

crows, Marionette as cairn terriers, and the Maestro as Kansas farm girls or munchkins (not the gamer kind, either). If the heroes survive these clashes, their saga concludes with a showdown with the one man who can restore them to their former selves: King Cole himself.

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB

Once again adhering to August Roman's play book, the Crime League steals "Little Boy" (the Hiroshima A-bomb) en route from Los Alamos to San Francisco. The League promptly informs President Truman of their intention to strap the A-bomb onto Tom Cyprus' back and march him toward an unspecified large American city unless they're paid the sum of (dramatic pause) one *million* dollars!

The heroes are in a difficult spot with the villains' fingers on the dreaded "button." Or are they? Is it possible the super-criminals are bluffing and really don't know how to set "Little Boy" off? More importantly, can the characters plan around such a risky assumption?

The adventure can have a healthy amount of detective work as the heroes try to locate the bomb before the League makes good on its threat. Alternately, events can proceed to the "Capture the Flag" (err, Bomb) fight scene. If the characters lose, they may be forced into a desperate effort to persuade Tom Cyprus to put the bomb down (he won't survive the atomic blast, though no one knows that, including him). Even if the heroes win, there is a disturbing coda wherein they realize Marionette has copied the bomb's schematics and sent them off to Moscow...

THE FOMORIANS

Early efforts by the Serpent People of Lemuria to breed a human slave-race met with mixed success. Arcane techniques influenced by cultists such as the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign infused these early slaves with the forces of chaos, warping their genetics and fusing them with animalistic qualities. Some of these new creatures were quite powerful, while others were pitiful freaks of nature. In either case, they were most unsuitable for the Serpent People's use, and were either slain or driven into the deep tunnels beneath Lemuria, into the realm of Sub-Terra.

There in the darkness deep beneath the Earth, the banished failures of the Serpent People bred and survived, seeking refuge and scratching out a meager existence as best they could. A sizeable band lived in Sub-Terra when, one day, the psionic mutant known as Balor was born to the exiled race, becoming an influential leader.

Balor guided his people to the British Isles, where they easily displaced a few tribes of primitive humans in what would one day become Ireland. The humans called the newcomers to their land the Fomorians, meaning "from beneath the sea," as they appeared to emerge from under the waves (actually sub-terran tunnels beneath the sea). The Fomorians fought great battles and wars of conquest against the humans of the British Isles, pitting their sorcery and limited science against the humans' superior numbers. They largely forgot the distant affairs of Atlantis and Lemuria, now busy trying to carve out their own empire.

The conflict between Atlantis and the Serpent Empire culminated in the destruction and sinking of both island continents. Survivors of Atlantis, from the four great cities of the province of Danu, came to the shores of Eire where they burned their ships, intending to settle permanently. They were known as the Tuatha De Danann, or People of Danu, and soon overpowered the native humans and encountered the scattered Fomorians.

For a time, the two peoples coexisted, even intermingled in a few cases, leading to the birth of the half-Fomorian Bres, son of the Fomorian Elatha and the Tuatha Eriu. The ambitious Bres rose to become High King of the Tuatha after their leader, Nuada, lost an arm in battle and with it his determination. Despite his epithet "the Beautiful," however, Bres was not a just king, but was infected with the madness dwelling deep within all Fomorians. He

oppressed the Tuatha and elevated his father's people, eventually leading his Tuatha subjects to rebel and depose him. They restored Nuada to the throne, now with a magical silver arm to replace his missing one.

Bres fled to mighty Balor, still master of the Fomorians, and appealed to him for aid. Balor granted Bres an army to lead against the Tuatha and conquer them. The People of Danu also had a champion, Balor's own grandson, Lugh, born of the union of his daughter Ethniu and Cian of the Tuatha. Balor's wife foretold that his grandson would be the death of him, so Balor ordered Ethniu's child drowned, but the Atlantean Manannan rescued him and fostered him in secret. As an adult, Lugh gained entrance into the court of Tara by his mastery of every art known to the Tuatha.

In the battles that followed, Balor killed Nuada with the power of his great and terrible eye, but Lugh fired a shot that drove Balor's baleful eye out of his head, tearing open a rift in the fabric of the dimensions and devastating the Fomorian forces. Bres' magic was able to contain the forces unleashed by Balor's death, but it was too little, too late. The Fomorians were driven not just from the land, but from Earth's dimension itself, through the open rift and into exile in the otherworldly realm of Annwn (an-OON).

Although the Tuatha eventually withdrew from Earth themselves, going "under the hill" to the extradimensional realm of Avalon, the Fomorians remained in exile. Druids wise in the lore of the People of Danu raised cairns and standing stones over places of dimensional weakness, reinforced by powerful spells to hold the Fomorians at bay. Only occasional conjunctions permitted them access to Earth, and these grew even fewer when Master Mage Simon Magus enacted the Pact to shield Earth's dimension from outside influence. The withdrawal of the Tuatha created another bulwark against the Fomorians, as Avalon stands "between" the realms of Earth and Annwn, allowing the Tuatha to keep watch from their shining fortresses.

Bres established himself as Dark Lord of Annwn, rendered immortal by his magic and the power of the Eye of Balor. Long has he lusted for revenge on the Tuatha De Danann and escape from his extradimensional exile to take back what he sees as rightfully his. The Fomorians rarely find any escape from their exile, though, only the occasional foolish human who attempts to piece the dimensional

veils or stumbles into a place of power. One such, Irish terrorist Liam O' Herlihy, was invested with the name and power of Balor to spread chaos and bloodshed across the Earth in hopes of one day reversing the Fomorians' banishment and securing their freedom (see **Balor** later in this book).

FOMORIAN

The "typical" Fomorian is a contradiction in terms, but the preceding game information should suffice for representing them in play with a few custom touches by the Gamemaster to suit important individuals. Fomorians are nearly all brutishly strong and tough, as much a testament to their savage environment as their genetics.

Fomorians are a product of genetic instability and chaotic sorcery: each new generation is another spin of the evolutionary roulette wheel, producing random mutations and unusual traits. To human eyes, Fomorians are freakish monsters, with no two exactly the same. They often have animalistic traits such as horns, hooves, fur, claws and the like, but multiple limbs, tentacles, gigantism, dwarfism, and other mutations are just as common. Most Fomorians are capable of breeding with humans (and human offshoots like the Atlanteans, Utopians, and Ultima); at one time they regularly abducted humans to act as breeding stock in hopes of stabilizing their bloodlines, without success.

Culturally, the Fomorians are savage and brutal, prizing strength and survival above all else. Their standards of "beauty" and esthetics are virtually nonexistent, although they make a show of disdaining human attitudes about such things. Their society remains largely feudal, dominated by the strongest and most cunning of their kind able to cultivate alliances and gain the allegiance of less-powerful Fomorians.

Fomorians have a slightly greater talent for magic than ordinary humans, owing to their arcane origins, but they are also tainted by the preternatural spells first used to create their kind. Fomorian sorcerers tend to fall prey to the "dark side" of magic, becoming even more cruel and dictatorial, as the most powerful Fomorian sorcerer-king Bres aptly demonstrates. Some Fomorians have the Ritualist feat and ranks in Knowledge (arcane lore) while fewer possess actual ranks in the Magic power. Bres keeps other Fomorian sorcerers on a short leash to ensure none ever progress to the point where they can directly challenge him.

FOMORIAN

PL 4

Str 20 | **Dex 10** | **Con 17** | **Int 10** | **Wis 10** | **Cha 10**

Skills: Intimidate 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+4), Search 2 (+2), Sense Motive 2 (+2), Survival 4 (+4)

Feats: Endurance, Power Attack

Powers: None, although many Fomorians have 5-10 points worth of powers such as Growth, Immunity, Protection, Strike, Super-Movement, Super-Senses, or various attack powers due to their mutations.

Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +8, Damage +3 (unarmed) or by weapon, Defense +3, Knockback -1, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +3, Fortitude +5, Reflex +2, Will +2

Abilities 16 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 0 + Combat 12 + Saves 6 = Total 40

FOMORIAN TECHNOLOGY

Like the Morlocks (also former slaves of the Serpent People), the Fomorians have access to some examples of ancient Lemurian technology, although their understanding of it is imperfect and more akin to religious rituals passed down across the generations. Things like science and learning interest them solely in terms of the power they can grant, so Fomorian technical skill has advanced very little and deteriorated in some cases. The game traits do not include whatever equipment or technology a Fomorian might carry; the GM should assign this as best suits the encounter, following the guidelines of the game's power level.

BRAIN-SPIDER

DEVICE 2 • 6 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Mind Control 10** (Conscious, Sustained; Limited to pacifying subject, Touch Range)

A brain-spider is an electronic device that rests on the top and back of a subject's head, with multiple metallic "legs" that touch neural contact points on the forehead and sides. It creates a synaptic disruption field that renders the wearer incapable of taking any action more complex than a shuffling walk, including using any powers requiring a free action or more to activate. Fomorians use brain-spiders to pacify prisoners once they've been captured, although it is possible to place a brain-spider on a subject in combat with a melee attack roll.

ELECTRON-FORGE

DEVICE 2 • 8 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Transform 6** (50 lbs., raw materials into worked goods; Continuous; Full-Round Action, Requires a Craft check, Touch Range; Requires 10 minutes [-2 points])

An electron-forge is a semi-automated manufacturing device, taking raw materials and using molecular rearrangement technology to transform them into worked goods using various pre-set templates and designs. Larger items are manufactured in separate pieces and assembled by workers or robots. The Fomorians have a number of electron-forges used to turn out weapons and some technology, although their use is somewhat more limited in Annwn. Forge operators are fairly important figures in Fomorian society, although they keep secret the fact that many forge patterns have degraded over the years. It is only a matter of time (albeit likely decades or centuries) before the electron-forges break down and become entirely useless.

REGENERATION CAULDRON

DEVICE 4 • 16 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Healing 9** (Total; Regrowth; Side-Effect [mutation, Fortitude save, DC 19]; *Alternate Power:* **Summon Zombie 9** [Fanatical; Full-Round Action])

A Fomorian regeneration cauldron is a sarcophagus-like container lined with advanced circuitry, capable of accelerating the healing process in a subject placed inside it. The cauldron can treat diseases and poisoning as well as injury, although it cannot cure the ravages of aging. Fomorian regeneration cauldrons also tend to cause mutations as a side-effect, perhaps due to the technology's inability to fully compensate for unusual variances in Fomorian



biology or some flaw in its design the Fomorians are unable to correct; a failed recovery check requires a Fortitude save to avoid acquiring some new mutation.

The regen-cauldron has one additional effect: while it cannot truly raise the dead, it can infuse them with a kind of pseudo-life, turning them into mindless zombies for a period of a few days before they deteriorate entirely. The Fomorians have in the past used this to their advantage, creating reinforcements out of their own fallen troops or even those of their enemies.

SHOCK-PROD

DEVICE 3 • 9 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Nauseate 7** (*Alternate Power: Stun 7*)

The standard Fomorian sidearm is the shock-prod, a blunt metallic rod about 30 inches long that emits a powerful electrical shock when touching or striking a subject. Shock-prods were originally slave-control devices used by the Serpent People that were turned into weapons. The Fomorians also still use them for their original purpose, controlling prisoners and slaves, but primarily as non-lethal weapons.

In battle, Fomorian warriors tend to wield heavier melee weapons (swords, axes, and bludgeons) and photon-bows (crossbow-like laser weapons inflicting +5 damage), but shock-prods are the most commonly used sidearms. Some Fomorians have similar devices in the form of metallic gauntlets with the same abilities, but hard to lose (and therefore costing 12 points).

BRES THE BEAUTIFUL

Bres, called “The Beautiful,” is the offspring of a Fomorian/Tuatha mating. He initially offered hope for the Fomorians to stabilize their genetics, but it turned out Bres was a changeling and his “beauty” was little more than a façade. Still, it was sufficient for a cunning mind to parley into a position of trust and authority among the Tuatha, such that Bres succeeded Nuada as High King in hopes of uniting two disparate peoples into one nation.

Bres succeeded in uniting Eire, but only by oppressing the Tuatha and making them the virtual slaves of the Fomorians, who became brutal enforcers of his rule. The Children of Danu quickly learned Bres’ cultured and sophisticated manner concealed a heart as brutal as any of his Fomorian brethren.

Eventually, Bres’ Tuatha subjects rebelled against him. A scathing satire broke his concentration, causing Bres to reveal his true form, and opposition to his rule spread. He was forced to flee to Fomorian-held lands and seek the aid of mighty Balor, who ultimately pulled Bres’ strings on the throne of Tara. Balor then fell in battle against his own grandson, Lugh, also born of Tuatha blood, and Bres used sorcery to contain and claim the power of Balor’s eye. Still, the Fomorians were exiled to Annwn and sealed away from the Earth.

Bres has since solidified his hold on power among his own kind, becoming Dark Lord of Annwn and Master Mage through the power of the Eye of Balor. Still, he lusts to do more than merely rule in Hell over his freakish subjects. He has greater ambitions and desires both