, and as long as there are people lording their technology over others, there will be people who believe those others are obnoxious twerps.

Still, it became clear early on that ComStar was going to be a major player in the Inner Sphere, and NeoNET looked them over and said yes, they wanted them some of that.[1] The white robes, the air of smug superiority, and the gadgets—my God, the gadgets!—were powerful draws, and NeoNET did not feel like resisting.

The exact nature of the NeoNET/ComStar relationship remains unclear, mainly because the organization(s) are so secretive about their inner workings. There still seems to be some separation between the two—NeoNET has not made the complete journey to religious organization, and ComStar has not returned to the corporate-style organization originally dreamed up by Blake. But they share information freely, embark on a large number of joint R&D projects, and generally just enjoy getting together and having the types of conversations that leave everyone else in the Inner Sphere confused and shaking their heads.

Like most other Great Houses and megacorps, some of the best talent from ComStar/NeoNET have migrated to Solaris VII to show off just how good they are. Most of them do not have the physical prowess to compete in events like the Best Ever Tournament, but they have developed their own series of competitions that highlight what they do well. The most notable of these is 'MechHack, where teams of techs take a week to modify a 'Mech however they want, with judges voting on the best mod. Last year, Gary Wasserstrom won the event with his *Centaur,* which mounted the torso, head, and arms of a *Grasshopper* on the body of a *Barghest*. The 'Mech pilot say in the *Grasshopper*'s cockpit space, while the *Barghest* cockpit space was modified to hold two combat mages. The machine suffered from a slight tendency to topple forward on its face when in motion, but as long as it held still it looked awesome.

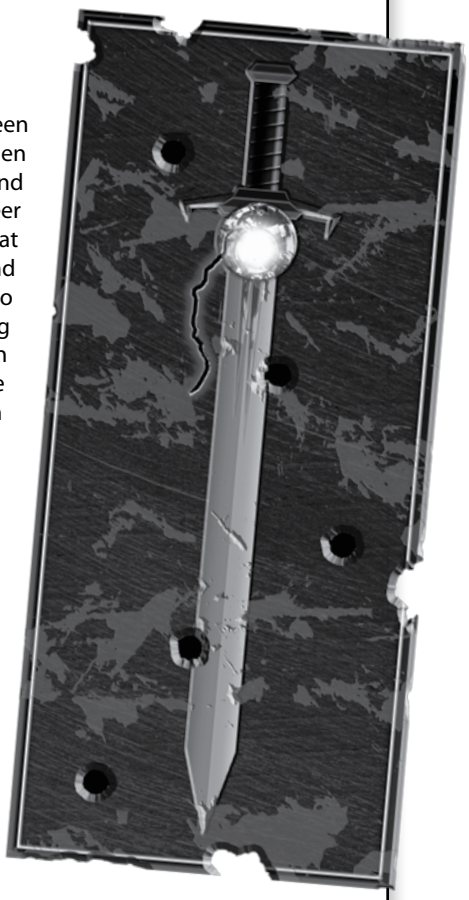
ComStar/NeoNet and Profitable War:
He Who Has the Most Toys, Wins

The loyalties of ComStar have not always been clear when fighting breaks out, and most people agree that's because ComStar wants it that way. Despite what we said above about the lack of combat skills in ComStar adepts[2] there is considerable martial skill in ComStar's army, and while NeoNET may not boast the same number of troops as ComStar, the high technology level of their troops makes them a force to be reckoned with. The question is, what are they going to do with their might as the current era progresses? They could, of course, make like House Steiner and be happy just to provide the tech services warfare always demands, but that would be far more straightforward than ComStar leadership could handle.

Lots of people are anxious for ComStar and NeoNET to flex more muscle, if only to see what kind of weapons they'll break out. If these organizations don't have some kick-ass tech that they've been hiding from everyone else, waiting for the right moment to break it out, then there will be lots of moaning and groaning.[3]

It's likely, then, that ComStar and NeoNET will be throwing their weight around as the unending wars progress, and past history suggests one other fact: Whatever they do, it will likely be counterintuitive and border on hopeless. NeoNET hasn't had to rise from the ashes for over a century now, so the time is way past for a spectacular crash and burn.

The Legion of the Batshit Insane:
Rational Thought Is a Prison, and We've Got the Key



Aztechnology has long been proof that the difference between being harmlessly eccentric and being a trendsetting pioneer is the amount of money at your disposal. It's tough to find anyone in the Inner Sphere who hasn't been affected by the Big A in one way or another, even if that way was nothing more than a slight case of indigestion after a Stuffer Shack meal. Everyone knows that there is something not quite right about the corporation, but there's not much anyone can do about it.

If the corp was some guy on your block who wore polka dot pants and a pinwheel hat while skipping up and down the street and blowing on a duck call, you'd shrug, watch to make sure he didn't hurt himself, and maybe call some authorities if he looked like he was causing trouble. But if your neighbor was a corporation who has an immortal blob on its board (still!), inspired numerous outbreaks of

1 Because geeks occasionally have the unfortunate habit of speaking in slang that is more than one thousand years out of date.

2 Isn't it weird how in this book it sometimes seems like we're just making crap up as we go?

3 Plus a scathing critique in *Wired*. Assuming it's still being published.

Urgent Message...

MANEI DOMINI BLOOD MAGIC: AT LEAST THE LBI CAN NEVER SAY "WE'RE NOT *THAT* BAD, ARE WE?" EVER AGAIN

There have been different occasions when LBI members have insisted that they are not as bad as they are commonly portrayed, insisting that they're not evil, just competitive. The emergence of the Manei Domini Blood Mages, however, pretty much put an end to all that talk.

The creepiness factor of these guys is extremely high. You'd run up and give Stefan Amaris a peck smack on the lips before you'd even want to touch one of these creatures. The MDBMs combine heavy magical power with more cyberware than most Awakened beings care to sport. You'd think all that circuitry would limit some of their magic abilities, but they've got a workaround for it—blood, preferably from others, but their own if they need it.

The chronicles of the Jihad contain plenty of examples of the horrors inflicted by the MDBMs, so we will not repeat them here.[1] Suffice it to say that the sight of one of these creatures walking toward you, eyes blazing with dead light, is bad enough, but when the cyber-stylus emerges from their skull and starts carving new patterns in their cheeks, and they keep advancing even as blood is running down their face, and they start their blood magic incantations in a guttural voice—well, if you can see that and keep your urine safely stowed in your bladder, then you're either one of the toughest sons-of-bitches in the Inner Sphere or in a coma.

1 Convenient, right?

TTER THAN THE SIXTH WORLD

horrid toxic spirits, and regularly explored new frontiers in blood magic, then they're not crazy—they're just ahead of the curve.

The true triumph of Aztechnology has always been that people shudder at their name, but when they do so they are likely carrying or wearing a minimum two Aztechnology products. Corps learned a long, long time ago that as long as people like what they're buying, they don't care too much about who's selling it.

It's possible that things would have remained at a sort of equilibrium with Aztechnology, where people secretly feared them while regularly pouring money into company coffers. Sure, Aztech's altars would still glisten with fresh blood, but lots of lots of people would be able to buy cheap food, and that's the type of trade humanity has generally been able to do without much trouble.

But then we reached a point where the Inner Sphere gave birth to a second organization that firmly believed in the power of advancing humanity—or at least a part of it—by sacrificing another part of it. Members of the Word of Blake can often look quite sincere when they talk about doing their part for the overall advancement of humanity, and they can keep that same sincere expression on their face as they rip out your heart, slap you with it a few times, then through it into a smoking brazier.

To the surprise of very few, Aztechnology found the philosophy of the Blakists appealing. And so it was that Aztechnology swatted away the better angels of their natures[1] and decided the part of their operations that had been shrouded in secrecy should now be in the open. They joined forces with the Word, creating the alliance that the rest of the Inner Sphere labeled as the Legion of the Batshit Insane.

While the LBI shares with many generations of parents the idea that suffering builds character, they have at least never tried to use the old "This hurts you more than it hurts me" tack. They know that what they're doing hurts the rest of us more than it hurts them, and to tell the truth they're not really broken up about that. To hear LBI members talk about it, the Jihad they unleashed on the Inner Sphere is nothing more than a prolonged spanking. They assure us that the pain won't last,[2] and that when it's over we'll be the better for it.

The LBI and Profitable War:
We Went Ahead and Started Without You

In some senses, the LBI was made for the era of profitable war. These are organizations that are completely comfortable with the idea of constantly being embroiled in hostilities, because that's been their *modus operandi* since day one. Some Houses and corps have at least paid lip service to the idea of making peace with their enemies for some period of time, but Aztechnology and the Word of Blake have never been burdened by such diplomatic niceties. Their enemies exist to be conquered;[3] the members of the LBI would rather travel nonstop on the Freeway of Victory rather than delay themselves at the Rest Stop of Temporary Appeasement.

In another sense, though, the LBI and the era of profitable war is not an exact fit. Aztechnology and the Word of Blake have not always defined "profit" in the same way as their peers. Yes, Aztechnology likes making money and has proven to be very good at it over the years, but whenever people talk about the true purposes of the corp and their darker activities, it's not clear whether those activities are about reaping more profits or conquering the universe and bending the fabric of reality to their wills.[4]

What this means is that the LBI cannot be expected to wage war in a manner that is consistent with maintaining a profit. No member of the LBI would ever shoot rubber bullets, even if they were out of all other types of ammo.[5] As their Jihad demonstrated, they will

1 Which was, for them, about as hard as swatting an overfed, lame fly with broken wings.

2 Except, of course, for those who were weak enough to actually die in the proceedings.

3 Or, better yet, burned on altars.

4 Though some corporate barons will tell you that all those things are pretty much the same.

5 They would strongly prefer to beat you to death with their rifle butt.

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destroy anything and everything that stands in the way of their goals, which means they have an adoration of nuclear weapons that even exceeds that of the most deranged game designers.

The bottom line is this: The rest of the Inner Sphere can expect the LBI to be completely on part for the "war" part of this era, but not always cooperative in the efforts for across-the-board profits.[1]

The Clans: Why Ally With One of Your Weak Megacorps When We Can Build a Better One On Our Own?

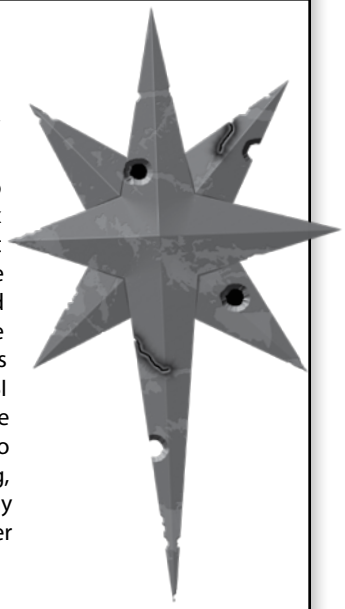
One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Clans[2] is a strong DIY mentality. The Clans have never been all that anxious to engage in commerce with non-Clan groups. If they can do things themselves, that's how they'd prefer it. So when the Clans returned to the Inner Sphere and noted how most of the Great Houses had their own pet megacorps, they didn't[3] try to form an alliance with any existing corp. No, they figured they'd be better off with their own home-grown group of commerce-minded crazies, so they set Clan Sea Fox on the path of becoming a megacorp to rival any other.

Clan Sea Fox's initial efforts drew mixed results. While they have always been without peer in their ability to haggle with manufacturers and distributors and come out on the good side of any negotiation process, their ability to appeal to the general public and draw in new customers was underwhelming. It is unclear if their slogan, "Buy this. It is better than its competitors," would have worked for any one product, but when it was used for every single product in the Sea Fox line, the slogan backfired, driving far more people away from doing business with Clan Sea Fox than it attracted. The Clans' next gambit, the ill-advised Great Ghost Bear dance aimed at wreaking havoc with Clan Sea Fox's competition, also failed to generate any tangible results.[4]

The Clans, however, have time and time again proved their adaptability. What they have also proved is that when they say "adaptability," they do not mean "changing to suit our surroundings," but rather "changing our surroundings to suit us."

The Clans embarked on what only Neanderthals would refer to as a PR campaign—most people call it extortion. Customers across the Inner Sphere, from other corporations to individuals walking around shopping centers, were made to understand that not doing business with Clan Sea Fox would result in severe, and often explosive, consequences. The Clans also used their Awakened members to embark on some mind-control experiments—why use words to persuade, they argued with time-honored Clan logic, when you can use some form of force?

These efforts were quite successful,[5] and it did not take long for Clan Sea Fox to be recognized as a AAA corp and gain a seat on the Interstellar Corporate Court.[6] Most existing members of the Court were not thrilled with Sea Fox's emergence, as they figured it was the harbinger of an inevitable and prolonged Corporate War. Things certainly appeared to heading in that direction, as Sea Fox Elementals had the annoying habit of hanging out in the hallways of the Courthouse so they could pound their fists into their palms and glare at the representatives of other corps as they walked by, but then the LBI Jihad erupted and distracted everyone for a time. So if you're ever tempted to think the LBI was wholly a bad thing, remember that it at least delayed any Sea Fox hostilities towards the other megas. For a time.



The Clans and Profitable War: Happy Memories of Home

When the concepts behind the era of profitable war were first being bandied about, it was not uncommon for any Clanners who happened to be nearby to get an odd, entirely uncharacteristic grin on their face while their eyes drifted out of focus.

"Always fighting," they would say dreamily. "Never negotiating for peace. Just like the old days."

In many ways, this era is the Clans' idea of heaven. There is no need to dream up a pretext for fighting—you just go fight, when and where you please, and no one makes a big stink about it. In some ways it is even better than heaven, because angels never die, and if the people you are fighting do not die, how do you know who is winning?

Still, nothing in life is perfect, and the desire of some weak Spheroids to wage war without actually destroying too many people and buildings is greatly offensive to the Clans. While the Clans are too broad-based and diverse to settle on any one target, they have a distinct tendency to track down and whale on anyone whom they do not think is taking war seriously enough. So before they load their guns with rubber bullets, armies have taken to asking themselves—would this be enough to stop a legion of pissed-off Clanners? Then they reach for the real stuff.

And the Rest: Some Other Powers of Note in the Inner Sphere

Tir na Niops: If you thought one thousand years would be enough time for the elves to get over their separatist leanings, then you haven't met enough elves. It wasn't easy for them, though—their constant infighting, along with their tendency to move in slow motion[7] meant that several otherwise-promising worlds were snatched up by rival powers before the elves got to them.

1 Please remember that "across the board" does not include the Free Worlds League.

2 Besides off-putting humorless arrogance.

3 Or rather <sigh> "did not."

4 Mainly because them Ghost Bears ain't got no rhythm.

5 To the point that Aztechnology became jealous of the Clan's marketing techniques, which tells you something.

6 Isn't it neat how old things sound all cool and futuristic when you put "interstellar" in front of them?

7 Or does that just happen in movies?

Urgent Message...

CLAN SEA FOX: JUST BECAUSE WE HATE OUR CUSTOMERS DOES NOT MEAN WE DO NOT CARE

One of the difficulties Clan Sea Fox encountered as it tried to transition into an outright corporation was finding the right business niches for itself. Most observers thought that entering the weapons and military machines market would be a no-brainer—after all, what power in the Inner Sphere wouldn't pay handsomely to get their hands on some genuine Clan technology? The Clans, however, have never been too anxious to give away their tech goodies, so when Sea Fox started selling, it was with older tech that had mostly been equaled by other Inner Sphere manufacturers.

The area of consumer goods was also not an immediate success for Clan Sea Fox. Their attempt to start a clothing line was disastrous; it turned out that most people did not feel they needed several layers of bulletproof fabric woven into their evening wear.[1] In general, the appearance of Sea Fox Fashions confirmed the belief that cultures that view aesthetics as an indulgence of the weak should not ever design anything for anyone else.

Eventually, Clan Sea Fox turned things around. While their "Buy This Or We Will Kill You" strategy played a large role in their success, it also helped that they finally found some products that people actually wanted. Taking a page from the Swiss army of twentieth century Terra, Clan Sea Fox developed civilian applications for military items. The kitchen vibro-knife[2] became a sensation across the Inner Sphere, as did Sea Fox HackerShield, whereby instead of threatening to beat you up, the Clanners promised to beat the living crap out of anyone who hacked into any of your machines.

1 I mean, have you ever tried to dance while wearing that stuff? You can*not* get jiggy with it! At

2 "It slices! It dices! It can cut through this tin can and *still* remain sharp enough to carve through the ulna of your mortal enemy!"

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Elven nations bounced around the Inner Sphere for a while without finding a home before they finally got deliberate about it. They evaluated the powers of the Inner Sphere, decided where would be the best place for them to find a home of their own while remaining a power, and then decided to ally/takeover the Niops Association, proving once and for all that elves are capable of a miscalculation.

Whether their little group of planets has everything they want or not, the elves of Tir Na Niops at least have a home they can call their own. They understand that their decades of wandering took a little luster off their glamour, so they have placed a considerable emphasis on having one of their own, Nadja Daviar of Kieran McCool, take home the crown in the Best Ever Tournament.

The BTL Queens: Though they still are geographically disadvantaged, the surging popularity of better-than-life chips has brought huge amounts of revenue into the masters of the genre, the Magistracy of Canopus. Sadly, our editors have informed us that while this is not exactly a child-safe publication, it is also not the kind of thing that will be sold in a plain brown wrapper, so we are prevented from describing the content of the most popular of these BTLs. However, we'd like to just say this: The one with the goldfish? And the magic fingers spell? And the candelabra? *Wicked!*

But Our Mothers Say We're Cute: The Technomancers of the Rim Worlds Alliance: Okay, look, hey, we all love the technomancers, right? So cool and always tied into the Matrix and stuff? How could anyone not like them? The thing is, they're, like, maybe too cool for us? Or something? So it worked out for the best for everyone if they, like, moved to their own place that kind of wasn't in the middle of any of our places and gave them plenty of space to do their stuff and be cool and all that, and if they ever needed to talk to us they could totally come on over and say "hey" and tell us what was up, and we'd listen and be all "Wow, man, that's great, thanks for coming over and telling us that!" And then we'd tell them to go back home.

<<Transcript from *Countdown to the Best Ever*, airdate 30 March 3076, Solaris VII>>

Rich Robertson: Dirk, we've been through five rounds of the Best Ever Tournament already, and the variety of the competitors we have seen has been truly astonishing.

Dirk Diedrick: That's right, Rich. Who would have believed the variety of competitors we've seen slugging it out here in the arenas of Solaris VII? From ork MechWarriors to smokin' hot elves in black leather to the always-intimidating Manei Domini blood magicians, this tournament has truly featured a ferocious range of fighting talent. The 'Mechs that have competed have been quite powerful, of course, but they are far from the only kings of *this* battlefield.

RR: Absolutely not. But you know, what you just said got me thinking. Imagine a world where we didn't have the full variety of creatures and powerful warriors that the Eighth World boasts. If that were the case, 'Mechs would probably be the undisputed most powerful things in existence, and Solaris VII would be nothing but 'Mech battle after 'Mech battle.

DD: How boring would that be?

Urgent Message...

THE BEST EVER: AN EIGHTH WORLD ADVENTURE

Urgent Message...

<<Transcript from *Countdown to the Best Ever*, airdate 30 March 3076, Solaris VII>>

Rich Robertson: And so we've made it to where we are now, ready for the semi-finals in the greatest tournament ever on Solaris VII, the appropriately named Best Ever Tournament. Dirk, are you surprised by any of the finalists.

Dirk Diedrick: No, not really. Though I can't say I predicted any of them to be in this position before the tournament started. But we've got a lot of compelling stories here, don't we Rich? There's Nadja Daviar, who re-emerged more than one thousand years after her disappearance on Terra and not only is healthy but is battle-ready and, of course sexy as hell. And then there's Kieren McCool, the Niops-based immortal elf who only increased his power by strapping himself to the greatest fighting machine known to metahumanity—the *UrbanMech*.

RR: And of course we've got a villain, just like any good story. The Manei Domini may be secretive and reclusive, but that did not stop them from sending one of their blood mages to the competition, a man named Asmodeal el Angel de la Muerte. He has been unstoppable, wiping the floor—sometimes literally—with the blood of his conquests.

DD: But life doesn't give us a nightmarish villain without providing us with a hero all of us can root for. Honestly, is there anyone out there who *isn't* pulling for the newcomer Jonas Hadry?

RR: Not that I know of. This guy is the entire package—fast, strong, remarkably canny, and, let's be honest, devastatingly handsome. When kids are watching—and I really hope they are—they're thinking, "That's what I want to be like when I grow up."

DD: There's a number of adults who feel the same way. Hadry will go against the McCool in the semis, and I don't think the immortal elf will find many supporters.

RR: There had been talk about an all-elf final between McCool and Daviar, but Hadry is a considerable obstacle to that prospect, no doubt about it.

DD: Could we put a picture of Hadry onscreen for a minute, just so we could get lost in his eyes? That would be terrific.

RR & DD: Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

INTRODUCTION

The Best Ever is an adventure for use with … um … well, mostly *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, plus some stuff from the Classic BattleTech Role Playing Game (CBT:RPG) plus a fair amount of crap that, let's be honest, we just made up. So while we welcome you to run this and have a lot of fun doing so, some of the stuff you might need to run it successfully does not exist. Anywhere. We recommend that, should you come to a situation where there are no rules to explain what the hell should happen next, you just make something up. As long as you say it in a firm, confident tone, most people will buy it and you'll be fine. Seriously. That's how we get through most of life.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Hahahahahahaha!

Okay, seriously, you should probably review the master *Eighth World* sourcebook. Except it doesn't exist. So that's a problem.

So here's what you do. Read this whole book through. Then turn down the lights at your domicile, boil some water, and make a nice mug of hot chocolate. Turn on some music that inspires thought and creativity.[1] Breathe deeply. Then read through this chapter again.

Close your eyes. Imagine your spirit slowly beginning to float outside your body. Let your spirit free as it tosses aside the shackles of the body and journeys to new dimensions you cannot imagine. Keep all parts of your mind open to the experience so that the full range of emotions and sensations can course through you.

Make sure you maintain a clear line back to your body, though, so that when you are ready follow that line you can return to your material home. Once your spirit has settled back in your body, do not move immediately. Let it get comfortable again. Take a few sips of hot chocolate when you feel like it.

1 We would recommend some Neko Case, some Neutral Milk Hotel, some REM, but there are people we respect who would recommend Beethoven, Rush, Dream Theater, and Nightwish. So, you know, whatever.

THE BEST EVER: AN EIGHTH WORLD ADVENTURE

It's possible that, during this experience, you gained tremendous knowledge about how to run this adventure, but it's not likely. But here's what you do: Just get started and run the adventure as best you can. If you get to a tough spot and the "make stuff up" strategy we mentioned above isn't working, lean back in your chair and say "Hey, did I ever tell you guys about my out-of-body experience?" Then proceed to relate the story of what you experienced as described above. Hopefully, by then end of the story, your fellow gamers will have forgotten just what the controversy was about, then you can pick up the story pretty much wherever you want to and move ahead. That's the best idea we've got.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The adventure takes place in parallel with the conclusion of the Best Ever Tournament. There are considerable prizes and prestige at stake, and several parties are interested in having the tournament go their way. One of these parties contacts the runners and hires them to make the tournament come out right. In the end, the powerful competitors involved in the tournament might have something to say about the outcome, but the runners will do what they can to fulfill their clients' wishes.

The adventure is divided into three scenes, which have the following sections:

- **Scan This**: A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It To Them Straight**: A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when the player characters reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks**: Descriptions of ways that characters might be encouraged to play a scene.
- **Behind the Scenes**: The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations and any secrets or special instructions for the scene.
- **Pushing the Envelope**: Suggestions for gamemasters on altering the scene to challenge more experienced players or more powerful player characters.
- **Debugging**: Suggestions for getting the adventure back on track if the player characters' actions derail it.
- **Places of Interest**: Locations featured in the scene, including descriptions and ratings for security systems and Matrix systems.
- **Grunts and Moving Targets**: NPCs in that particular scene. We'll probably just give you the names and some basic information, because we'll be damned if we're doing lots of stats for an essentially unplayable product.[1]

At the end of the adventure are some rules additions to deal with some of the circumstances presented by this unique setting.[2]

1 I mean, we already did the Archetypes chapter for Pete's sake.

2 That's right, new rules for a non-existent game. That's right, our dedication knows no bounds. Oh wait, it does. We're still not writing up NPCs.

BACKGROUND

The riot of creatures and powers in the Eighth World led to a seemingly unending series of arguments about which was the most powerful, and the era of profitable war did nothing to calm those arguments. As the megacorps have proved time and time again, if enough people are interested in a topic, someone can organize a product related to that topic, and the Best Ever Tournament is that topic.

The Best Ever Tournament brought in 64 contestants from across the Inner Sphere to do battle with few rules. Each competitor would bring whatever they could to the fight, and the battles didn't end until one contestant was either dead, incapacitated, or had surrendered.

After four rounds of the tournament, four warriors are left standing (see sidebar). While all four have been acknowledged as mighty warriors, only one will be crowned the Best Ever.

The tournament has spawned an entire industry of shadowrunning. Some of these runs are paid for by people who bet a substantial amount of money on one contender or another, but other individuals have much more at stake. Sometimes there are grudges to settle (as in one case when a House Liao agent made sure a Davion warrior went up against Asmodeal in the fourth round, thereby ensuring a rough and grisly death for their hated enemy), and sometimes there are people trying to advance political goals through victory in the tournament.

So it is with Tir na Niops. Long known to harbor Inner Sphere-conquering desires, the Tir sees the two elves remaining in the tournament as an unparalleled opportunity to raise their standing in the Inner Sphere and bring glory, attention, and hopefully sponsorship dollars to their nation. They may not have decided what to do once they get to the desired all-elf final, but they are convinced that getting that initial result would be a great boon.

The early rounds did not require great interference by the Tir, but as the opponents become even stronger in the later rounds, Tir leaders are willing to do whatever it takes to help the elven contenders move on. They have dispatched one of their best Mr. Johnsons to the Tir to hire two teams of runners—one to make sure Daviar beats Asmodeal, and the other to help McCool down the beloved Hadry. The players will be brought in to help Daviar win in the semifinals, and, assuming they succeed in that, they will be given further opportunities to help Daviar along once McCool is eliminated by Hadry.

THROW SOME MONEY ON THE WALL AND HOPE IT STICKS

Scan This

Mr. Johnson wants runners who have the right balance of skill and anonymity. He finds the players through one of their contacts on Solaris VII and feels out their sympathies for Tir na Niops. If they are willing to help the elven cause—or just make a lot of money—he hires them for the job.

He is not too specific in this meeting, talking more about

THE FINAL FOUR

Nadja Daviar: One of the leading figures of the Sixth World, Nadja Daviar disappeared shortly after the Second Crash. Her departure left a tremendous void, both in terms of leadership (she stood to become President of the UCAS when she vanished) and cheescake (not many politicians are that smokin' hot, but then not that many politicians have kickass elven blood in their veins). Suffice it to say, she was sorely missed.

One thousand years after her departure, however, her name had been mostly lost in the mists of history.[1] The mystery of her disappearance had never been solved, but that just meant it joined the ranks of hundreds of thousands of other unanswered questions. Until the Tir na Niops announced that the prodigal Daviar had returned.

To this day the Tir has remained all quiet and mysterious and elf-like about Daviar's return, refusing to say how they found her or where she appeared. She seems to have come through any disorientation in fine fashion—while there obviously was an adjustment period, Daviar's political acumen did not abandon her in her long absence, and she was able to get up to speed on Inner Sphere affairs in short order.

Other talents stayed with Daviar as well. She had always been lethally attractive, desired by the most wealthy and powerful, and she had known how to use that as an asset. Now, in the Eighth World, she has turned that gift into a deadly weapon, as her run through the Best Ever Tournament has made clear. She dispatched her first round opponent by promising to show him a bit of leg above the knee as long as he sliced his own wrist open. He gazed adoringly at her flesh as he bled himself into unconsciousness. In the second round, all she had to do to reduce her opponent to quivering jelly was peel and eat a banana. Her third round victory was a simple affair—while her opponent watched, she invited a friend into the arena and proceeded to kiss her, deeply, on the mouth. Her opponent had an aneurism on the spot.

She has made it to the semifinals without firing a shot or wielding any weapon in anger. Nevertheless, she is regarded by many as the most lethal competitor still standing.

Kieran McCool: The thing about the immortal elves is, they really don't need your approval. They'll carry out their schemes, manipulate the secret powers of the world, and play with people like puppets on strings, and if you don't like it, or don't like them, they could care less. They got over that whole "trying to impress other people" when they were in their forties, which was a few thousand years ago.

While they don't care much if humanity approves or disapproves of them, they are willing to admit that the great unwashed masses occasionally come up with a good idea.[2] In their journey through the centuries, they recently came across an object that, despite their many decades of carefully studied jadedness, knocked their socks off. When they first saw this object, they couldn't believe their eyes. How was it possible, they thought, that the universe, the one they had lived in so long, was still capable of producing such glorious objects of wondrous power? When they saw the object they knew they must have it. Their thoughts were consumed by the desire to possess it, to own it, to do nothing but live in its sweet metal caress. It was sleek, powerful, and beautiful. It was the most fabulous object the universe had ever produced.

It was the *UrbanMech*.

Few there were[3] who did not understand the passion the *UrbanMech* aroused in the bosoms of the immortal elves. And even fewer there were who did not fear the results of this powerful union—the oldest, most powerful beings in the Inner Sphere[4] riding in the single greatest piece of machinery ever devised. INN correspondent Bertram Habeas wrote this about the union of the two:

As soon as the first immortal elf piloted an UrbanMech*, it became clear that they were meant for each other. The* Urbie*'s slow grace became even more pronounced under the hands of its new pilot, and the light weapons load forced them to be exact and deadly accurate with their shots. As I watched the 'Mech move, I could not help but be filled with a deep sense of envy. Only one thought could stay in my head, and that thought was repeated over and over:*

"God help me, I do so want an UrbanMech*."*

McCool has not had the easiest time in the tournament, occasionally struggling against machines burdened by such things as excessive speed or superior firepower.[5] But the subtler qualities of the *UrbanMech* and its supremely gifted pilot eventually won out, round after round, until McCool faces fearsome newcomer Jonas Hadry in an attempt to generate an all-elf final round.

Asmodeal el Angel de la Muerte: This is one ugly SOB. It's tough to tell which of the scars on his face are from battle and which are from his cyberware, but honestly, who would want to stare at his face long enough to figure this out? And if you could stand it, you'd find out that removing his scars and implants would leave a dude who still looked like a bulldog with his face mashed against a window.

But Asmodeal[6] has made his appearance work for him. Long ago he learned that people recoil from his face, so he strove to make it ever more fearsome. It is now the true face of a devil, from the pointed red horns to the glowing eyes to the scent of sulfur that wafts on his breath.[7]

Asmodeal has been drastically altered from whatever it was he used to be, both in his body and his mind, and all those alterations have served a single purpose—to make him the most lethal killing machine known to the Inner Sphere. As his success in the tournament has demonstrated, the effort has been pretty damn successful.

Asmodeal is the only contestant who has killed each and every one of his opponents. Not only does he make certain they are dead, but he kills them in a gruesome and grisly fashion that would be right at home in Aztechnology's latest splatter trids.[8] In the first round, he drew and quartered his opponent all by himself. Once all

1 Honestly, can you remember the name of the vice-president of whatever nation you live in from ten years ago? Didn't think so. Now try doing it for a thousand.

2 Like elven pornography.

3 You write about immortal elves, you have to start sounding like Tolkein. It's the law.

4 Ahem? Signed, Lofwyr

5 Or, for the most part, both.

6 That's right, we're going with the first name, because if you think we're typing "el Angel de la Muerte" over and over, then, um, no.

7 We're pretty sure that last thing is just bad hygiene.

8 Like *The Hostile Saw XXIV*.

retrievable remains of his second round opponent were gathered, they weighed less than one-third of the man's pre-fight weight. And in the third round, he did the kinds of things with his opponent's entrails that are best left to children in schoolyards.

The aura of brutality Asmodeal has developed has only helped him as he goes along. Now, the foulest of the competitors is poised to face the fairest, and the entire Inner Sphere is concerned over just what he will do to the recently recovered masterpiece of elven beauty.

Jonas Hadry: What can we say about this guy? To know him is to love him. Even those that don't know him still probably love him, because he represents every ideal they hold. Hadry is the pure embodiment of honorable manhood, and his triumphant march through the tournament is a reminder that good things are still possible in this corrupt universe.

There is, of course, not enough space to review Hadry's entire career. Suffice it to say that from his pirate days with Kane XXIV to his tactical planning of Victor Steiner-Davion's fight at Tukayyid to his inspiring fights against the LBI at Devlin Stone's side, Hadry has been daring, brilliant, strong, agile, and whatever other positive adjectives you would care to throw into this space.

His combat exploits are so renowned that his diplomatic feats are sometimes ignored, but they shouldn't be. The fact that he got the Great Dragons Ryumyo and Lung to have lunch together is an astounding feat, and Katrina Steiner-Davion's declaration that she would repent of her wrong doings and serve time in a Lyran Alliance prison "if I could just see his beautiful face one more time" are well known.

Hadry's procession through the tournament has been as triumphant as his life. His victories have been convincing, elegant, and gentlemanly—his opponents were thoroughly defeated, but none were killed or even seriously harmed. Every one of them expressed admiration for Hadry's abilities after the fight, and every one of them was seen buying him a drink afterward.

In short, Hadry is impossible to dislike. If there is anything that could unite the Inner Sphere and help them move past this era of profitable war, it is their shared love for this great Marisoo, Jonas Hadry.

advancing the glory of the Tir through the Best Ever Tournament. He assures the runners that details of their actions will be delivered to them shortly after they accept the mission.

All the action in Solaris VII is taking place in betting parlors these days, so that's where Mr. Johnson meets the players—in the private room of one of the more upscale betting houses.

Tell It to Them Straight

Solaris VII is brimming over with money, and your team has arrived on planet, ladle in hand, ready to dip into this stream.

There are offers all over the place and plenty of Johnsons who want to take a meeting, but the trick lies in sorting the real dealmakers out from the shitheads in suits. When one of your fixers gets a hold of you and tells you an interested party wants to meet you in the back room of The Brown Derby, you can't help but think you've got a live one. People don't drop that many c-bills on a private room just to screw with somebody.

At least, you and your team hopes they don't.

[Read when the team arrives at the back room of The Brown Derby]

This place is so nice that cigar burns are cleaned and patched minutes after they appear. It's so nice that you could probably tip your glass of fine '61 Northwind Scotch over, and the cleaning staff would have a sponge ready to catch the liquid before it hit the floor, and then they'd give you a refill and make you feel like it was their fault that you were being clumsy. It's nice, I tell you, nice.

The Johnson in the room is dressed the part, all dark suit and shades and slicked-back white hair. Slicked back far enough to reveal his pointed ears. He's got a few similarly dressed compatriots with him, and even the non-Awakened in the group can feel the power radiating off these guys. You might be able to mess with them if you wanted, but you're sitting on a leather couch with a Scotch on the rocks in your hands. So why not listen?

[After they accept the job, read this]

Mr. Johnson shakes each of your hands.

"I hope you understand the scope of this project. This is not just about some tournament. This is about advancing the cause of the Tir, and thus the cause of all elves. Should such lofty goals be met, then a lofty reward is only fair. This could be a great beginning for you."

He says this with a glint of diamonds in his eyes.

[If they do not accept the job, read this]

Mr. Johnson leaps to his feet.

"What the hell is the matter with you? I brought you here, bought you drinks, played nice and all, just so I could be clear that this is the kind of thing you should be doing. This here is the plot, for heaven's sakes! And you're just going to turn your backs on it? What do suggest we do for the rest of the night? I mean, really, if you could just *cooperate* for once instead of having to always do your own damned thing."

He stops to breathe for a moment and shakes his head.

"Gamers," he says. "You'll be the death of me." Then an odd, somewhat embarrassed expression crosses his face. "Runners, that is. You're runners. Sorry."

[If they still *do not accept the job, read this]*

A small, extremely localized nuclear bomb goes off in the back room of The Brown Derby, completely disintegrating you and your stupid, stubborn crew. So suck on *that*, you bastards.[1]

Hooks

Runners. Lots of cash. High-profile job. What do you need, a road map?

1 You may then feel free to spend the remainder of the gaming session generating new characters.

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Behind the Scenes

Mr. Johnson presents a cool surface, but he's pretty anxious to have *these* runners on the job—he's done his research and is convinced that they're the right mix to do what it takes. His initial offer is 1,000 c-bills per runner per day, but he is willing to go as high as 3,500 with a successful Negotiation (4) Test. If the money doesn't work, he calls up his close friend Arthur Fiat, whom he says is capable of making anyone do anything, to convince the runners to take the job.

Pushing the Envelope

When in doubt, have one of the members of Mr. Johnson's team proposition one of the runners for sex. We're not sure just what it accomplishes plot-wise, but it sure adds spice to the encounter, right?

Debugging

Yelling at the players when they are making stupid decisions is always a good idea. Remember to constantly remind them about it in future gaming sessions, too, by doing things like "Remember when you turned down that boatload of money from the elf on Solaris VII for no good reason? You *dicks*."

If the players have an objection to working with elves, tell them that they are effectively undoing several decades of civil rights progress through their prejudice, and they should shut the hell up.

Places of Interest

The Brown Derby

A full-service Solaris VII betting parlor, The Brown Derby has everything its high-end clientele would want. Fine liquor, comfortable seating, thick carpeting, several private rooms for gambling or other business, and dozens of trolls and other muscled beings who will beat the hell out of you if you step out of line. There's public AR node at The Brown Derby so that patrons can regularly monitor the full range of sports happenings across the Inner Sphere, as well as keep up on Solaris VII goings-on.

Grunts and Moving Targets

Okay, you got the elf Mr. Johnson and two lackeys, all right? Use a random number generator or something, we don't have time for this right now.

THE RUBBER HITS THE FERROCRETE

Scan This

Not long after the runners return to wherever they're staying, they receive a dossier from Mr. Johnson giving them a briefing on the first part of the mission. The runners should familiarize themselves with what they need to do and start making any preparations—they don't have a lot of time, as the semifinals of the tournament start the day after tomorrow.

The briefing is delivered over the Matrix by a dumb agent, so there's not much to learn in the delivery process. This section should focus on the runners preparing for what is to come.

Tell It To Them Straight

You make it safely back to your quarters, but you don't have much time to relax before and AR agent, appearing as a cylindrical, hovering robot, drifts into view. A circular blue light on the top of its head blinks softly, and in the middle of the circle is a glowing red button. Once its pushed, you abruptly have all the information you need in your head.

This is not going to be easy—time to get planning.

Hooks

What the hell are you talking about? They accepted the job in the last scene, right? So they're doing it! Case closed!

Behind the Scenes

The agent sent to deliver the information is a simple bit of code—quite secure for anyone who isn't the runners, but ready to give up the information to the runners and disappear.

The agent provides the following information to the runners:

- Complete trideo footage of the preliminary rounds for all four semifinalists. A Perception (4) Test tells the runners that Daviar relies perhaps too heavily on her physical attractiveness, Asmodeal can fall prey to bloodlust, McCool's *UrbanMech* is, in fact, really quite slow, and if Hadry has a weakness it is that he's too good to be true.
- Schedule and other information on the semifinals matches. Both will take place the Factory arena; the Daviar/McCool match will start at eight in the morning the day after tomorrow, the Hadry/Asmodeal match will start at four in the afternoon, assuming the previous match has been completed. The data contains a detailed map of how the Factory will be set up for the matches.
- Basic background on each competitor, similar to the information provided in the Background section above.
- Some contacts who may be of use: Karstenn Rolf, a shaman who supposedly knows how to counter blood magic; Lt. Col. Heinrich Kasselbaum (LAAF, ret.), one of the foremost experts in countering the overwhelming force of a solo *UrbanMech*; dating coach Kelly Green, who helps people get over the intimidation they may feel around exceptionally attractive individuals; and a cloned version of Thomas Bulfinch, whose unparalleled understanding of mythology can explain how much someone like Hadry has in common with Greek gods.

It's up to the runners to decide which, if any, of these resources they will use and how they will use them. All of the contacts provided by the elves are open to working with the runners, and their fees are negotiable based on their statistics.[1]

The runners may decide to try to give themselves more time by delaying the tournament, but that will be a tall order—there

1 Which we're not going to give you. Ha ha.

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are going to be tens of billions of viewers, so as long as there is some sort of functional arena on the planet, the organizers will go through with the event.

Pushing the Envelope

Want this more dangerous? Make the messenger agent totally coated in black IC that the runners have to penetrate to get the message! Does it make sense that Mr. Johnson would make the message so hard to reach? Who cares? It'd be cool!

Debugging

At some point, the runners may decide that this adventure doesn't make a lot of sense and isn't worth their time. Often, belittling them is the surest path to breaking their will and forcing them to do whatever cockamamie thing we—er, we mean you—come up with. Questioning the manhood of the males in the group is always a good tactic, while females are often vulnerable to attacks on their appearance. Don't hold back or get caught up worrying about their feelings or some other such crap—remember, you're the gameMASTER, not the gameSERVANT!

Grunts and Moving Targets

Well, we've got a Shaman, a military dude, a scholar, and a dating coach. Just use the archetypes for Street Shaman, Weapons Specialist, Occult Investigator, and, um, Face.[1] Cripes, do we have to do all the thinking for you?

DAY ONE: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST[2]

Scan This

Preparation time goes by quickly, and soon the moment has arrived for the semifinals to begin and for the runner to put whatever plan they have into action. Daviar versus Asmodeal is up first, and if the runners don't do something, Daviar stands to lose, meaning the runners' employers will not be happy.

Tell It To Them Straight

The day of the tournament has arrived, and there is a buzz in the air. Everyone on the planet is going to be involved in the tournament somehow today, either working to support the tourney or watching it somewhere. The betting parlors and bars are doing tremendous business, and a cloud of alcoholic mist hangs over much of the planet.

The Factory has been given plenty of security, and no one wants anything to interfere with the match. Which is good, because who ever remembers the easy jobs?

Hooks

It's not only the job the runners were hired to do, but it's also the single biggest event going on in the Inner Sphere at the moment. Perhaps, maybe, the runners could find it in their souls to be interested in it.

Behind the Scenes

Without any interference by the runners, the battle will last for five hours. Neither Daviar nor Asmodeal use any vehicles in the battle—both decide to confront each other on foot. Daviar's strategy is simple—she walks around the Factory, tugging lightly at the zipper to her black leather jumpsuit and saying things like "It's hot in here, isn't it? I feel hot." She wears caps over her sharpened heels, and she is ready to remove those caps and deliver any deadly kicks if she needs to. She carries no other weapons—really, with a tight suit like the one she's wearing, where would she put it?

Asmodeal, however, is not messing around. He grabbed a security guard on his way into the arena, and once the appointed hour hits Asmodeal sacrifices the guard and begins summoning some blood spirits, knowing they'll be completely immune to Daviar's charms. Once they're summoned he follows them at a distance until they find her, which he hopes happens before the summoning fades.

The summoning ritual takes half an hour (the guard put up a decent fight at the end there), and the summoned spirits take just over four hours to track down Daviar in the complex arena. Once they find her, though, they make quick work of her, pummeling her to the brink of death before allowing their master to deliver the killing blow.

If the runners want to do their job right, they have to interfere before this happens. If they fail, they can try to redeem themselves by interfering in the next match, but making Jonas Hadry lose is a tall order. Like, a really tall order. Like, we will force the gamemaster to do whatever railroading is necessary to make you fail. We're very serious about this.

Pushing the Envelope

To make the adventure a little harder, Asmodeal could have sacrificed a victim before he arrived at the stadium and used the Cannibalize power to build his strength. This will help him find and finish off Daviar faster, so the runners have only three and a half hours before he gains his victory.

Debugging

If the players get lost, they should call 311 to get directions.

If they are not sure how to counter the blood magic of Asmodeal, feel free to have a spirit materialize who can tell the runners whatever they need to know, or even do the candy asses' entire run for them.

If the runners forget what they were supposed to do, have people they encounter say things like "Hey, that big tournament is today, isn't it? I sure hope no one's trying to fix the match or anything!"

Places of Interest

The Factory is, of all things, a former factory used for building shuttlecraft. Most of it is structurally sound, but the occasional shaky floor or crumbling wall helps keep combatants on their toes. The elevators and ramps leading up and down to the many factory levels give combatants plenty of ways to evade each other—or stage an ambush.

1 Because dating involves a lot of facetime, right?
2 That's not clichéd yet, is it?

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There are a few nodes located in the factory but no AR overlay. The nodes allow limited access—the last thing arena managers want are combatants linking to outside cameras in order to track down their opponents. The easiest data to access is information about other ongoing battles and the up-to-date odds on the current fight—which can at least give combatants an idea of whether they're doing well or not.

Grunts and Moving Targets

Asmodeal and Nadja Daviar, who were detailed above. Kind of.

MATCH TWO: THE GOLDEN BOY AND THE IMMORTAL ELF, WHO BY COMPARISON LOOKS LIKE A DRAB TWO DIMENSIONAL CUTOUT

Scan This

Hopefully by this point the runners have helped Daviar to victory, thus giving them a degree of security when they approach the second match. As it turns out, it's a good thing they got it right the first time, because getting Hadry to lose is a near-impossible proposition.[1]

Part of the complication in planning for this stage is that no one knows just what mode of combat Hadry will employ against McCool. In previous rounds, he has shown himself to be a deadly artillery marksman, a small weapons expert, a parkour adept, a nimble and quick-witted 'Mech pilot, and even a deadly ninja capable of slipping through battlefields entirely unseen.[2] Most people believe Hadry will get into a 'Mech to match McCool's firepower, but no one knows for sure.

The match between Daviar and Asmodeal should have ended well before 4 PM, unless the runners' actions extended it somehow. Thus, the Hadry/McCool showdown should start on time.

Tell It To Them Straight

While there was plenty of excitement over the first match of the day, the battle between the immortal elf Kieran McCool and all-around great guy Jonas Hadry has the planet in a tizzy. The betting has been pretty even—most people want Hadry to win, of course, but there is beginning to be a feeling that he is just too good to be true, and that his time of reckoning will come. The combination of McCool and his sleek, powerful *UrbanMech* (nicknamed "Road Runner") will, many people think, finally reveal a weakness in the wonderful, talented, and really very handsome Hadry

Crowds will be a factor here—they're all around the arena, packing every space they can, watching every move attentively. If you're going to interfere, you'd better be sure you're not obvious about it.

Hooks

Okay, remember that whole ice skating thing when the one goon hit the skater in the knee with, like, a metal rod? Remember how much attention everyone paid to that whole thing?[3] So if the runners pull this off, this will be the same kind of story, only a few billion times bigger. This is their chance to be legends![4] How could they not want in?

Behind the Scenes

As he has with every battle to this point, McCool will saddle up in the Road Runner and use the speed, quick moves, and feints that are the *UrbanMech*'s trademark to attempt to gain the upper hand. While that strategy has served him well in the past, it's not going to be enough this time. Hadry makes his appearance in a ProtoMech that's been modified to allow spell casting from the cockpit. His speed, which is somehow better than the Road Runner's, [5] helps keep McCool unbalanced and confused, and his array of spells wear down his opponent, softening him up for the eventual kill.

Interfering with Hadry will be incredibly difficult. He is the consummate warrior, completely aware of his surroundings, while also being an ace mage and a diviner as well, meaning he usually knows what's coming before it happens. Whatever the players try, he should be able to counter as if he was expecting it. The runners should come away totally impressed by his abilities, while also nursing an admiration and even a liking for the gallant fighter.[6]

McCool should put up a gallant fight, but eventually he will succumb—most likely four hours into the fight, unless the runners did something to give him a boost. Hadry's victory sets off a planet-wide celebration that lasts well into the morning.

Pushing the Envelope

If you want to make this stage more difficult for the players, have them spend some moments totally lost in reverie as they contemplate how wonderful Hadry is. Then have Hadry sneak up behind them, smack them in the head, and run away laughing.

Debugging

The only thing that really could go wrong here is that Hadry doesn't win. If that happens, close all your rulebooks, put them in a stack along with any screens or any other tools you use, then put your dice on top. Shove this pile to the player on your left, and say "I clearly am completely unworthy to run this game. Why don't you give it a shot?"

Grunts and Moving Targets

For McCool, use the Totally Awesome Immortal Elf archetype; for Hadry, use the Marisoo, but max out all his attributes and give him whatever skills are necessary to succeed.

1 Let's put it this way: It's "possible" for the Asmodeal to defeat Hadry in the same sense that it's theoretically "possible" for your players to travel to the moon.

2 Did we also mention how he's good looking and everyone likes him and stuff?

3 What do you mean you're too young to remember that? Shut up!

4 Legendary goons, but still.

5 Yeah, that's right—Hadry can sometimes go over *thirty* in that bad boy.

6 If instead they come away resentful and feeling like the gamemaster totally railroaded them, that means you did it wrong.

THE BEST EVER: AN EIGHTH WORLD ADVENTURE

THE NIGHT AFTER: ONE ANGRY, DRUNKEN ELF

Scan This

Mr. Johnson was happy enough with Daviar's victor to keep the runners on the case, but McCool's defeat did not please him at all. During the long celebration that follows the match, a somewhat inebriated Mr. Johnson tracks down the runners to tell them how imperative it is that Daviar wins the tournament. He knows how wonderful and cool Hadry is, but there is a rumor running around that Hadry does, in fact, have a weakness. The runners should follow this rumor, discover the weakness, and exploit it. Or else Mr. Johnson might have to use their genitalia as an ingredient in an obscure elven aphrodisiac.

Tell It To Them Straight

The streets are alive with people shouting, celebrating, and otherwise carrying on. There is a genuine exuberance on Solaris VII, combined with great excitement at seeing how Daviar and Hadry will match up in the finals.

You wish you could share in the happiness—you really do, because despite your mission you find yourself liking Hadry tremendously and wishing for his success. But you're professionals, and you have a job to do.

You don't pay attention to the drunken reveler that bumps into you as you walk through the crowded streets—you've already been bumped a few dozen times. But then he turns, and you're looking into the face of Mr. Johnson. He doesn't look happy, and he starts talking before you've totally recognized who he is. His speech is slurred and slow.

"He is beautiful," he says. "He really is. It's just a damn shame that he has to die. And you better make sure that happens."

Hooks

By this point the runners should realize how tough it will be to get Hadry to ever lose at anything, so information about a weakness should be very compelling to them.

Pushing the Envelope

To better simulate Mr. Johnson's state, drink a bottle of gin before running this scene.[1] Then watch your players enjoy the challenge of trying to understand what the hell you are talking about.

Debugging

The runners might, at this point, decide that they like Hadry so much that they want to help him win rather than working against him. While this is a very understandable, and even commendable desire, they must be reminded that they are professionals with a job to do. The appearance of Mr. Johnson can remind them that they have a job to do, and if they welch out on it, Mr. Johnson will report them to the MRBC.[2]

1 EDITOR'S NOTE: Please do not actually do this.

2 Yeah, they rate shadowrunners, too. Wouldn't that be kind of cool?

SCRAPING THE CALLUS OFF ACHILLES' HEEL

Scan This

The final match of the tournament is scheduled to take place two days after the semifinals, so the runners do not have much time to dig up the needed information about Hadry. This scene is about following a tangled skein of contacts and low-lifes to finally find the person who might be able to reveal the secret of Hadry's weakness—as long as the runners can persuade him to give it up.

The first parts of this section will be variable, as the runners use whatever contacts they have. Eventually, though, they should get a lead that turns them on to the Solaris VII Mafia. The Mafia has connections to a large number of the planet's betting institutions, and they have a vested influence in knowing about anything that could affect competitive events one way or another. They have connections to some investigators who are not exactly made men but have a long and notable history of service to the Mafia.

The runners should find their way to a Mafia capo named Carlos Dugan, and if they meet his approval, they can move on to meet the man who supposedly knows Hadry's weakness—Burt Gretchen, mole supreme.

Tell It To Them Straight

Mr. Johnson didn't give you much to go on, only a rumor. You've got less than forty-two hours to track it down—time to work over any contacts you have on the planet, but only if you hurry.

Hooks

As the dedicated professionals they surely are, the runners know what they're up against and should be eager to find anything that might help slow him down. Thus, any information that might help them get their job done should be interesting to them.

Alternately, they might be so fascinated and compelled by Hadry's wonderfulness that they are eager to hear anything about him, no matter what it might be.

Behind the Scenes

Mafia capos do not make themselves available to just anyone who wants a meeting. It shouldn't take much effort for the runners to discover that the Mafia has the information they are looking for, and a little more giving should give them the name of Carlos Dugan. They won't get into meet with Dugan, however, unless they can prove that their interests overlap with his.

Dugan's interests are fairly simple—he knows odds are going against Daviar, so if he can place a significant bet on McCool and have him win, he'll collect some good money.

Knowing the runners want to help Daviar win is enough for Dugan to meet with them, but by itself not enough for him to send them on to Gretchen. How they'll win his trust is up to the runners.[3]

If they get in to see Gretchen, he's happy to tell them what they want to know—if Dugan vouches for them, that's good enough for him. He tells that he doesn't have much, but maybe it will help the runners swing things Daviar's way. From what he has found, Hadry

3 Though "not acting like complete dumbasses" is always a good first step.

has a powerful allergy to *Mycosia pseudoflora* pollen,[1] so strong that if he inhales enough, he is effectively immobilized.

Mycosia pseudoflora is not the most common plant in the world, but anything can be found on Solaris VII—if the players scrounge well enough.

Pushing the Envelope

Instead of having Hadry be allergic to *Mycosia pseudoflora*, the gamemaster could choose to make him allergic to the even-more-difficult-to-find powdered orichalcum. Or powdered dragon testicles. Whatever.

Debugging

If the players use the Mafia as an excuse to indulge in tired Italian stereotypes, call your local Italian-American civic organization and get them on the case. There is no excuse for tacky behavior.

Grunts and Moving Targets

Have you ever done a web search for Shadowrun character generators? You should. It would save us a lot of time.[2]

STOP AND SMELL THE FLOWERS

Scan This

Depending on how long it took the runners to find Gretchen and learn what he knows, they could be running very short on time to get the pollen they need and find a way to use it in the fight. While there are *Mycosia pseudoflora* plants on Solaris VII, it's not like the pollen is sold in every corner store. The runners will have to find some botanists who can help them locate some samples of the flower, and then go where it is growing—in a forested battleground that is currently hosting a multi-day, multi-'Mech tournament.

Tell It To Them Straight

You've discovered Jonas Hadry's secret weakness, but now you need to take advantage of it. You need to find some flowers, but that's not your specialty. So you need to ask—who would know where *Mycosia pseudoflora* grows?

[*When the runners arrive at the arena where the flowers can be found*]

The sky flashes, gunshots roar, and an enthusiastic crowd (undoubtedly warming themselves up for the big fight to come) cheers happily. If there are flowers in there, it seems likely that they've been either trampled or burned. But it's the only lead you've got, so you need to find a way in.

Hooks

Okay, can we be honest here? By this point, the runners are either doing the adventure or they're not. If they're not, good riddance. If they are, then they're going to go through all the steps like nice little runners. So if you don't mind, we're going to stop justifying the existence of every single damn scene, all right? Thanks.

1 What is it about that plant and great people, right?
2 By "us," I of course mean "me."

OPTIONAL SCENE: A CHARACTER DIES

Scan This

We all know that you're not doing your job as a gamemaster unless at least one player character dies in the course of the adventure. If one hasn't kicked the bucket yet, this is your chance to flex a little muscle and remind the players that you are in charge here and they need to pay you your proper respect.

Tell It To Them Straight

Oh no! [Name of character] has just experienced [some unavoidably fatal experience]. Wow, that's a shame!

Hooks

While your players may complain about this scene and say that it seems random, forced, and arbitrary, don't listen to them. Players are like children—they need to be disciplined every now and again or they'll just run all over you. In the long run, scenes like this are for their own good, and they will eventually thank you for it.

Behind the Scenes

This is not rocket science. Pick a character and make them dead. Yours is the Finger of God in this game—just reach out and touch someone with it.

Debugging

That's the whole purpose of this scene—it's a big debug. It reminds the characters to fear the gamemaster, and when players have that fear, all is right in the gaming universe.

Grunts and Moving Targets

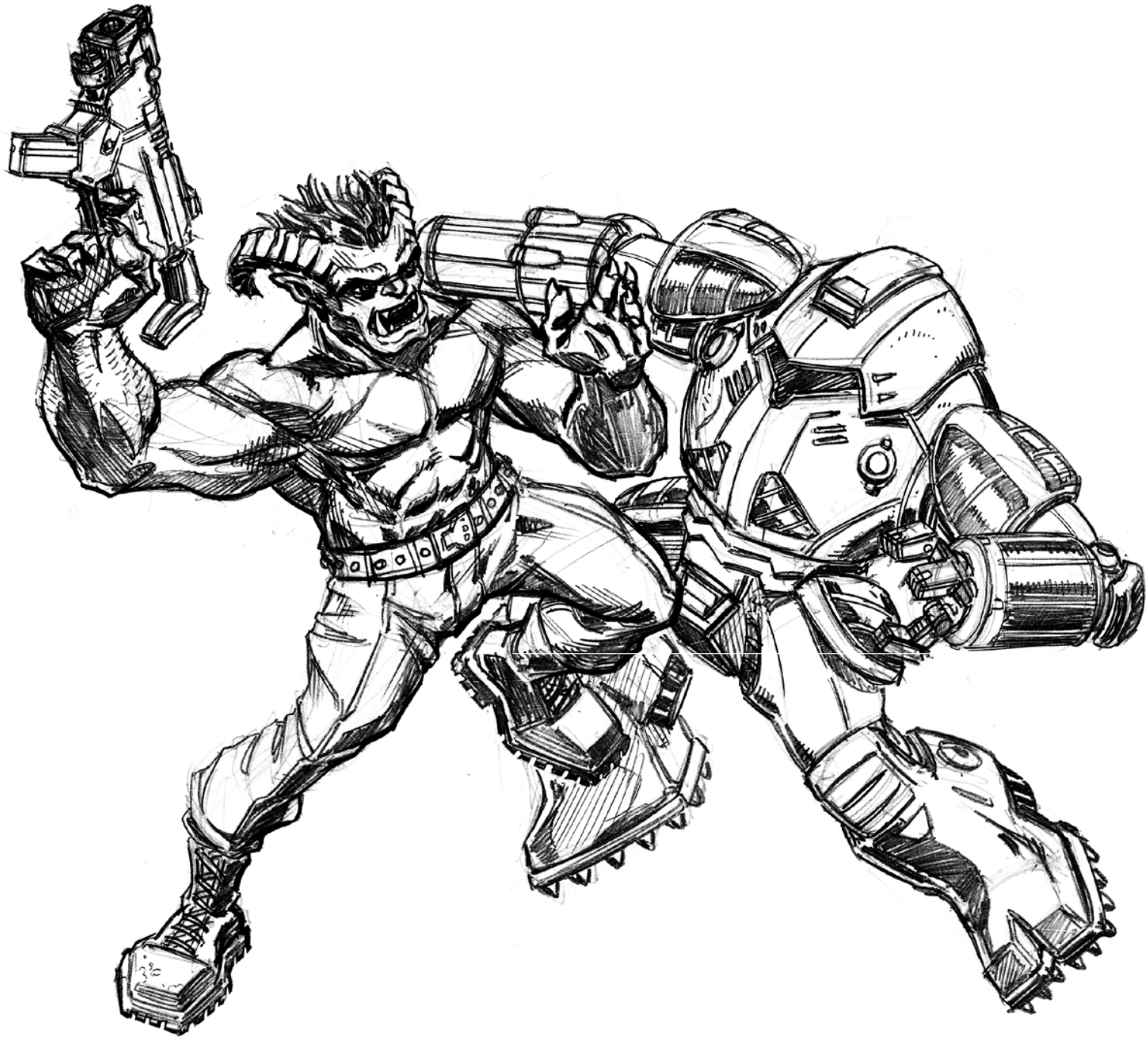
You could introduce an NPC here if you'd like in order to kill the runner, but why go to that effort? It's easier to just make this a *deus ex machina* kind of thing, except you're not helping them find a happy ending. But it *is*, at least, an ending!

If you really want an NPC to do the job, might we suggest introducing your own Marisoo? That way, the NPC can easily kill one character and leave the other characters loving him/her for it.

Behind the Scenes

Given the historical importance of *Mycosia pseudoflora*, most botanists worth their salt on the planet know where to find the plant on the planet, and know that the closest available sample is in a nearby 'Mech arena.

The 'Mech arena, like the finals of the Best Ever Tournament, is in the Montenegro section of Solaris City. It's a Class Three arena, meaning it hosts medium 'Mechs and spells of force level 5 or less. It presents a forested setting, though not too dense—if the upper canopy was too thick, spectators wouldn't be able to see anything. There are small hills in the arena, some rising as high as fifteen meters.



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When the runners get to the arena, a battle is underway between two three-'Mech squads. The 'Mech pilots will not be looking for people on foot in the arena, and if they happen to see them they won't be too concerned about not stepping on them.

There are two 'Mech-sized entrances into the arena floor, one on the west, one on the east. The *Mycosia pseudoflora* is located just northeast of the west entrance, a fact that any botanist the runners speak with will know.[1]

Pushing the Envelope

Put more 'Mechs in the arena, or make 'em bigger. Or for real fun, throw some mines in the arena, including one right in the middle of the flower patch.

Debugging

If the runners get stepped on by one of the 'Mechs in the arena, get an air pump and re-inflate them.[2]

If the players aren't aware that there are such people as "botanists" who can help them find a particular plant, send them to college for a few years and then restart the adventure when they get back.

Places of Interest

The Forest Arena, which we just described above, and we're not about to go into that sort of detail again.

THE FINALS: SNEEZING IN THE FACE OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

Scan This

Between finding Mr. Gretchen and tracking down the flowers they need, the runners should not have a lot of extra time on their hand. They won't have time to confront either combatant and try to make some sort of deal or alliance—the combatants went to the arena early to prepare and are maintaining strict seclusion.

This means the runners will need to get onto the floor of the arena during the fight and get close enough to Hadry to put the pollen in his face and incapacitate him. They may elect to approach Daviar first and let them know what they are up to so she doesn't interfere with them—and perhaps can give them a hand.

Tell It To Them Straight

<<Transcript from *The Best Ever Live!*, airdate 31 March 3076, Solaris VII>>

Rich Robertson: Well, it's finally here. The big moment. The climax. The conclusion. The time to crown the big enchilada. All the talk is over, and any speculation people throw out doesn't matter anymore. Reality is about to set in, and it's going to be glorious.

Dirk Diedrick: That's right, Rich. And I'm telling you something, the winner tonight is going on to more than just glory. They will not only become the most famous warrior in the entire Inner Sphere, they will be acknowledged as the greatest solo warrior alive, possibly the greatest in history. Which means the powers of the Inner Sphere are going to be all over the winner, trying to get him or her to their side. And they'll be willing to offer them just about anything to get that person on their side. Let me tell you something, Rich—I wouldn't be surprised if the winner today shortly winds up as the head of some nation, and perhaps even founding their own Great House.

RR: Are you serious?

DD: Are my pants off?

The weeks-long tournament has climaxed at a fever pitch, and you're in the middle of it. You are going to try to play a role in fixing the biggest sporting event ever, and somehow you hope to both succeed and get away without being noticed so you can get paid. It's not going to be easy, but you can bet your ass it will be worth it.

[*Add this if the runners managed to get their hands on the* Mycosia pseudoflora]

You can't help but feel that it's a little insane that you're going up against a absolutely terrific warrior—and, from what you've seen, a totally charming guy to boot—with nothing more than flower pollen. But if your Mafia friend is right, this is the one thing that could bring Hadry down and make your Tir employers very happy.

Behind the Scenes

The competitors in this last round provide plenty of time for the runners to interfere, assuming they can find a way to be involved. Hadry enters the fight 'Mech-less, wearing simply body armor and carrying an Ares XtraLongKill hunting rifle. Daviar is savvy enough to use Hadry's chivalry against him—since she has already won most of her battles without the benefit of any weapons, she enters the final round armed with nothing other than the killer curves that have already been imitated by millions of body sculptors across the Inner Sphere.[3] She gambles on the belief that Hadry will not fire any weapons at an unarmed woman, and in this aspect, at least, she wins. Early in the final round, viewers see that Hadry has Daviar in his sites several times, but each time he cannot bring himself to pull the trigger.

Eventually Hadry abandons his rifle, acknowledging that he'll have to win this battle hand-to-hand. He drops the rifle, draws his leather billy club, and gets ready to pound Daviar to submission.[4]

While Daviar has a pretty good defense, she doesn't have a plan for how to defeat Hadry. He clearly has been impressed by her appearance when he has gotten close enough, but so far he has not fallen victim to the long periods of stunned gaping that have

1 This whole entry has been unusually detailed, hasn't it? Sometimes we just can't help ourselves and slip into normal sourcebook-writing mode. It's a little scary.

2 What? It always works in cartoons!

3 And you really don't want to know what's going on in bunraku parlors.

4 If we wanted to get all Freudian, we could look at the implications of Hadry using a black-leather club to whale on the black-leather-clad Daviar, but we don't want to go there, do we?

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felled Daviar's other foes. Her patented maneuvers and hip thrusts have distracted him enough for her to get away when he gets uncomfortably close, but she hasn't been able to take advantage of the situation.

If the runners can get Daviar's attention and explain what they are trying to do, she is quite open to just about anything they propose. It didn't take her too to figure out that Hadry might be too much for her to handle, so if the runners can credibly convince her that they can help her, she is on board.

While convincing Daviar to let them help her may not be too difficult, getting close enough to Hadry to make the pollen do its thing is a far more challenging task. Hadry is very alert, and he's going to be very suspicious of anyone who approaches him in the middle of a fight. Daviar will buy as much time for the runners as she can, while also providing a distraction if she can, but the runners' time is not unlimited—eventually Hadry will track down Daviar and pummel her into submission.

Hadry's allergy is strong enough that if the runners get any bit of pollen within a meter of his face, he collapses, immobilized. The complete immobility lasts 2d6 rounds, and after that Hadry takes 1d6 rounds to recover and regain his faculties. This should give Daviar plenty of time to reach Hadry and claim victory, but when the moment comes Daviar falters. She approaches Hadry's prone body, but instead of standing triumphantly above him, she drops to the ground, cradles his head in her lap, and looks around protectively. Like so many others in the Inner Sphere, Daviar has fallen hard for Hadry. She loves him and wants him to be acknowledged for what he is—truly the Best Ever.

EPILOGUE

<<Transcript from *The Best Ever Live!*, airdate 31 March 3076, Solaris VII>>

Rich Robertson: What an astonishing turn of events! Daviar seemed to have the tournament won, and then she gives the title to Hadry! Simply unbelievable! Ludicrous, even!

Dirk Diedrick: That's right, Rich. But who could doubt Daviar's sincerity when she looked into the beautiful eyes of her supine competitor? Truly her gaze was that of complete love and devotion.

RR: Indeed—and a little something more, perhaps. While plenty of competitors in this tournament were distracted by Daviar's black-clad form, I believe Hadry might be the first person in the tournament who will get a full look at what lies under the leather.

DD: You got that right! <*pause*> Say, Daviar's an elf, right? So what color are an elf's—[1]

<*cut to commercial*>

1 They're brown.

Urgent Message...

RULES, RULES, RULES

MAGIC VS. TECHNOLOGY: WHO WINS WHEN YOU GO HEAD TO HEAD

While all versions of *Shadowrun* have involved technology clashing with magic, the level of tech has never been quite as high as it is in the Eighth World. Laser beams, PPCs, and Gauss rifles (to name a few things) all present new challenges to magicians seeking to make their way in the world. Since we aren't about to draw up specific rules for spells and weapons and all that, gamemasters will have considerable leeway in determining how magic and tech interact.[1] When deciding what beats what, remember the simple but elegant structure of Rock-Paper-Scissors. Everything beats something, everything is vulnerable to something. No one weapon or spell should beat every other weapon or spell. Unless the weapons or spell is wielded by a Marisoo.

WHEN ARCHETYPES COLLIDE: WHO IS STRONGER, TROLLS OR CLAN ELEMENTALS?

Okay. Deep breath. Okay. No matter how we answer this, someone is going to be unhappy, but we're going to answer it anyway. Because we do not back down from a challenge![2] When in doubt, we will do what every good baseball fan does—we'll go to the numbers.

Trolls are strong mofos, no doubt about it, and cybered trolls are even stronger. Your average troll is almost twice as your average human, and a maxed-out cybered troll is two-thirds again as strong as a maxed-out cybered human. A Clan Elemental, by contrast, is a little more than ten percent stronger than a human. So it's not contest—not only would a troll win an arm-wrestling contest with an elemental, it might rip the damn elemental's arm off. So Clanners should keep this in mind when they strut about proclaiming their superiority—these days, they're the trolls' bitches.

TURNING A 'MECH TO GOO: OVERFLOWING BUBBLING BUCKETS OF AWESOMENESS

In 3053, a congress of sociologists and culture experts voted the Turn to Goo spell as the Best Thing in the History of Things.[3] Sure it's impractical and messy, making it really difficult to cover your tracks and stuff, but it turns *people* into *goo*, man! Come on! How cool is that?

Now, the spell has the minor drawback of only working on living tissue, so with the original edition of the spell, you couldn't turn a 'Mech to goo at all. You could turn a bunch of infantry to goo and then hope a 'Mech gets stuck in the icky, sticky remains of your victims, and that would be pretty cool, but it's not the same as making a big, many-ton mound of 'Mech-shaped goo, is it?

Fortunately, the Awakened world has had one thousand years of research to come up with new applications of magic, and since we're pretty much pulling things out of our nether regions for this book anyway, let's say that there is a Turn to Goo variant that works on non-living thing. Awesome!

But it can't be too easy. So let's make it a ritual to generate enough power. And we'll crunch some numbers and make a few things up and here, ladies and gentlemen, we now present: Turn a 'Mech to Goo!

Turn a 'Mech to Goo (Physical)

Type: P • Range: LOS • Duration: S • DV: (F ÷ 2) +2

Turn a 'Mech to Goo is a ritual spell that can turn a 'Mech into a sticky, glue-like substance. It only works on 'Mechs—it cannot be used on any other objects, whether they are animate or inanimate, for reasons known only to the great mage who first developed the spell.[4] The group of casters must win an Opposed Test pitting their combined Magic + Spellcasting against the armor value of a selected body area of the targeted 'Mech (plus the Counterspelling ratings of any mages protecting the 'Mech). If successful, you've got a big mess on your hands. A big, sticky mess.

LIVING UP TO THE AWESOMENESS WE HAVE CREATED: ROLEPLAYING MARISOO NPCS

Running a game comes with all sorts of challenges, difficulties, and the occasional odd odor, and convincingly roleplaying the many NPCs your players encounter is one of the most important. Adding a Marisoo to the campaign is a particular challenge—how should a gamemaster embody the pure wonderfulness that is the defining characteristic of the Marisoo? Here are a few tips to help you include Marisoos in your game:

1) Remember that everyone loves the Marisoo, The players should all either want to imitate the Marisoo, be his best friend, or (usually) both. If the players start showing resentment or, heaven forbid, dislike for the Marisoo, then either you or they are doing it wrong. Any attempts to attack or strike or even criticize the Marisoo should not be allowed—since everyone in the Eighth World loves Marisoos, the characters are breaking the rules by acting negatively toward them.

2) Use visual aids. Headshots are so easy to find on the internet these days, so it shouldn't be a problem for you to find some and print them up. Then, hold the picture in front of your face every time the Marisoo is talking so your players get a hint of the overwhelming charisma the Marisoo possesses. For male Marisoos, we recommend using pictures of George Clooney; for females, Halle Berry.

3) Make fake tests involving the Marisoo: It doesn't hurt to keep your players guessing. Naturally, the Marisoo will be able to do pretty much anything they want to do, but you should occasionally roll dice anyway to make it seem as if there's a possibility of a Marisoo not succeeding in a test.

4) Don't forget the power of suggestion. It doesn't hurt for you to add a little subtle positive reinforcement to help nudge your players' opinions along. Saying things like "Man, this Hadry sounds so cool! I can't wait to read some stories or novels about him!" couldn't hurt anything.

We hope you find those tips helpful, and we hope both you and your players will enjoy the benefits of having a new best friend in the Inner Sphere![5]

1 Until the *Eighth World Master Rulebook* comes out and makes all of this clear.

2 Except, you know, pretty much every other challenge this book presented.

3 Of course, this was before Jonas Hadry came on the scene, so we'll have to see what happens if the congress ever reassembles and takes a revote.

4 Oddly enough, the mage's name was Arthur Fiat.

5 Assuming your players are cool enough to the Marisoo's friend. Which they probably are not.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

ORK MECHWARRIOR

The only people who think you don't have to be fit and strong to control a 'Mech are people who have never piloted one. There's a reason Clanners grow their 'Mech pilots big and strong, and it's not because they all have some muscle fetish.[1] Putting an ork in the cockpit of a 'Mech makes the whole thing a step heavier and faster, allows it to endure on the battlefield longer, and fire weapons so hard that trigger buttons and joysticks need to be replaced at regular intervals. Plus, when an ork is safely ensconced within a 'Mech, no one has to bother looking at its ugly mug.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Ork (20 BP)

Attributes (240 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
6	4	6(8)	5	4	3	3	4	5

Essence:	1.8
Initiative:	11
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	11
Stun Damage Track:	10

Active Skills (126 BP):

Battlefield Maneuvers	5
Leadership:	4
Lookin' good in uniform:	2
'Mech mechanic:	2
'Mech pilot skill group (Assault 'Mech):	4 (+2)
Perception:	4
Scanner Operation:	4

Knowledge Skills (18 free BP)**:**

Cockpit odors:	5
Critical Hit Locations:	3
Pre-Sixth World Ceramics:	4
What Happens When You Step On Small Things:	4

Language Skills:
English (Military/Elaborate Cursing): N(+4/+2)

Qualities (0 BP)**:**
Cocky (+5), Guts (5), Often Tells Long, Rather Boring War Stories (+5), Smelly (+5), Toughness (10)

Cyberware:
Control Rig (Alpha), Datajack, Wired Reflexes (2)

Gear & Lifestyle (30,000 C-Bills) (6 BP)**:**
Ares Predator XXXII (w/ 10 clips ammo); Armor Jacket; Middle Lifestyle (6 months); Medkit (3); NeoNET Geektacular 3000 commlink

Contacts (8 BP)**:**
Commanding officer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Girl in that one port that you like better than the girls in the other ports (Connection 2/Loyalty 0)
That nosy guy in every unit who seems to know everybody else's business (Connection 1/Loyalty 1)

Notes: Starting c-bills 4d6+5 x 100, Natural Low-Light Vision

1 At least, that's not the *only* reason.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	9	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	10	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	9	Stun:	❑
DEX	6		
INT	5	**Movement (Meters per Turn)**	
WIL	6	Walk:	18
CHA	4	Run:	28
EDG	5	Sprint:	56

Traits

Ork Phenotype: +4 to STR, BOD max; –2 to INT, CHA, EDG max; Combat Sense, Good Vision, Toughness, Unattractive Traits free

Combat Sense: When rolling for Initiative in Personal Combat, roll 3D6 rather than 2D6. Use the highest 2 dice to determine the initiative roll result.

Compulsion/Arrogance: Character compulsively acts like a snob. Requires WIL Attribute Check (with a –1 roll modifier) to resist gloating inappropriately. After any action Check failure, character will be "humbled", and suffers a –1 roll modifier to all Action Checks until he can again prove his superiority with an action Check MoS equal to the number of hours passed since his "shame".

Suffer –1 roll modifier to all Actions for 24 hours after any failed roll result

Connections (3): Check for contacts (CHA Attribute Check) – 1x per 10 days; Contact provides MoS 3-level information, up to 5,000 C-bills, or 1 item of equipment rated D/B/C or less.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls (+2 in darkness for Ork)

Toughness: Multiply all standard damage by 0.75 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 0.5 (round up).

Unattractive: You're not very pretty. Apply a –2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Gunnery/'Mech (Assault)	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+3 (+5)
Leadership	7 / S	WIL+CHA	+4
Martial Arts, Advanced	7 / C	RFL+DEX	+5
Melee Weapons, Basic	6 / S	DEX	+3
Perception	6 / S	INT	+4
Pilot/'Mech (Assault)	7 / S	RFL+DEX	+4 (+6)
Sensor Operations	7 / S	INT+WIL	+4
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+4
Technician/Mechanical	9 / C	DEX+INT	+2

Equipment	**Stats**
Ablative/Flak Jacket	*BAR*: 4
Military Communicator:	*Range*: 10 km (max); 10 channels (+1 to Communications Skill)
Ares Predator XXXII	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 5m/20m/40m/85m; *AP*: 3, *BD*: 4; *Ammo*: 8 shots per clip (10 clips)
Implant: Neural Interface	+1 to Piloting 'Mechs or vehicles (Already factored above)
Implant: Adrenal Infuser	+1 to RFL Attribute score (Already factored above)

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

DWARF PRINCE

Look, we understand. We were short once, too. We know how short people are treated, how often they are overlooked, robbed of their dignity, and picked last for basketball in gym class. But just because you're a little vertically challenged doesn't mean you're not commanding. You can tower over your peers in terms of your leadership, your combat skills, and your peerless decision-making abilities.[1] But as a dwarf prince, you use your stature to your advantage, making yourself stand out even more because you're not like everyone else. Your sheer force of personality will make them listen to you, and you'll be damned if anyone will utter the words "Napoleon complex" in your earshot while you still draw breath.

SHADOWRUN

Race Dwarf (25 BP)**:**
Attributes (240 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	4	4	5	6(8)	2	2	7	4

Essence:	5
Initiative:	6
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	12

Active Skills (100 BP)**:**

Battlefield Maneuvers	5
'Mech Pilot Skill Group	4
Politics Skill Group:	4

Knowledge Skills (12 free BP)**:**

Dysfunctional Family Dynamics:	3
Ludicrous Political Schemes:	3
Military Tactics:	4

Language Skills:

English (Politician)	N(+2)

Qualities (10 BP)**:**
Friend of Arthur Fiat (20), Related to Total Bitch Queen of the Universe (+10)

Cyberware:
Aztechnology Royal Aura Enhancer (2), Lifts

Gear & Lifestyle (35,000 C-bills) (7 BP)**:**
High Lifestyle (4 life!); Slightly Tarnished Crown

Contacts (6 BP)**:**
Creepy ComStar guy (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Inner Sphere politician (Connection 1/Loyalty 1-3 (changes daily))

Notes:
Starting c-bills: 4d6+3 x 500
+2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins, including any that a bitch sister might be sneaking into your food, so she can suck on *that*.
Natural Thermographic Vision

1 Okay, maybe not that last one.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	6	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	5	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	6	Stun:	❑
DEX	7		
INT	5	**Movement**	
WIL	10	Walk:	12
CHA	8	Run:	22
EDG	10 (12)	Sprint:	44

Traits

Dwarf Phenotype: +2 to BOD, WIL max; –1 to CHA, EDG max; –1 to Movement; Good Vision, Introvert, Pain Resistant Traits free

Combat Sense: When rolling for Initiative in Personal Combat, roll 3D6 rather than 2D6. Use the highest 2 dice to determine the initiative roll result.

Enemy (10): Your sister wants you dead and rules a powerful nation state with enough resources to make it happen…once you let your guard down.

Exceptional Attribute/EDG: Max EDG increased to 10.

Connections (10): Check for contacts (Protocol Skill Check with –5 roll modifier) – 1x per 60 days; Contact provides MoS 10-level information, up to 1,000,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated F/F/F or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 200% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls (+2 in darkness for Dwarf)

Introvert: You find it hard to make friends because they tend to stab you in the back a lot. Apply a –1 roll modifier to CHA-based Checks.

Natural Aptitude/Leadership: When making a Leadership Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.

Pain Resistance: Ignore Stun and reduce any Injury and Fatigue Modifiers sustained by 1 point.

Title/Archon-Prince (Deposed): Damn her to hell!! (See *Enemy*)

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Gunnery/'Mech	7 / S	RFL+DEX	+7
Leadership	7 / S	WIL+CHA	+10
Martial Arts, Advanced	7 / S	RFL+DEX	+5
Melee Weapons, Advanced	6 / S	RFL+DEX	+5
Perception	6 / S	INT	+3
Pilot/'Mech (Assault)	7 / S	RFL+DEX	+6
Protocol/FedCom	9 / C	WIL+CHA	+8
Sensor Operations	7 / S	INT+WIL	+6
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+5
Tactics/Land	9 / C	INT+WIL	+7

Equipment	**Stats**
Robes	*BAR*: 0
Vibrokatana	*Range*: Melee (1m max); *AP*: 5, *BD*: 3; *Ammo*: 1 power point/turn (max 30 turns); +1 to Melee Weapons Skill
BattleMech (Custom *Daishi*)	Hint: It's called "Prometheus"
Magical Enhancement: Aura (2)	+2 to EDG; Also regenerates 1 EDG per day
Implants: Lifts	+1 to Movement

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

DECKER REDUX

There once was a time, a glorious time, when the innovations of Augmented Reality and wireless networking meant that deckers were no longer tied to their decks. They changed their names to hackers, came out of their basements, blinked as the bright sun immediately started frying skin that had too long been bathed in nothing but fluorescent light, and rejoined the active world. Sadly, their renaissance did not survive into the Eighth World. The firepower let loose on the Inner Sphere is just too great—there's no way for those masters of data, whatever they call themselves, to be safe in the middle of a big-time firefight. So, sadly, they retreated back to their basements, plugged back into the Matrix, and consoled themselves that at least now they'd get a chance to catch up on the latest 3-D anime epics from Highstar.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Human
Attributes

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	3	5	3	3	5	4	3	4

Essence:	4.8
Initiative:	10
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

Active Skills (138 BP):

Cybercombat:	4
Dodge:	2
Electronics Skill Group:	4
Electronic Warfare:	5
Etiquette (Matrix):	1(+2)
Forgery:	2
Hacking:	5
Perception:	3
Porn Downloading:	2

Knowledge Skills (27 free BP):

Different Ways to Comb/Braid Your Beard:	2
First Aid for Electrical Shocks:	2
Kinds of Frozen Pizza:	3
Operating Systems:	5
Rumors About What NeoNET Might Release Next Year:	3
Security Procedures:	5
Ways to Swear Online:	3

Language Skills:
English (1337)[1]: N(+4)

Qualities:
Codeslinger (10), Photographic Memory (10), Uncouth (+20)[2]

Cyberware:
Commlink (NeoNET Brainslicer 20X10), Control Rig, Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/ Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Smartlink, Thermographic Vision, Protective Covers, and Built-in Infrarays That Can Be Used to Heat Up Breakfast Pastries), Datajack

1 No, really, they still use a slang term that was already dated by 2007 more than one thousand years in the future. Seriously!
2 Yeah, these are the exact same qualities as Hackers in SR4. Why should we change something so perfect?

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Gear & Lifestyle (150,000 C-bills) (30 BP)**:**
Laser Pistol, 5 fake SIMs, 2 VR Games[1], Renraku Toe-Tall-E B17ch1n Surround Sound System; Mister Freez Xtra Jumbo Refrigerator/Freezer; Premium Satellite Trideo Package; Middle Lifestyle (4 months)

Contacts (7 BP)**:**
Squirrelly chatroom dude (Connection 1/Loyalty 2)
Convenience store clerk (Connection 1/Loyalty 3)

Notes:
Starting c-bills: 4d6+13 x 100

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	4	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	4	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	6	Stun:	❑
DEX	6		
INT	9	**Movement**	
WIL	4	Walk:	10
CHA	4	Run:	20
EDG	3	Sprint:	40

Traits
Human Phenotype: Standard rules apply.
Equipped (5): Available starting gear may be E/D/E or lower.
Exceptional Attribute/INT: Max INT increased to 9.
Glass Jaw: Multiply all standard damage taken by 1.5 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 2.
Introvert: You find it hard to make friends outside your unique clique. Apply a –1 roll modifier to CHA-based Checks.
Natural Aptitude/Computers: When making a Computers Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.
Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Computers (Hacking)	9 / C	DEX+INT	+6 (+8)
Forgery	7 / S	DEX+INT	+2
Interest/Interstellar Nets	9 / C	INT+WIL	+3
Martial Arts, Basic	6 / S	RFL	+1
Perception	6 / S	INT	+5
Security Systs/Electronic	9 / C	DEX+INT	+5
Streetwise/Lyran	8 / C	CHA	+2
Tech/Electronic	9 / C	DEX+INT	+4

Equipment	**Stats**
Laser Pistol	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 15m/35m/80m/225m; *AP*: 4, *BD*: 3; *Ammo*: 15 shots per clip (1 clip)
Engineers Portable Computer	+1 to Computers and Technician/Electronic Skill Check rolls; Max Running Time: 30 hours
Deluxe Tool Kt	+1 to all Technician Skill Check rolls; Encumbering
Implant: Enhanced Optics	May see in the dark: +1 to Perception Skill Check rolls; ignore darkness modifiers
Implant: Computer Interface	Incorporates all functionality of a Descartes XXV personal computer; +1 to Computers Skill Check rolls.
Implant: Commlink Suite	Mimics functions of Military Communicator: *Range*: 10 km (max); 10 channels (+1 to Communications Skill Check rolls)

1 These are the purchased games. The bootlegged ones number in the thousands.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

ELVEN WIDOW

If she didn't exist, some skeezy BTL-smut producers would have had to invent her. She is the black-clad siren that lives in the dreams of anyone who has ever been the least bit attracted to women. Part Nadja Daviar, part Natasha Kerensky, she could stomp on your throat with her stiletto-heeled boot and make you beg for more. She does not need to carry any armament; her body alone could be registered as a lethal weapon.[1] The universe is her plaything, and she can tug on any part of it as a puppeteer pulls on a string. All things bow to her will; she is unconquerable and unstoppable.[2]

SHADOWRUN

Race: Elf (30 BP)
Attributes (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
5	5	3	2	8	3	3	4	2

Essence:	4.6
Initiative:	6
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	11
Stun Damage Track:	10

Active Skills (116 BP):

Chewing-gum walk:	4
Flirting:	3
Gymnastics:	5
Hypnotic Appearance:	4
Seduction Skill Group:[3]	5(+2)

Knowledge Skills (18 free BPs)**:**

(censored):	4
(censored):	5
Fashion:	3
(censored):	4

Language Skills:

English	N
The International Language of Love	2

Qualities (10 BP)**:**
Double Jointed (5), Heartbreakingly Beautiful (10), Not Especially Loyal (+5 BP)

Cyberware:
Anti-gravity bosom, Other things that we cannot possibly detail here

Gear & Lifestyle (15,000 C-bills) (3 BP)**:**
Massage oils; One-piece black leather jumpsuit; Silk sheets; Loose Lifestyle (one year)

Contacts (14 BPs)**:**
Adulterous politician (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)
Somewhat pathetic neighbor who still believes he has a shot (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)
Less attractive girlfriends (Connection 3/Loyalty 1)

Notes: Starting c-bills: 4d6 x 100, Natural Low-Light Vision

1 Wait, what? You mean I didn't just make up that line? Damn.
2 Unless you do that, you know, thing with the jump jets.
3 Wouldn't you like to know what's included in this group? Also, there's a specialization there, but we're not allowed to detail it. Maybe if you find us at GenCon, we'll whisper it to you or write it down or something.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	3	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	7	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	7	Stun:	❑
DEX	7		
INT	5	**Movement**	
WIL	6	Walk:	10
CHA	13	Run:	20
EDG	3	Sprint:	40

Traits

Elf Phenotype: +2 to CHA max; +1 to RFL, DEX max; –2 to STR, EDG max; Attractive, Glass Jaw, Good Vision, Patient Traits free

Ambidextrous: May use both hands equally well (no off-hand modifier).

Attractive: You're stunning beyond words! Apply a +2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Exceptional Attribute/CHA: Max CHA increased to 13.

Connections (5): Check for contacts (Streetwise/Protocol Skill Check with +2 roll modifier) – 1x per 4 days; Contact provides MoS 5-level information, up to 25,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated E/C/D or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 60% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Glass Jaw: Multiply all standard damage taken by 1.5 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 2.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls (+2 in darkness for Elf)

Gregarious: You find it easy to make friends because of your unearthly charm. Apply a +1 roll modifier to CHA-based Checks.

Natural Aptitude/Acting/Seduction: When making an Acting/Seduction Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.

Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Dark Secret (–5): If the truth of how your husband really died is ever exposed, your character will receive a –5 TP Reputation Trait (Universally Known bad reputation, which imposes a –1 roll modifier for all CHA-based action Checks).

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Acrobatics	6 / S	RFL	+7
Acting/Seduction	8 / C	CHA	+10
Melee Weapons, Basic	6 / S	DEX	+4
Negotiation	8 / C	CHA	+7
Perception	6 / S	INT	+3
Protocol	9 / C	WIL+CHA	+9
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+4
Streetwise	8 / C	CHA	+7

Equipment	**Stats**
Leather Armor	*BAR*: 1
Knife	*Range*: Melee (1m max); *AP*: 1, *BD*: 1; *Ammo*: Unlimited
Auto Pistol	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 5m/20m/45m/105m; *AP*: 3, *BD*: 4; *Ammo*: 10 shots per clip (2 clips)
Implants: Cosmetic (Beauty)	Additional +1 roll modifier to all CHA-based action Checks focused on seduction and persuasion

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

BATLE ARMOR STREET SAMURAI

These guys know a hundred ways to mess you up, and that's only counting what they can do with their right hand. They are so enhanced, inside and out, by bleeding-edge technology that they regularly perform actions that were beyond the reach of the greatest athletes and warriors of previous years. Of course, this comes with a slight drawback: In many ways, Battle Armor Street Samurai are barely human anymore. Their speed, their strength, and much of their knowledge comes from mechanical (if that words isn't too archaic) parts, with their human muscles and nervous system playing an at times incidental role. But their heart and brains are still all human, and some people say that's all that matters.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Human
Attributes (220 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
4	5(7)	4(5)	5(7)	3	3	2	3	2

Essence:	0.6
Initiative:	8
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

Active Skills (146 BP)**:**

Athletic Skill Group:	3
BattleArmor Use:	3
Automatics:	4
Blades:	2
Dodge:	3
Heavy Weapons:	3
Intimidation:	4
Infiltration:	2
Pistols:	4
Unarmed Combat:	4

Knowledge Skills (15 free BP)**:**

Kicking Ass:	4
Liao Martial Philosophy	3
Safe Houses	4
Taking Names	4

Language Skills:

English	N

Qualities (5 BP)**:**
Carrying Burden of Being Cooler than Everyone (+10), Guts (5), High Pain Tolerance (10)

Cyberware:
Wired Reflexes (Alpha) (1), Dermal Plating (Alpha) (2), Muscle Replacement (Alpha) (2), Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/ Flare Compensation, Laser Resistance, Low-Light Vision, Protective Covers, Smartlink, and Thermographic Vision, plus they look all jet-black and cool.

Gear & Lifestyle (100,000 C-bills) (20 BP)**:**
Ares ThunderClap (w/ armor piercing ammo), AR Gloves, VIbroblade, Kage BattleArmor,[1] DocWagon Contract (Platinum, 1 year), Low Lifestyle (3 months).

1 Bought on financing with twenty percent down. Go to Lemon Joe's Military Surplus, ask for Lenny.

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Contacts (9 BP)**:**
Fanboy who always follows you around (Connection 1/Loyalty 3)
Fixer (Connection 3/ Loyalty 2)

Notes:
Starting C-bills: 3d6 x 50

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	10	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	5	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	10	Stun:	❑
DEX	8		
INT	4	**Movement**	
WIL	4	Walk:	20
CHA	4	Run:	30
EDG	3	Sprint:	60

Traits

Human Phenotype: Standard rules apply

Attractive: You're stunning beyond words! Apply a +2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Combat Sense: When rolling for Initiative in Personal Combat, roll 3D6 rather than 2D6. Use the highest 2 dice to determine the initiative roll result.

Connections (5): Check for contacts (Streetwise Skill Check with +2 roll modifier) – 1x per 4 days; Contact provides MoS 5-level information, up to 25,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated E/C/D or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 60% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls

Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Reputation (+5): Universally Known good reputation, applies a +1 roll modifier for all CHA-based action Checks.

Toughness: Multiply all standard damage taken by 0.75 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 0.5(round up).

Unattractive: You're not very pretty. Apply a –2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Acrobatics	6 / S	RFL	+5
Acting/Intimidation	8 / C	CHA	+4
Gunnery/Battlesuit	6 / S	DEX+RFL	+6
Martial Arts, Advanced	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+7
Melee Weapons, Basic	6 / S	DEX	+3
Perception	6 / S	INT	+2
Piloting/Battlesuit	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+6
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+5
Streetwise/Capellan	8 / C	CHA	+4
Stealth	7 / S	RFL+INT	+4
Support Weapons	6 / S	DEX	+4

Equipment	**Stats**
Kage Battle Armor	*BAR*: 8, 5 Tactical Armor, 120m Jump/turn
Ares Thunderclap Auto Pistol	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 12m/24m/36m/188m; *AP*: 5, *BD*: 3; *Ammo*: 10 shots per clip (12 clips)
Implant: Enhanced Optics	May see in the dark: +1 to Perception Skill Check rolls; ignore darkness modifiers
Implant: Full-Body TSM	+4 STR, +2 RFL, -1 CHA, Unattractive, Toughness

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

MANEI DOMINI BLOOD MAGICIAN

Scary bastards, is what these guys are. The only break you get from them is that you can't be a full-on MD and be a blood mage (too much essence loss) and you can't be a great blood magician and be a MD (too many skills focused on the wrong areas). But putting that aside, if you can be standing on the battlefield and watch one of these cybered goons stalking toward you, blood running down each cheek, the air around them cracking with foul power—if you can see that and not wet your pants, then there's something very, very wrong with you, and I'm not going to be spending much time wondering what that is, because I will be running away really fast.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Human
Attributes (280 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	3(4)	4(6)	3(4)	2	5	4	5	5	3

Essence:	0.8
Initiative:	9
Initiative Passes:	2
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	11

Active Skills (90 BP)**:**

Conjuring Skill Group:	4
'Mech Piloting Skill Group	2
Sorcery Skill Group:	3

Knowledge Skills (27 free BP)**:**

Aztechnology Corporate Structure:	4
Blood Magic:	4
Magical Theory:	3
Minimizing the Appearance of Unsightly Scars:	4
Scowling:	3
Zealotry:	4

Language Skills:

English	N
Infernal	3
Latin	2

Qualities (5 BP)**:**
Guts (5), High Pain Tolerance (5), Really Quite Unattractive (+5)

Cyberware:
Commlink, Cyberarms (Alpha) (2 Strength, 1 Agility), Wired Reflexes (2)

Spells (12 BP)
Death Touch, Mind Probe, Petrify, Resist Pain

Gear & Lifestyle (10,000 C-bills) (2 BP)**:**
Saeder-Krupp Grobermorder (w/ 10 clips); Oil Can; Metal Polish; Vials of Blood; 24 White Handkerchiefs

Contacts (11 BP)**:**
Devil worshipper who believes MDBMs are good stand-ins (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)
Word of Blake tech salesman (Connection 3/Loyalty 3)

Notes: Starting C-bills: 3d6 x 50

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	6	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	5	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	8	Stun:	❑
DEX	5		
INT	6	**Movement**	
WIL	8	Walk:	14
CHA	3	Run:	24
EDG	3	Sprint:	48

Traits

Human Phenotype: Standard rules apply
Ambidextrous: May use both hands equally well (no off-hand modifier).
Connections (7): Check for contacts (Protocol Skill Check with no roll modifier) – 1x per 10 days; Contact provides MoS 7-level information, up to 25,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated E/D/E or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 100% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.
Pain Resistance: Ignore Stun and reduce any Injury and Fatigue Modifiers sustained by 1 point.
Toughness: Multiply all standard damage taken by 0.75 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 0.5(round up).
Reputation (–5): Universally Known bad reputation, which imposes a –1 roll modifier for all CHA-based action Checks.

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Acting/Intimidation	8 / C	CHA	+4
Gunnery/'Mech	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+5
Interest/Word of Blake	9 / C	INT+WIL	+10
Martial Arts, Advanced	7 / C	RFL+DEX	+5
Melee Weapons, Basic	6 / S	DEX	+4
Perception	6 / S	INT	+2
Pilot/'Mech	7 / S	RFL+DEX	+5
Protocol/Word of Blake	9 / C	WIL+CHA	+9
Sensor Operations	7 / S	INT+WIL	+4
Spellcasting (Blood Magic)	9 / C	INT+WIL	+3 (+5)
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+4

Equipment	**Stats**
Saeder-Krupp Grobermorder	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 50m/110m/245m/1,060m; *AP*: 6, *BD*: 8; *Ammo*: 6 shots per clip (10 clips)
Implant: Adrenal Infuser	+1 to RFL Attribute score (Already factored above)
Implant: Cosmetic (Horror)	Additional +1 roll modifier to all CHA-based action Checks focused of fear and intimidation
Implant: Enh. Prosthetic Arms	+1 to STR; each arm contains 1 vibroblade (Range: Melee; AP: 3, BD: 2; Ammo: Unlimited)
Implant: Computer Interface	Incorporates all functionality of a Descartes XXV personal computer; +1 to Computers Skill Check rolls.
Implant: Commlink Suite	Mimics functions of Military Communicator: *Range*: 10 km (max); 10 channels (+1 to Communications Skill Check rolls)
Implant: Neural Interface	+1 to Piloting 'Mechs or vehicles (Already factored above)

Spells	**Stats**
Death Touch	Add +2 AP, +2 BD to all Martial Arts and Melee Weapon attacks; Spell Duration: 8 turns
Mind Probe	On successful Opposed WIL Check, attacker automatically wins initiative for 4 turns; Spell Duration: 8 turns
Petrify	On successful Martial Arts or Melee Weapon attack, target is rendered immobile for 4 turns; Spell Duration: 8 turns
Resist Pain	Ignore Stun and reduce any Injury and Fatigue Modifiers sustained by 1 point. (Stackable with Pain Resistance Trait); Spell Duration: 16 turns

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

TOTALLY AWESOME IMMORTAL ELF

The immortal elves were some of the most powerful beings of the Sixth World, the hidden forces behind the scenes that manipulated world-changing events and regularly shook up the world. This meant, of course, that immortal elves were universally beloved. It is not at all surprising, then that immortal elves survived and prospered through the Seventh World and into the Eighth, and that they continue to play a strong role in Inner Sphere events. In fact, the advances in technology have made immortal elves even more powerful, as they have become adept MechWarriors and put themselves in the cockpits of the most powerful machines known to metahumanity: yes, UrbanMechs, OstScouts, *and ProtoMechs become even more wonderful in the hands of these deadly pilots.*

SHADOWRUN

Race: Elf (30 BP)
Attributes (260 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	3	4	2	5	5	5	5	5	1

Essence:	6
Initiative:	9
Initiative Passes (Astral):	1 (+2)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	11

Active Skills (82 BP)**:**

Extreme Pomposity	3
MechWarrior Skill Group	3
Sorcery Skill Group	4

Knowledge Skills (30 free BP)**:**

Artifacts	3
Conspiracy Theories	3
Elven Pornography	3
History of Everything	5
World Conquest Schemes	4

Language Skills:

Elven	N
English	3
Orc	3
Dwarf	2
Troll	1
Latin	3

Qualities:
Arrogant (+5), Extra Arrogant (+5), Hypnotic Aura (10)

Cyberware:
… is for puny mortals

Spells (18 BP)
Analyze Truth, Death Touch, Mind Probe, Mob Control, Mob Mood, Powerball

Gear & Lifestyle (15,000 C-bills) (3 BP)**:**
Industrial strength hair gel; Silk robe; At least one rare artifact that can, like, melt people's faces or something; Luxury lifestyle (forever)

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Contacts (7 BP)**:**
That other elf you hung out with for a while until you inevitably got into a fight about something or other that no one remembers since it was like eight hundred years ago (Connection 2 / Loyalty 2)
One of the Inner Sphere's many suck-ups (Connection 1 / Loyalty 2)

Notes:
Immortal elfs have all the money they need. And Low-Light Vision.

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	3	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	4	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	5	Stun:	❑
DEX	5		
INT	5	**Movement**	
WIL	7	Walk:	8
CHA	8	Run:	18
EDG	1	Sprint:	36

Traits

Elf Phenotype: +2 to CHA max; +1 to RFL, DEX max; –2 to STR, EDG max; Attractive, Glass Jaw, Good Vision, Patient Traits free

Attractive: You're stunning beyond words! Apply a +2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Compulsion (2)/Arrogance: Character compulsively acts like a snob. Requires WIL Attribute Check (with a –2 roll modifier) to resist gloating inappropriately. After any action Check failure, character will be "humbled", and suffers a –2 roll modifier to all Action Checks until he can again prove his superiority with an action Check MoS equal to the number of hours passed since his "shame".

Connections (10): Check for contacts (Protocol Skill Check with –5 roll modifier) – 1x per 60 days; Contact provides MoS 10-level information, up to 1,000,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated F/F/F or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 200% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Glass Jaw: Multiply all standard damage taken by 1.5 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 2.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls (+2 in darkness for Elf)

Extra Income (+10): Character receives an extra 5,000 C-bills per month from other ventures.

Immortality: You are ageless (if not indestructible). Ignore aging rules; receive +1 free Skill Level for all Interest and Language Skills taken per 50 years lived.

Natural Aptitude/Spellcasting: When making a Spellcasting Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.

Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Property (+10): Character receives an extra 15,000,000 C-bills per year from combined properties the size of a small moon

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Appraisal	9 / C	INT+WIL	+10
Acting/Seduction	8 / C	CHA	+5
Gunnery/'Mech	7 / C	DEX+RFL	+7
Interest/Artifacts (Magical)	9 / C	INT+WIL	+8 (+10)
Interest/'Mechs (Light)	9 / C	INT+WIL	+5 (+7)
Interest/History (Terra)	9 / C	INT+WIL	+8 (+10)
Martial Arts, Advanced	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+6
Melee Weapons, Advanced	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+6
Negotiation	8 / C	CHA	+7
Perception	6 / S	INT	+3

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Piloting/'Mech	7 / S	DEX+RFL	+6
Protocol/Niops	9 / C	WIL+CHA	+9
Sensor Operations	7 / S	INT+WIL	+3
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+4
Strategy	9 / C	WIL+INT	+7

Equipment	**Stats**
Silk Robes	*BAR*: 0
Special Weaponized Artifact	*Range, AP, BD, and Ammo*: Determined by GM. Artifact is considered a +5 Magic Item

Spells	**Stats**
Analyze Truth	Add +4 to INT and WIL when making an Opposed Action Check to determine if another character is lying; Spell Duration: 14 turns
Death Touch	Add +2 AP, +2 BD to all Martial Arts and Melee Weapon attacks; Spell Duration: 7 turns
Mind Probe	On successful Opposed WIL Check, attacker automatically wins initiative for 4 turns; Spell Duration: 7 turns
Mob Control	On successful WIL+CHA Check, attacker receives a +4 modifier to all Acting, Leadership, Protocol, Negotiation, and Streetwise Skill Checks when dealing with crowds of up to 14 individuals; Spell duration: 7 turns
Mob Mood	On successful WIL+CHA Check, attacker receives a +2 modifier to the effects of a subsequent Mob Control Action Check, reflecting his ability to identify and influence the mob's emotional state; Spell duration: 7 turns
Powerball	For 7 turns, character may force any Action Check to be rerolled as if burning EDG (but with no EDG cost to the character).

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

WORD OF BLAKE TECH SALESMAN

Not too many people in the Inner Sphere are terribly fond of the Legion of the Batshit Insane, yet despite this widespread disdain, their corporate arms always manage to turn in a healthy profit. Part of this is because their tech is very impressive and leaves strong twitchings of lust in anyone who sees it, but another part of it is due to the diligence, hard work, and genuinely scary commitment of the Word of Blake Tech Sales Force.

Being a tech salesman may not seem like the best pathway to adventure, but the life of a Word of Blake Tech Salesman is never dull. When you have access to some of the best toys in the Inner Sphere, and you're also part of an organization that hundreds of billions of people would like to crush, you're always on the go, since someone's always coming after you for one reason or another.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Human (0 BP)
Attributes (210 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
2	3	4	2	3	5	5	3	3

Essence:	4.5
Initiative:	9
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (+2)
Physical Damage Track:	9
Stun Damage Track:	10

Active Skills (132 BP)**:**

Cybercombat:	4
Electronics Skill Group:	4
Electronic Warfare	5
Hacking:	5
Passing as Not Batshit Insane:	4
Perception:	2
Salesmanship:	3

Knowledge Skills (30 free BP)**:**

Animal sacrifice:	2
Bleeding-edge tech:	4
Inner Sphere politics:	3
Nearest escape route:	4
Operating systems:	5
Reading body language:	3
Security procedures:	3
Shameless manipulation:	3

Language Skills:

English (Techspeak)	N(+2)
Spanish	2

Qualities (0 BP)
Codeslinger (10), Creepily intense (+5), LBI taint (+5)

Cyberware
Commlink (LBI BrainWarper 28xK1), Control Rig, Cybereyes (2 w/ Eye Recording Unit and Image Link), Datajack, Data Lock (Encryption: 6)

Bodyware
Touch Link

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Gear & Lifestyle (150,000 C-bills) (30 BP)
AR Gloves; BlakeBlast 240 (w/ 10 clips of Regular Ammo); Armor Vest; Biometric Reader; VR music and video 'ware (*Songs to Sacrifice By*), Medium Lifestlye (1 month).

Programs
Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 4, Biofeedback Filters 4, Black Hammer 3, Browse 5, Command 5, Data Bomb 4, Decrypt 4, Edit 5, Encrypt 5, Scan 5, Spoof 3, Stealth 5, Track 5

Contacts (11 BP)
Bob in IT (Connection 1 / Loyalty 2)
Edgar the taxi driver who always takes you to the DropPort (Connection 1 / Loyalty 2)
That weasely guy who will do about anything to avoid ending up on the LBI's altars (Connection 2 / Loyalty 3)

Notes
Starting C-bills: 4d6+7 x 100

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	3	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	3	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	6	Stun:	❑
DEX	6		
INT	7	**Movement**	
WIL	6	Walk:	9
CHA	5	Run:	19
EDG	3	Sprint:	38

Traits

Human Phenotype: Standard rules apply.

Connections (4): Check for contacts (Protocol Skill Check with +1 roll modifier) – 1x per 7 days; Contact provides MoS 4-level information, up to 1,000,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated D/C/C or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 20% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Equipped (5): Available starting gear may be E/D/E or lower.

Gregarious: You find it easy to make friends and influence people. Apply a +1 roll modifier to CHA-based Checks.

Natural Aptitude/Negotiation: When making a Negotiation Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.

Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Reputation (–5): Universally Known bad reputation, which imposes a –1 roll modifier for all CHA-based action Checks.

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Acting/Fast-Talk	8 / C	CHA	+4
Computers (Hacking)	9 / C	DEX+INT	+4 (+6)
Cryptography	9 / C	INT+WIL	+3
Interest/Technology	9 / C	INT+WIL	+4
Martial Arts, Basic	6 / S	RFL	+2
Negotiation	8 / C	CHA	+6
Perception	6 / S	INT	+3
Security Systs/Electronic	9 / C	DEX+INT	+5
Small Arms	6 / S	DEX	+3
Tech/Electronic	9 / C	DEX+INT	+4

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

Equipment	**Stats**
BlakeBlast 240 Pistol	*Range (S/M/L/X)*: 25m/55m/90m/125m; *AP*: 3, *BD*: 4; *Ammo*: 8 shots per clip (10 clips)
Engineers Portable Computer	+1 to Computers and Technician/Electronic Skill Check rolls; Max Running Time: 30 hours
Implant: Enhanced Optics	May see in the dark: +1 to Perception Skill Check rolls; ignore darkness modifiers
Implant: Computer Interface	Incorporates all functionality of a Descartes XXV personal computer; +1 to Computers Skill Check rolls.
Implant: Commlink Suite	Mimics functions of Military Communicator: *Range*: 10 km (max); 10 channels (+1 to Communications Skill Check rolls)

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

THE MARISOO

Talented. Witty. Insanely attractive. Deadly at war, deadlier at romance. The Marisoo is everything you want to be, everything you could be—if you were just a little better.[1]

The Marisoo is humanity's fondest vision of itself come to life. People cannot help but be drawn to Marisoo charcters, to find them attractive, appealing, and desirable. Most anyone who encounters a Marisoo wants to be with them—in every sense of that phrase.

The Marisoo is a unique archetype in that it is not suited for player characters; rather it should only be used for NPCs. If player characters used this archetpye, they would find the game too easy, as they would succeed at everything they tried.

Since the Marisoo should not be used as part of a character build, and since Marisoos are typicalyl far more experienced than entry-level characters, build point calculations are not included.

SHADOWRUN

Race: Variable[2]
Attributes[3]

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
6	6(8)	6(8)	6(8)	6	6	6	6	6	6

Essence:	1
Initiative:	14
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	11
Stun Damage Track:	11

Active Skills:

All the Right Moves	5
MechWarrior Skill Group	4
Social Etiquette in All Situations	4

Knowledge Skills:
Omniscient. More or less.
Language Skills:
See "Knowledge Skills"

Qualities:
Better than You, First Impression, Intimidatingly Awesome

Cyberware:[4]
Muscle Replacement (2), Wired Reflexes (2)

Spells[5]
Armor, Death Touch, Levitate, Powerball, Teleport[6]

Gear & Lifestyle
Whatever they need!

Contacts: Romantic conquest (Connection 3 / Loyalty 4), Slavering fanboy (Connection 1 / Loyalty 4)

Notes: The Marisoo is chock full of awesomeness!

1 Okay, a lot better.

2 Marisoos can be whatever you want to be—I mean, whatevever you want *them* to be.

3 The attributes and skills listed here are an approximation of the Marisoo's abilities; in the end, the Marisoo should succeed at whatever they want to do, so their attributes are whatever they need to be.

4 Since we love to point out how awesome Marisoos are, we should mention that Marisoos don't need cybereyes, because their natural eyes have eagle-like vision, and they don't need ear enhancements because they not only have great hearing but they have wonderful memory so they never forget what they hear. Or see.

5 Marisoos do not need magic to help them control others moods or actions, because they can do it through sheer force of their personality, and they don't need control emotions spells because they are always in total control of themselves—you get the idea.

6 Just kidding!

AS NASTY AS YOU WANT TO BE: ARCHETYPES OF THE EIGHTH WORLD

A TIME OF WAR: THE BATTLETECH RPG

Attributes		**Condition Monitor**	
STR	10	Standard Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
BOD	10	Fatigue Damage:	❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑
RFL	10	Stun:	❑
DEX	10		
INT	10	**Movement**	
WIL	10	Walk:	20
CHA	15	Run:	30
EDG	12	Sprint:	60

Traits

Any Phenotype: Clan Aerospace, Clan Elemental, Elves, and Humans are most common.

Ambidextrous: May use both hands equally well (no off-hand modifier).

Attractive: You're stunning beyond words! Apply a +2 modifier to all rolls where CHA is a factor.

Exceptional Attribute/CHA: Max CHA increased to 15.

Exceptional Attribute/EDG: Max EDG increased to 12.

Connections (10): Check for contacts (Protocol Skill Check with –5 roll modifier) – 1x per 60 days; Contact provides MoS 10-level information, up to 1,000,000 C-bills, 1 item of equipment rated F/F/F or less, or a Critical NPC ally who has 200% of the character's current XP value in Attributes, Skills, and Traits.

Good Vision: +1 modifier to all Perception Check rolls (+2 in darkness for Dwarf, Elf, or Ork)

Gregarious: You find it easy to make friends because of your unearthly charm. Apply a +1 roll modifier to CHA-based Checks.

Natural Aptitude/Any: When making the designated Skill Check, roll 3D6 and use the highest 2 dice to determine the result.

Pain Resistance: Ignore Stun and reduce any Injury and Fatigue Modifiers sustained by 1 point.

Patient: Resistant to stress, especially when time is of the essence. Apply a +1 roll modifier to all Complex Skills and Actions.

Toughness: Multiply all standard damage taken by 0.75 (round up). Multiply all Fatigue taken by 0.5 (round up).

Relevant Skills	**TN/Complexity**	**Linked Attributes**	**Level**
Any Simple Skill (x5)	6 / S	As Skill	+10
Any Complex Skill (x5)	8 / C	As Skill	+10

Equipment	**Stats**
Implant: Adrenal Infuser	+1 to RFL Attribute score (Already factored above)
Implant: Full-Body TSM	+4 STR, +2 RFL, -1 CHA, Unattractive, Toughness
Implant: Cosmetic (Beauty)	+1 CHA (negates scarring from TSM implants)
Any Other Desired Equipment	

Spells	**Stats**
Armor	Add +4 BAR to any clothing/armor worn; Spell Duration: 20 turns
Death Touch	Add +2 AP, +2 BD to all Martial Arts and Melee Weapon attacks; Spell Duration: 10 turns
Levitate	May move vertically at Walking rate; Spell Duration: 10 turns
Powerball	For 10 turns, character may force any Action Check to be rerolled as if burning EDG (but with no EDG cost to the character).