



# CHAOSITECH

*A sourcebook for characters of all levels*

BY MONTE COOK

*Uses the Third Edition rules, including updated material from the v. 3.5 revision.*

*This book is compatible with Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire.*

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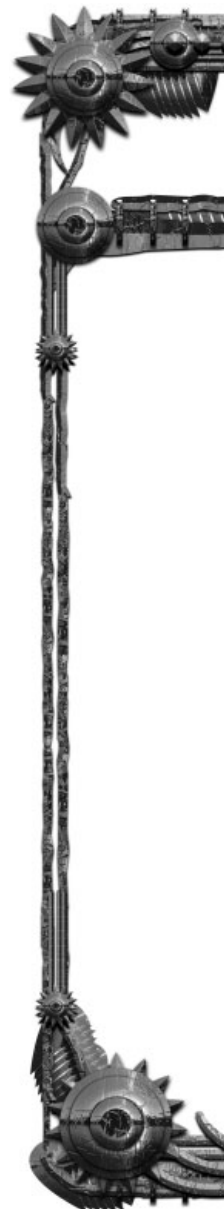
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## Blessing and Curse

*Kail staggered on what should have been feeble legs, muscles eroded by time and mistreatment. Instead, he felt the rubbery tubes that ran from the pulsing device at the base of his spine into his extremities pumping slivers of burning hot fuel that unnaturally filled him with energy. Tiny—almost unseen—insectlike fleshworkers squirmed across his limbs, repairing damage and enhancing every muscle moment by moment. He may appear to be a shriveled old wreck, but, in truth, he had the strength of an ogre and the speed of a demon.*

*Under his tattered cloak, stained with the strange oils and elixirs of chaos, Kail kept a magic curved knife. He also concealed the harrower, a wicked, death-dealing device of steel and bone, fed by chaotic energies and granted him by Mevalkris, leader of the cult of chaos. Kail moved into the shadows of the rain-slick streets and peered up at the councilman's home. He did not want to kill the man, but he had little choice in the matter. Oh, he might look like a man with amazing tools, but actually, these chaositech devices were his masters.*

Long ago, the Dark Ones, known collectively as the Galchutt, desired to establish their hold over the mortal realm. In order to empower more slaves to help them in their terrible goals of destruction, they harnessed the power of raw chaos. Controlling the uncontrollable is managed by devices both alien and unfathomable. Some appear to be fashioned from steel, but even more have the properties of still-living flesh.

### WHAT IS CHAOSITECH?

Chaositech enslaves even as it grants power. Its addictive nature grants the Dark Ones a foothold in controlling your mind, your body, and even your soul. But still the Galchutt find people willing to make these sacrifices to harness its great power. Of course, many believe they can use chaositech without falling victim to its dangers. A few are even correct.

Despite what it may appear, chaositech is not technology—it is technology's dark and evil twin. It is not magic, but another power altogether. It is corruption and destruction given form. It is like nothing anyone in your campaign has ever seen before.

Chaositech: tool or creature? Blessing or curse? Gift or shackles? Chaositech is all of these and more.

### TWO TYPES

Chaositech can be categorized in two distinct types. The first includes fairly straightforward devices made of steel, glass, and other (mostly) inorganic substances. Many such devices bear a design or embellishment that makes them look organic, while others incorporate organic parts, such as actual skulls, bones, fleshlike coverings, membranous sacs, and so on. For this reason, some call these devices the “bones of steel.”

The other type of chaositech utilizes knowledge of living organisms—a terrible, perverted knowledge. These applications of chaositech are known as the “betrayal of flesh.” They involve alterations and additions made to the bodies of living creatures, as well as the creation of self-sustaining

organisms designed for a specific purpose. Either way, this type of chaositech is certainly the more aberrant of the two. Most people consider beings created or modified using this dark, twisted knowledge to be abominations.

### THE CONSEQUENCES

Unquestionably, the use of chaositech carries consequences, despite the benefits and power it offers. The first is the terrible curse of mutation. Close proximity to chaositech over an extended period often results in physical and sometimes mental mutation. These mutations permanently warp a creature, leaving behind the indelible mark of chaos.

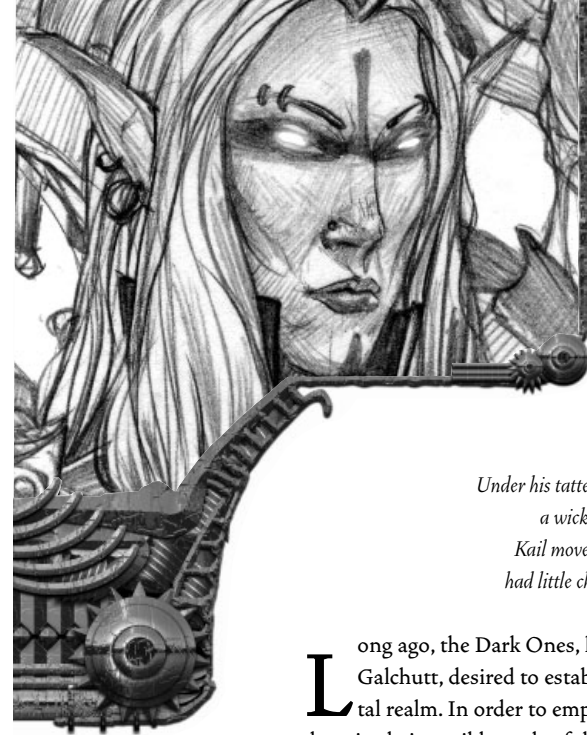
The second, perhaps even more insidious, consequence is the fact that using it can open one up to the influence of the dark powers behind chaositech: the Dark Ones, the Lords of Chaos. These beings are known as the Galchutt (or in ancient Elvish, the Natharl'nacna; or in modern Elvish, the Vlachacna). Without caution, chaositech users end up the slaves of these terrible masters.

Most people consider chaositech unstable and unreliable. Using it involves many random elements, and there is no way of knowing when a device will fail, run out of power, or worse—explode in the user's face.

### THE LOOK AND FEEL

Chaositech is an alternate to technology, powered by chaos. Visually, even tactilely, its curves and lines seem alien. DMs should note that even if a device sounds like a “laser gun” or a “gas mask” it shouldn't look like one. Thanks to the influence of chaos, the form does not always logically match the function. Chaositech doesn't follow the laws of reality or the edicts of logic, either in its abilities or its appearance. Many of the devices go beyond strange to the slightly disturbing. All are, at least at first, very mysterious.

As previously stated, chaositech possesses an organic appearance, even those devices made of steel and other inorganic materials. When describing an item to players, feel free to incorporate insectoid or reptilian characteristics



## About the Author

**Monte Cook** started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. In the employ of Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked on the Rolemaster and Champions games as an editor, developer, and designer.

In 1994 Monte came to TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the 3rd Edition of Dungeons & Dragons, authored the Dungeon Master's Guide, and designed Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil, the d20 version of Call of Cthulhu, and The Book of Vile Darkness. For WizKids games he designed the HeroClix system of superhero combat. He created the best-selling Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed for Malhavoc Press.

A graduate of the Clarion West writer's workshop, Monte also has published short stories and two novels. In his spare time, he runs games, builds vast dioramas out of LEGO bricks, and reads a lot of comics.

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Cover artist **rk post** received his BFA from Northern Illinois University in 1994. Just prior to graduation, he started freelancing in the fantasy gaming industry and garnered a staff artist position at TSR, Inc., in 1996. When Wizards of the Coast purchased TSR, he trekked his family out to the Seattle area. Wizards and rk parted company in 2000, and now he works as a full-time freelance illustrator. You can buy rk post's collected works in the hardcover art book, Postmortem: The Art of rk post through Cartouche Press <[www.cartouchepress.com](http://www.cartouchepress.com)>. Check out his new and continuing work at <[www.rkpost.net](http://www.rkpost.net)>.

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**Peter Schlough** is trained in the traditional arts, having studied illustration at Cazenovia College and the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He has worked in commercial art, but his real passion is telling stories through pictures—mostly science fiction, a little fantasy, and a whole lot of dark and foreboding. His childhood love of Star Wars has had a lifelong impact on his work and led him to become a member of the Star Wars Artists Guild. Visit his website at <[www.shadowdeep.com](http://www.shadowdeep.com)>.

Interior artist **Kieran Yanner** has always been interested in art, roleplaying games, and the fantasy/sci-fi genre. From Decipher to Malhavoc Press, White Wolf to Dream Pod 9, Kieran has produced hundreds of illustrations for the roleplaying industry.

## Malhavoc Press

**Malhavoc Press** is Monte's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products exhibit the mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer.

Recent releases include The Complete Book of Eldritch Might and The Diamond Throne, a setting book for the variant player's handbook, Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed. Look for the Legacy of the Dragons bestiary, coming soon. Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at <[www.montecook.com](http://www.montecook.com)>.

into its look. Means of activating chaositech are rarely as straightforward as a trigger or a switch, although the descriptions in this book sometimes use such words for simplicity's sake. Instead, they might include a part the user sticks in his mouth and activates with his tongue, a membranous sac the user has to squeeze, or a small panel that one must tap in a certain sequence. Some parts of a device might seem utterly extraneous, their function never fully understood.

Many items also have a chaos symbol etched into them or hanging from them like a charm. Some might feature extra spikes, spines, or other dangerous-looking bits.

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

Here's what you'll find in each chapter of *Chaositech*:

**Chapter One: Chaos:** Everything you ever wanted to know about chaos is right here: the philosophy of true chaos; chaos cults, cultists, and priests; and new chaos spells.

**Chapter Two: Bones of Steel:** Descriptions of dozens of chaositech items and devices appear in this chapter.

**Chapter Three: Betrayal of Flesh:** This chapter discusses how to use chaositech to alter one's body and mind.

**Chapter Four: Blessed Mutation:** Sometimes raw chaos twists and mutates living creatures—with both beneficial and detrimental effects. This chapter lists various degrees of mutation and mutant powers to be found among those who revel in chaos. Mutation is expressed as three different templates.

**Chapter Five: Chaos Slaves:** This chapter offers more information for those who want to use chaositech and/or serve chaos. It includes two prestige classes and three templates.

**Chapter Six: Masters of Chaos:** The monstrous creatures and entities known as the Lords of Chaos are described here. These are the terrible Galchutt themselves.

Throughout this sourcebook, sidebars offer special information and guidelines for the DM. Spells, items, etc. introduced in this book are marked with a dagger (†). Otherwise, all references to spells, feats, and other rules are from the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Chaositech* appear on Monte Cook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page online at <[www.montecook.com/mpress\\_\\_Chaos.html](http://www.montecook.com/mpress__Chaos.html)>.

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## ONE DM TO ANOTHER

Why add chaostech to your game?

Chaostech adds an interesting dimension to the game. It's a way to inject quasi-science-fiction elements into your campaign without putting in starship captains, computers, and D-cell batteries. Neither science nor magic, chaostech represents a way to inject something new into the fantasy mix.

Chaostech isn't magic, because it's not created by spells or fueled by magical energy. It is the harnessing of chaotic energies, which are a source of power unto themselves. Chaostech is more like blasters and flying cars than incantations and mystical artifacts.

But chaostech isn't science, because it doesn't obey the laws of physics. Instead, it's pseudoscience given life. Like Dr. Frankenstein's monster, it appears to have the trappings of science, but it could never actually be, not without perverting the way the world works—and that's exactly what chaos does, in this context. Despite the fact that it looks like sci-fi gadgetry, using chaostech isn't the same as putting laser guns and jet packs into your fantasy game.

This is, if you will, "fantasy science" (as opposed to science fantasy). You don't dilute the fantasy feel of your game with this stuff. In fact, this book provides the whole philosophy and religion of true chaos as a backdrop. To keep the fantasy feel, the DM has the Galchutt—the terrible demonic Lords of Chaos—to serve as the real source of power behind chaostech.

## A FOUL TEMPTATION

One of the assumptions of this book is that most player characters (PCs) will react with abhorrence at the thought of some of the chaostech devices and procedures, particularly those found in Chapter Three: Betrayal of Flesh. The allure of chaostech's power countered by its unsavory flavor and connection with the forces of darkness creates interesting dilemmas for the players. Do their characters use it? Do they destroy it? Do they use it just long enough to help defeat the forces of chaos?

Of course, if your PC group decides to embrace chaostech, all the devices, enhancements, and spells in this book are designed to balance and work well alongside the traditional spells, magic items, and other powers available to the PCs.

## INTRODUCING CHAOSTECH INTO YOUR GAME

Being such a big idea, chaostech may be difficult to insert into some fantasy campaigns. Here are a few ideas to make it easy.

## THE ANCIENT DARK GODS

In the time before time, malevolent and destructive forces moved upon the world, seeking unknowable ends. When it became clear that they would have to leave, they sought to plant the seeds of their own return. These seeds were sealed storehouses of chaostech. The forces knew that one day mortals would inhabit the world and would find these devices and crave their power. In using them, mortals would grant the dark forces—the Galchutt—entry back into the world.

Today, people are beginning to find these vaults of chaostech. Miners discover them when creating new shafts, dungeon adventurers find them on delves. Within ancient citadels in far-off lands, and buried deep in cold mountain lakes, chaostech is surfacing once again. The cults of chaos, having long prophesied of this day, scramble to buy or steal the relics to use for their own ends. The PCs might want to stop them, or they might be the ones to uncover an ancient vault and seek to protect it, sell it, use it, or destroy it.

In this method, chaostech becomes the legacy of ancient times. It's not something that someone creates or can repair. It's a resource that must be discovered. Finding a cache of chaostech is like striking it rich prospecting, and probably just as dangerous. Not only is the cache most likely guarded, but it's certainly going to draw the attention of chaos cultists and evil organizations who covet its power.

## THE NEW WORLD DISORDER

The antithesis of the tried-and-true "ancient dark gods" approach is to make chaostech something brand new. Perhaps the product of some demented genius, it finds its way into the hands of the burgeoning cults of chaos. This discovery spreads like a virus, with chaostech popping up everywhere—and always in the wrong hands. It becomes a real threat to law and order, even to whole governments. A prominent church of a lawful deity announces a crusade to wipe out its spread, and many cities declare ownership of a chaostech device a severe crime.

Still, the use of chaostech grows and grows. The only way to wipe it out is to discover who is creating it and stop them. This story arc could encompass much of a campaign, with chaostech introduced slowly, in the hands of the PCs' opponents. Soon the player characters will develop a real hatred for the stuff, due to the power it gives their foes. The PCs find themselves ultimately on the point of the spearhead to stamp out chaostech, which means destroying the cults of chaos and perhaps even the Galchutt themselves.

## THE ISOLATED LOCALE

On a cold, wind-swept isle, atop a rocky crag, a madman tinkers with ideas no mortal should have conceived. In the laboratory



of his dark castle, the chaos-tainted lunatic creates machines that should not function and performs operations that should not work on victims taken from a recent shipwreck.

Soon, the crazed chaos cultist begins to sell his creations—both the devices and the living beings he has created. His customers are various evil organizations and the followers of gods devoted to mayhem, destruction, and murder, all of which are based on nearby islands or on the coast. In this isolated area, chaositech becomes fairly common—at least as common as magic and magic items. When the PCs come here, they encounter the strange devices and learn of the insane creator who crafts them in his island fortress. Do they investigate? Even if they do and put a stop to his work, is it too late?

### CHAOSITECH VS. REAL SCIENCE

One great way to introduce chaositech into a campaign is to do so alongside developments of real technology. If you've

got dwarves that use steam-powered machines or the occasional firearm, or if you include “steampunk” technology in your game at all, this is a wonderful chaositech hook: Now you can offer up both methods, as equals but opposites.

Chaositech, obviously, is the creation of chaos, and normal technology is the stuff of law. Gods of chaos (the Galchutt) support one, while the gods of law support the other. It's an arms race fueled by religion and/or alignment. The two forces can clash on a spiritual, philosophical, metaphysical, and physical level, and the PCs can choose which side to support.

In particular, this approach works well with the “tools of the ancient gods” idea, for it creates another way in which chaositech differs from conventional technology. While steam-powered devices are new, chaositech is old. Chaositech isn't an innovation, it's an artifact.