

Adventure Book

Hook, Line & SinkerTM
Game Master Reference & Adventures

**An epic adventure and sourcebook for the Rifts® series.
Compatible with the entire Palladium Books® Megaverse®!**

Warning!

Violence and the Supernatural

The fictional World of Rifts® is violent, deadly and filled with supernatural monsters. Other dimensional beings, often referred to as “demons,” torment, stalk and prey on humans. Other alien life forms, monsters, gods and demigod, as well as magic, insanity, and war are all elements in this book.

Some parents may find the violence and supernatural elements of the game inappropriate for young readers/players. We suggest parental discretion.

Please note that none of us at Palladium Books® condone or encourage the occult, the practice of magic, the use of drugs, or violence.

Sample file

Dedicated to Game Masters everywhere. Keep the adventure alive and the imagination burning.

— Kevin Siembieda

First Printing — August 1996

Copyright Palladium Books Inc. & Kevin Siembieda 1996

All rights reserved, world wide, under the Universal Copyright Convention. No part of this book may be reproduced in part or whole, in any form or by any means, without permission from the publisher, except for brief quotes for use in reviews. All incidents, situations, institutions, governments and people are fictional and any similarity, without satiric intent, of characters or persons living or dead, is strictly coincidental.

Palladium Books®, Rifts®, and Megaverse® are registered trademarks owned and licensed by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc. Hook, Line and Sinker™; Coalition War Campaign, Coalition States, Erin Tarn, SAMAS, Skelebots, Terror Trooper, Spider Skull Walker, Dog Boys, Xitcix, Psi-Stalker, Juicers, and other names and titles are trademarks owned by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books Inc.

Rifts® Game Shields & Adventures™ is published by Palladium Books Inc., 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor, MI 48180. Printed in the USA.

Palladium Books® Presents:

Rifts® Adventure Book

Base on the world of Rifts®, the CS & other settings, characters, & concepts created and written By **Kevin Siembieda**.

Hook, Line & Sinks™ created by: **Jolly Blackburn**

Adventures: **Patrick Nowak**
Julius Rosenstein
Kevin Siembieda

Interior Artists: **Wayne Breaux Jr.**
Vince Martin

HLS Adventures written by: **James Osten**
Alex Marciniszyn
Kevin Siembieda

Art Direction, Maps & Keylining: **Kevin Siembieda**

Typography: **Maryann Siembieda**

Senior Editor: **Alex Marciniszyn**

Character Sheets Designs: **Michael Leonard**

Game Shields Designs: **Michael Leonard**

Game Shield Paintings: **Keith Parkinson**
Kevin Long

Editors: **Alex Marciniszyn**
James A. Osten
Julius Rosenstein

Special Thanks to Mike Leonard for his diligent work on the game shield designs and excellent character sheets. Edwin and Donna Millheim for giving it a try. And to Wayne, Keith, Pat, Maryann, Steve, Thom, Jim, and all the usual Palladium wizards for all their hard work and dedication.

—*Kevin Siembieda*

Other Palladium Products

Palladium Books® products are available throughout the world at hobby, game and comic shops everywhere. If a particular book is not in stock, most stores should be able to special order the item. You may find it helpful to let your favorite store know in advance that you are interested in a particular book(s). This should help the manager order enough books to satisfy everybody's needs.

Palladium Books® Inc. offers over 100 different role-playing products including limited editions, art portfolios, miniatures and T-shirts. For a description of *all* our products, send for Palladium's latest 32 page catalog along with 75 cents to: *Palladium Books Inc., Dept. P, 12455 Universal Drive, Taylor MI 48180*

Game Master Aids

The idea behind the **Rifts® Game Shields & Adventures** product is to create a Game Master package with all kinds of helpful references, charts, screens, character sheets, blank maps, source material, a couple of full-sized adventures, several *Hook, Line and Sinker™* adventures, and everything a G.M. for **Rifts®** might need or want. I hope we've come close with providing just that.

First there are the *two* Game Master Reference screens. The screen with *Kevin Long's* popular Red 'Borg painting contains basic reference data for creating, running and keeping track of **Rifts®** characters, including salvage tables and some adventure guidelines. The screen with *Keith Parkinson's* female druid is devoted to magic and the metaphysical. Of course, we couldn't cram all the magic spells and psionics from all of the books onto one screen, but all the basic items are included for quick, easy reference.

The six character sheets can be photocopied for your personal use in any **Rifts®** campaign (but cannot be sold or distributed). Like the game shields, these sheets are designed by *Mike Leonard* and include some new and clever ideas, like a separate sheet for the Game Master to use as a character log and quick reference, as well as a sheet for Mercenary Companies (see **Rifts® Mercenaries**) and Travelling shows (see **Rifts® World Book One: Vampire Kingdoms™**). Some of the screen panels have also been reprinted in the reference booklet for additional ease of reference.

The maps can also be photocopied for your personal use in mapping parts of the world of your own campaigns and places of note.

The elaborate and multi-faceted *Pat Nowak* adventure should give Game Masters several nights, if not weeks of adventuring. Meanwhile, the popular **Hook, Line, & Sinker™** style of adventure outlines should provide ideas for dozens of additional adventures that the G.M. can expand and modify as much as he pleases.

I thought every contributor to this book did a wonderful job. I hope it translates into hours of *adventure and fun*. Check out the Coming Attractions at the end of the book for Palladium's plans for **Rifts** over the next year or so.

—Kevin Siembieda

Adventures

Slavers, Xiticix & the Green Death!

An Adventure by Patrick Nowak

Additional text and suggestions by Siembieda

Scenario Outline

The only sound in the darkened throne room came from the impatient drumming of Baron Varn Cromwell's fingers on the arm of his elaborately carved throne. Flickering candles cast a dim glow to illuminate the room; it was long past midnight and the keep's electricity generator was turned off. Everyone had already retired for the evening except for the night watch and the somber quartet in the throne room. Quiet and dark, it was a fitting atmosphere for a council of war. The baron shifted his focus from the young Line Walker, Taylor, to Kort Glenmore, the grizzled dwarven Captain of the Guard — he knew they were as tense and impatient as he, although they tried to hide it. Young Taylor nervously played at the hem of his robe, while the barrel-chested Kort predictably displayed no emotion. All three waited for the court mystic, James Farseer, to wake from his trance.

A sudden cry of terror from the mystic interrupted Varn's musings and brought the Baron to a standing position. The mystic slumped over, blinked violently for several moments and finally came to his senses. With the assistance of Kort, he climbed to his unsteady feet. For fear that Farseer would fall again the dwarf held him upright. All eyes in the throne room were on the stricken, pale-faced mystic.

"James, what did you see?" the Baron prodded in an insistent whisper.

"It was a nightmarish vision the likes of which I have not seen since the Four Demons! I have no doubt that our land is in great peril Milord," he muttered, obviously on the verge of exhaustion. All three men in the room gasped, for they each remembered the horrific stories concerning the Four Horsemen of Africa, reported by friends in Tolkeen.

"I must know, James, what exactly did you see?" Baron Cromwell urged, fearing what the answer would be.

"There was a ... a cloud of dark green from the east that killed everyone in the outer villages, even the animals. Then it exploded in a flash of angry red and there was nothing left of Markeen but empty ruins!" Farseer cried out with his last strength. Spent by the effort he collapsed into the dwarf's solid arms.

"I fear that there is more behind these troubles than just slavers. If the mystic is right, we will need help," said Kort.

"I agree. Farseer has never been wrong before," groaned the Baron, as he slumped back into his throne. He paused to think for several moments but, what else was there to do? "Taylor, use your magic to send word to Tolkeen. Tell them we need help!"

Strange things have been brewing in the quiet Barony of Markeen over the past fortnight. Dozens of people have mysteriously gone missing with no evidence of who or what might be responsible. This has led many residents to fear attacks by slavers from the north, Xiticix, Splugorth, or worse. A disturbing premonition from the Court Mystic prompted Baron Cromwell to send word via ley line transmission to the Council of Tolkeen requesting aid. Markeen is an important district in the (currently) free territory of Minnesota. It provides the south with vital raw materials, including iron ore, timber and assorted foodstuffs. Unfortunately, with the invasion by the Coalition looming on the horizon, the Tolkeen Council is reluctant to commit military units to any operation which might just amount to a wild goose chase or a weakening of their forces unless the threat is clearly identified and immediate. That being the case, Councilor Cedric Stonebark offered the idea of sending a small band of adventurers or mercenaries to locate and identify the root of the trouble that threatened Markeen. This would provide them with some ideas of what to expect and how to defend against the danger, and should get the Tolkeen military forces to send help. If they got lucky, the adventurer team might catch the faceless danger off-guard and neutralize it. Meanwhile, they will keep Tolkeen apprised of their situation requesting any help they might be able to spare. It was as good a plan as any.

Getting Started

This adventure is suited either for a group of veteran adventurers or mercenary player characters. Although a group of any composition can successfully complete this adventure, it is definitely helpful to have a *psychic* or *magic practitioner* along; it also couldn't hurt to have an intelligence specialist of some kind (CS military specialist, NGR Intelligence Commando, Freelance Spy, etc.). The G.M. should read through this adventure carefully and then decide whether or not it is appropriate for his players and/or campaign. **Slavers, Xiticix and the Green Death!** is a "thinking man's" adventure that is focused on solving the mysterious events in Markeen, not constant combat, even though there is a significant amount of conflict and fighting.

Councilor Cedric Stonebark recruits the characters for this adventure based on their reputation as dependable, experienced mercenaries, adventurers or friends from Tolkeen. Stonebark offers 10,000 credits to each character but will pay as much as 15,000 credits to each if necessary plus an expense budget of 150,000 credits for the entire group — if they really need it and/or perform admirably. In order to get paid, the characters must uncover who or what is causing the disappearances in Markeen and to stop it from happening again using whatever means are necessary. Unfortunately for the player characters, the identity of those responsible for the abductions is not readily apparent. And, even when the guilty parties are unmasked, our heroes will learn that the insidious purpose for the abductions is far more terrible than slavery, with dire ramifications for all of Minnesota!

The Barony of Markeen

Population Breakdown: 140,000 total population. Roughly 60,000 between the three northern cities plus 80,000 in small, surrounding communities. Although humans dominate, there are 50 different races of D-bees living in the Barony. Roughly 10% of the inhabitants practice magic and 6% possess some degree of psionics. All races are welcome.

55% Human

10% Psi-Stalkers

8% Renegade mutant animals (67% are Dog Boys)

4% Simvan Monster Riders

4% Quick Flex Aliens

3% Vanguard Brawlers

3% Tirrvol Sword Fist

3% Goblins

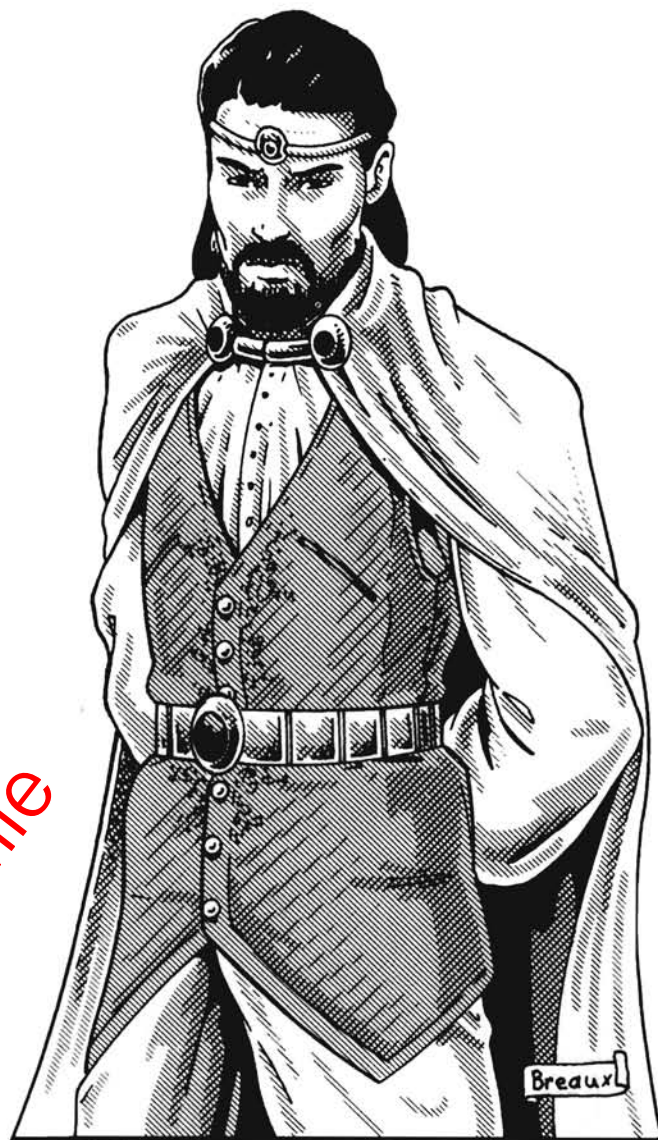
2% Orcs

8% Assorted other D-bees

In the far north of Minnesota, hugging the border of Xiticix country, is the Barony of Markeen. Even though it is officially considered a Barony of Tolkeen, the kingdom is essentially an autonomous kingdom that maintains strong economic and military ties with the southern city-state. **Baron Varn Cromwell**, the ruler of Markeen (a 9th level Cyber-Knight), is the sole authority in the kingdom and answers to no one in Tolkeen, making him the equal to the numerous feudal kings in the territory. Under the careful, compassionate leadership of Baron Cromwell, Markeen has grown into a substantial and prosperous community. Thanks to its abundant natural resources and hard-working populace, the Barony has a powerful economy rivaling that of every Minnesota city-state with the exception of Tolkeen.

Originally, the geographic region that now makes up Markeen was a backwards frontier area with no government and no organized economy, just a scattered group of hamlets. The brutal Xiticix Wars of 86 P.A. were the catalyst that changed everything and saw development explode in the region. The Xiticix had successfully occupied and colonized the ruins of Duluth for years. From here, war bands of the bug-men pushed south to grab more territory. They became especially aggressive in the fall of 85 P.A. The marauding D-bees razed frontier towns and pushed as far south as the Tolkeen border. In February of 86 P.A., Cromwell was selected to lead the counterattack against the aliens as an official representative of Tolkeen's military. With his army of patriots, mercenaries and adventurers from Tolkeen, along with dozens of local wilderness scouts and people anxious to defend their homelands, the Xiticix were pushed back. The spring and summer of 86 P.A. saw the worst battles of the campaign and would decide the outcome of the war. In the end, the original border was reestablished. At the request of the northern hamlets, they were brought under Tolkeen's authority as the Barony of Markeen. Varn Cromwell was appointed by the Tolkeen Council as the first Baron to govern the region and to serve as their protector from further Xiticix aggression.

In the decades since the post-war rebuilding of 86 P.A., the Markeen region has seen remarkable population growth and urbanization. Before the Xiticix Wars, the population of the area was a meager 15,000 people, most of whom lived in isolated farming villages or seasonal hunting/trapping camps. Since that time, three major towns, **Markeen City**, **Iron Town** and **Big**



Sands, each with a population of over 10,000, were constructed. An additional population of 80,000 has come to live in towns, villages and farms near or in the thriving cities. One reason for the massive swell in population is that any "civilized being" is welcome in Markeen. Literally fifty different D-bee races are represented in the populace.

Under the strong leadership of Baron Cromwell, the now famous mastermind behind the 86 P.A. Xiticix War, the region became a (comparatively speaking) boom town. People had great confidence in this war hero and felt safe with him in charge, even near the Xiticix border. His open racial policy and truly fair treatment of all races, unified the hundreds of scattered tribes, clans, villages and towns. Rather than simply relying on the traditional work of trapping and subsistence farming, the economy expanded to include the exploitation of Markeen's rich natural resources of timber and iron ore, as well as other light industry. Markeen seemed to transform almost overnight from backwater frontier to a leading iron ore and timber exporter. Baron Cromwell also utilized the diverse talents and abilities of the many different D-bee races. Psi-Stalkers and Simvan not only worked to control hostile animals and monsters, but put them to work in the fields (or sent them north into Xiticix territory). The level of technology improved to include the use of techno-wizardry