

"I smiled. 'I don't carry a weapon, Mr. Bogatyrev. Not usually. I've never been in a situation where I needed one. Either the other guy has one, and I do what he says, or he doesn't, and I make him do what I say.'"

—Marid Audran



COME TO THE CASBAH OF 2202!

R. Talsorian Games brings you the rules and background to put your campaign into the world of the George A. Effinger novel. This supplement (written with assistance and input by the author) includes a study of Islam in the Future, personality modifying chips, new mind-altering substances, the technology of WGF, and a Cyberpunk adventure with a sexy twist...

A SUPPLEMENT FOR

CYBERPUNK®

**R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.**

Published by R. Talsorian Games
P.O. Box 7356, Berkeley, CA. 94707
Copyright 1992 by R. Talsorian Games Inc. Cyberpunk® is a
trademark of R. Talsorian Games Inc. all rights reserved.

CP 3601

ISBN # 0-937279-12-9

WHEN GRAVITY FAILS

ADVENTURING IN THE WORLD OF GEORGE ALEC EFFINGER'S NOVELS

Want to know where that dark alley leads? What's it worth to you to find out? Maybe all your money? Maybe your *Life*?

I pictured some dark byways in *When Gravity Fails*, and I have Michael MacDonald, William Moss, David Ackerman and the rest of the crew at R. Talsorian to thank for bringing that vision to dice-wielding reality. In the original novel, I was very concerned with showing Marid as a loner and an outsider, one who doesn't quite fit into his own noble and ancient heritage. I'm glad that RTG has taken the same care and effort to consult the proper experts and provide an accurate and plausible vision of the world of 2202.

Everything's just a game to some people, right? You just don't want to be standing next to them when the pay-back happens.

GEORGE ALEC EFFINGER

A SOURCEBOOK FOR

CYBERPUNK



Credits

Written by:

David Ackerman
William Moss
Chris Williams
Chris Nockabout

Edited by:

George Alec Effinger
Derek Quinlan, S.E.
Will Moss
Michael MacDonald

Development:

Michael MacDonald

Art Direction:

Matthew Anacleto

Layout:

Matthew Anacleto

Cover by:

Doug Anderson
©1992 Doug Anderson

Illustration by:

B.J. West
Bob Giadrosich
Darryl Midgett
Shon Howell

Special thanks to George Alec Effinger, Redolet Lucerna

Based on characters & situations created by George Alec Effinger in his novel *When Gravity Fails*

Copyright © 1992 R. Talsorian Games, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Cyberpunk © is R. Talsorian's Trademark name for its adventure game of the dark future. All rights reserved under the Universal Copyright Convention. All incidents, situations, and persons portrayed within are fictional, and any similarity, without satiric intent, of characters living or dead is strictly coincidental.



Forward

Imagine a world where *Casablanca* collides with *Blade Runner*; where intrigue outstrips firepower, and where every crowded bazaar and twisting alley holds its own brand of danger.

Imagine midnight in the Budayeen.

The mullah's call awakes you from a fevered sleep; you stagger to the open window. You blink away your transpex hangover and focus on landscape below—minarets, domes, and microwave receivers spearing up into the desert night. A hot wind sweeps across the moonlit street, scattering dust devils over the ancient cobbles and driving laughing groups of veiled women back into the safety of club doorways. You start to smile a razor smile...

Then a thunderclap splits the night as a static gun hurls its gift of death.

When Gravity Fails is the second entry in our **Cyberpunk Masters** series—world-sourcebooks based on the works of the best in the genre. George Alec Effinger's hit series (*When Gravity Fails*, *Fire in the Sun* and *The Exile Kiss*) combines the best of mystery novels, hard science fiction, cutting edge cybertech, and the allure of a foreign land into a hard-hitting package that's hard to top. If you haven't read the novels yet, do it now; I guarantee you won't be disappointed.

For the true Cyberpunker, the world of *Gravity* is particularly fascinating because it takes place in a little known and seldom explored realm of the dark future: the turbulent Middle East. Unlike the metal-hard, steaming black cities of mega-urban America, or the glittering towers and neon palaces of Europe and the Pacific Rim, this is a land of ancient mystery, not easily penetrated by cybertech and the data flow. Here, the secrets run deeper, and the dangers are more subtle. Every face is a mask, and every proverb a warning.

So join us on this journey to another face of the cybersphere. Enter this world and prepare to be changed; to wear another mask. You know you're ready; your seizure gun is charged and you're about to hit those dark alleys. Sure, it's unknown territory. But you can handle it.

Because you're *Cyberpunk*.

Mike Pondsmith

Contents

Introduction.....4

Our welcome to the reader entering the exotic world of *When Gravity Fails*.

History of an Alternate World.....5

The two centuries of political and environmental catastrophes that have formed the *Gravity* world. Included is a comprehensive history of what has gone before, as well as the current world situation.

The City16

Detailing the city, its residents and environments, as described in *When Gravity Fails*. Included are stats for all major characters appearing in the novel, as well as descriptions of important and interesting locations.

Arabic Culture and Islam.....32

To role-play within a culture, you must understand the workings of it. This is an overview of the regional culture inside *When Gravity Fails*. In Islamic life, culture and religion are everything, so we provide a guide for both, to help players better understand the motivations of those around them.

Hacking through the future.....42

In 2020 the Net was a place of light; in 2202 the Net has faded into fragmented disuse, mirroring much of the real world. To a select few it is still a place of adventure and danger. Included is an overview of the fragmented Net, with rules and equipment new to 2202.

Tech of the 23rd Century.....65

Centuries of time can influence technological advancement in many ways. Included are rules for new weapons and armor, unique vehicles, and other items. Moddies and daddies have transformed the very minds of Mankind, while genetic surgery has altered their bodies. Plus a system for custom creation and pricing of moddies and daddies, as well as an expansive list of "off the rack" chipware.

Silken Nights.....82

In the Budayeen, people are not always what they seem, or even what they think... In a rare display of overt generosity, Papa presents a young woman with a gift that transforms her life, and the lives of those around her. A truly unique *Cyberpunk* adventure.



INTRODUCTION



When George Alec Effinger's novel *When Gravity Fails* was published in 1988, its originality and ingenuity made it an immediate hit among fans of the cyberpunk genre. The most outstanding thing about Effinger's book was its *setting*; not the shell-shocked, burnt-out remains of a once proud Europe or America, or the neon jewel of a corporate-owned Japan, but an exotic and often-overlooked dark future Middle East. Effinger's characters move through a hybrid world, caught between new technology, cyberpunk ideals, and traditional Islamic faith and culture, all set in an anonymous city somewhere in the Islamic world. It is a backdrop unlike any other in the genre, and an opportunity for a whole new kind of Cyberpunk role-playing adventure.

When Gravity Fails already encompasses two sequels: *A Fire in the Sun* and *The Exile Kiss*. The fourth, *Retribution*, is currently in

production. Reading all three books will give you the best overview of the setting and characters, but only this supplement is necessary for adventuring in the *Gravity* world. This product is intended to give as complete an image as possible of the world at the time of *When Gravity Fails*, and presents the Budayeen and its inhabitants as depicted at the beginning of this first book.

To make this supplement stand on its own we've had to cover a lot of ground not yet touched on in the books themselves. Although George has approved everything we've added, he may need to contradict some elements of this supplement in order to pursue his own vision in future books and stories. Referees should not find it hard to reconcile these differences in their campaigns. As always, the material in this book is meant to serve only as a guideline, leaving you the ultimate arbiter of what is to be included in your adventures. ■

