

predator & prey



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INTRODUCTION

Predator and Prey is a collection of roleplaying adventures set in the Awakened world of **Shadowrun**. The year is 2059. Advances in technology are astonishing, with humans able to blend with computers and travel through the electronic netherworld of data known as the Matrix. Even more astonishing is the return of magic. Elves, dwarfs, dragons, orks and trolls have reassumed their true forms, while megacorporations (rather than superpowers) rule much of the world. Moving through this world like hushed whispers in the night are the shadowrunners. No one admits their existence, but no one else can do their secret work.

The rise of magic affected all living things, not just metahumanity, and the world is now home to all types of Awakened creatures. Some seem to have sprung from legends humans have always told; others are new, and almost all are potentially deadly. Metahumanity no longer necessarily sits at the top of the food chain—other, more powerful predators may make him their prey. The three adventures in **Predator and Prey** pit shadowrunners against the full might of creatures spawned in the age of magic—a far cry from the usual shadow-world of corporate wars, backstabbing politicians and criminal kingpins. Metahumanity may win the battles, but the war will go on.

GAMEMASTERING NOTES

Predator and Prey is slightly different from a standard **Shadowrun** adventure. The three adventures that make up the overall story line are not directly connected to each other, but they all share a common theme—metahumanity against the creatures of the Awakened world. From the jungles of Amazonia to the sewers of Seattle, metahumanity faces off against creatures that can eat the toughest street sammy or most powerful mage for lunch. The **Introduction** to each adventure captures the feel of being predator and prey simultaneously.

Because these adventures operate independently of each other and do not directly impinge on any story line, the gamemaster may choose to run them between events already planned for his or her **Shadowrun** campaign.

The adventures in **Predator and Prey** combine decision-tree and linear story formats. For each adventure, the player characters may arrive at different locations in the story via different paths, or

follow one event in the story directly into the next. The gamemaster should think of each adventure as the bare-bones plot and should feel free to make any changes necessary to flesh it out and give his players more choices. To aid the gamemaster in this task, the individual sections of each adventure include suggestions for gamemastering the various situations that may arise. **Predator and Prey** is designed for a team of four to six shadowrunners with a wide variety of talents.

SHADOWRUN RULES

To run **Predator and Prey**, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the material in this book, as well as a working knowledge of the **Shadowrun, Second Edition (SRII)** rules. The gamemaster should also be familiar with the expanded magic rules in the **Grimoire, Second Edition (Grimoire II)**, **Rigger 2 (R2)** and **Virtual Realities 2.0 (VR2)** are also useful for riggers and deckers respectively. All the information contained in **Predator and Prey** is for the gamemaster's eyes only.

MAKING SUCCESS TESTS

During the course of **Predator and Prey**, the players will make a number of Success Tests using a skill and a given target number. These Success Tests are indicated by the name of the skill, followed by the target number in parentheses.

For example, a Sorcery (5) Test refers to a Sorcery Success Test against a Target Number 5.

SUCCESS TABLES

At times, the gamemaster will use success tables to determine how much information the player characters receive from inquiries and investigations. Each success table lists different information obtained for differing numbers of die roll successes. Rolling a higher number of successes always reveals the information for the lower numbers of successes as well. For example, a character rolling 3 successes would learn the information for 3 successes, and also the information for 1 and 2 successes.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **SRII** rules and those in the sourcebooks listed previously, this book includes all the information needed to run





Predator and Prey. The gamemaster should read through each adventure before attempting to run it. Some important plot developments do not become apparent until well into each adventure, but the gamemaster must lay the groundwork for these developments early on. He or she can only accomplish that by being familiar with each story line.

Though **Predator and Prey** as written tries to cover all the likely and even some of the unlikely ideas that the players might come up with, it is impossible to foresee every possible action players might choose to take. Therefore, the gamemaster must be prepared to improvise if necessary.

Each adventure begins with a fictional prologue that gives the gamemaster a feel for the setting of the adventure. The **Introduction** explains each adventure's specific background. The sections within each adventure follow standard **Shadowrun** format. Most of them contain four parts: **Tell It to Them Straight**, **Hooks, Behind the Scenes** and **Debugging**.

Tell It to Them Straight is read aloud to the players. It describes where the player characters are and what is happening to them as though they were actually there. Depending on the player characters' previous choices and/or the point in the adventure at which the encounter occurs, the gamemaster may need to adapt the text to suit the situation.

The second section, **Hooks**, gives the gamemaster hints and tips about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, textures and so on. The information provided in this section varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific emotions.

The next section, **Behind the Scenes**, tells the gamemaster what is really happening in each encounter and proposes a potential sequence of events. Any maps needed to play an encounter are included in this section. Information the player characters can discover and possible consequences of the player characters' actions also appear here. Non-player character statistics needed to roleplay the encounter are usually included here as well. This section may also contain hints and suggestions for handling a particular encounter.

The final section of each encounter, **Debugging**, offers suggestions for getting the story back on track if things go too far wrong; for example, if the player characters overlook a vital piece of data or if half the team meets an untimely death. The gamemaster need not use any of the suggestions given in this section; if he or she has a better method of redirecting the game, he should feel free to use it. As always, the gamemaster may also let the chips fall where they may.

At the end of each adventure, **Picking Up the Pieces** provides tips on wrapping up the adventure and awarding Karma, as well as offering suggestions for answering unresolved player or player character questions.

CRITTER STATISTICS AND POWERS

The two final sections of this book, **Gamemastering Critters** and **Critter Powers**, contain brief descriptions, statistics and pow-

ers for all of the critters that appear in each adventure. The gamemaster may adapt, add or subtract creatures from adventures as he or she sees fit. Longtime **Shadowrun** gamemasters and players will note that most of the creatures listed have appeared in previous books, many of which are now out of print. Gamemasters may use the listings in this book to plug various critters into future adventures and campaigns.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURES

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.

The gamemaster must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the published opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for the group. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the gamemaster may use the published version as an outline to develop an adventure of his or her own. Or, if it works well except for a quirk here and there, the gamemaster can change any part of the plot and story events to make the adventure a better one for the players.

Each adventure suggests Threat and Professional Ratings for each of the NPCs. Use Threat Rating dice in place of Dice Pools for these characters (p. 187, **SRII**). Gamemasters should adjust the Threat Ratings to better reflect the level of opposition presented by the player characters, especially in those adventures where maintaining game balance promises to be exceptionally tricky. The gamemaster should feel free to modify Threat Rating dice on the fly during an encounter to provide the proper level of opposition. To that end, the text occasionally includes notes on how tough a battle or encounter should be for the player characters.

The gamemaster will find such manipulation crucial to keeping some of the encounters in each adventure at a manageable level. The fights in **Predator and Prey** work best when choreographed like an action movie. Though lead and magic fly everywhere, only a few of the bad guys actually get a clean shot at the player characters at any one time. That limitation, and the application of the **SRII** Professional Rating rules, should help keep large-scale fights under control.

Using Locations

The adventures of **Predator and Prey** take place in locations with which the gamemaster and players may not be familiar. Two of the three adventures use exotic locations to introduce different creatures as well as different surroundings that may throw the player characters off balance. The adventures all contain enough information about the locations to permit the gamemaster to cover every angle. If a gamemaster wants more depth, however, the **Cyberpirates** sourcebook will be especially useful for additional information on Africa's Gold and Ivory Coasts (the setting of **Wild Kingdom**, p. 28).

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

ACCESS DENIED: A PROLOGUE

Edwin Danforth stormed into his partner's office and hurled his simulated-leather briefcase at the simulated-leather couch with a force that belied his small size. The case smacked against the back of the sofa and slid down to the seat, hesitating for a moment before tipping over with another quiet thump.

"I take it the meeting didn't go well?" asked the tall human to whom the office and the couch belonged. He sipped his soykaf calmly and eyed his partner.

"Those bastards," the dwarf snapped back, his face red with outrage. "They let us spend ten months and half a million nuyen planning this expedition, never voicing a word of complaint, and now that we've got everyone lined up and paid in advance, *now* they tell us they're unwilling to let us 'upset the delicate ecological balance of the region.' Delicate balance, my hoop! The fraggers are probably cultivating the damn things in an offshore greenhouse right now."

"Calm yourself, Edwin," the human said. "I told you the Amazonians would never allow foreigners to take plant samples from their precious rainforest. That's why I've made alternate plans."

"Calm myself? *Calm* myself?!? That's half a million nuyen thrown in the drekker! GGI isn't Shiawase Envirotech, you know, Randall. We can't afford ..." As his partner's last words sank into Danforth's consciousness, his tirade stalled. "What 'alternate plans'?"

Randall Pape smiled and sat down on the couch, resting one hand on Danforth's briefcase. "Just because I no longer work for Shiawase doesn't mean I've lost all my contacts. I know an individual who can help us arrange for a, shall we say, less *official* border crossing." He sipped his soykaf again, speculatively. "We've come too far to back down now."

Danforth sat down on a dwarf-sized chair opposite Pape. "Shadowrunners. You're talking about hiring shadowrunners."

"You disapprove?"

"I don't like that kind of thing, Randall. I thought GGI was supposed to be a newer, cleaner company." He gestured around at the cluttered office. "We may not have the resources to compete with the big boys, but we've got our integrity. We've avoided the corruption and crime that the megas are full of, and people respond to that. We're making it, and we're making it by doing honest business. I don't want to compromise that."

"Making it?" Pape snorted. "You're kidding yourself. We're a small fish in a pond full of sharks, and the only reason we haven't been snapped up yet is that we haven't produced anything worth taking over. If we're going to stand on our own and make those principles you're so proud of mean something, we need capital. And this operation is where it will come from. All over the world, megacorporations and one-man shops are scrabbling for pieces of

Dunkelzahn's estate, and I doubt any of them are sticking to purely legal means. If we stand on our principles, we're going to get trampled by everyone else who's running for the money."

Danforth leaned forward. "I know this is a race, Randall, but there must be some alternative to going outside the law."

"Alternative?" Pape shot back. "Sure. One alternative is to scrap everything we've done so far and write off five hundred thousand nuyen as a bad investment. Or we can exhaust our budget keeping the expedition on hold while we twiddle our thumbs and hope the Amazonians change their minds before someone with fewer scruples goes in and takes what we need." He spread his hands wide, pleading with his partner. "Edwin, I know this isn't how we want to do business. But if we're going to have any chance at this, we have to go in now and take advantage of the preparations we've already made. There won't be time to make another attempt."

With ten million nuyen in the bank and the PR that comes from scoring one of Dunkelzahn's bequests, we'll be ready to take on the market on its own terms. But we have to compromise now or we'll never get there."

"Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder," George Washington." Danforth scratched one sideburn uneasily, then looked up at his partner. "All right. Do it. But I don't want to know anything about it, okay?"

"Fair enough." Pape stood up and headed for his desk and the phone. "You won't regret this, Edwin. It's the same expedition—just with a few different guides."

"Don't patronize me, Randall." The dwarf recovered his briefcase and walked to the door. "Just do your dirty work and leave me out of it."

INTRODUCTION

In **Forbidden Fruit**, the runners are hired to perform a penetration and extraction mission—for a plant. Not a manufacturing plant, mind you—the kind with leaves.

Green Globe International, a botanical research firm, has set its sights on one of Dunkelzahn's bequests: the sum of 10 million nuyen, left to the first party to cultivate the rare Brazilian kiwi outside its native environment (p. 32, **Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzahn's Secrets**). GGI has the researchers, the facilities and the know-how to achieve this valuable goal; all it needs are some sample plants to work with. However, the fruit in question grows only in the Amazonian rainforest, and Amazonia does not export it. The only way to obtain any kiwis is to go into Amazonia after them.

Unfortunately, the Amazonian government doesn't appreciate the "exploitation of our natural resources," and has flatly refused GGI's requests to enter the country. Consequently, GGI has