

JUDGE DREDD

THE CURSED EARTH

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Judge Dredd Created by John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerro



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INTRODUCTION

'... into the Cursed Earth. A desert of the damned where hell on earth has broken out. But we gotta get through...'

– Judge Dredd, *The Cursed Earth* chapter two.

Judge Dredd's summary of the Cursed Earth is an accurate description; it is a stretch of radioactive wasteland left over from the Atomic Wars and is home to all sorts of mutants, aliens, gangs, creatures and natural hazards. It lies just beyond Mega-City One and reaches all the way to Mega-City Two, covering most of the United States. Just like the Mega Cities, anything can happen in the Cursed Earth – it is a place full of strangeness where mutations are commonplace and anarchy prevails.

This book details the Cursed Earth and its inhabitants, providing everything a Referee needs to run scenarios and campaigns in these wastelands. Inside *The Cursed Earth* you will find:

LIFE IN THE CURSED EARTH

This chapter gives an overview of the settlements found in the Cursed Earth and the people that inhabit them, together with a guide to their hard way of life and the threats they face. This chapter also includes a host of new mutations and mental disorders for creating unique and bizarre muties.

PLACES OF INTEREST

This chapter details numerous places of interest throughout the Cursed Earth that can be used in your Judge Dredd games. Locations include the major towns and regions, each detailed with areas of note, personalities and scenario ideas.

CULTS, GANGS & OTHER GROUPS

There are many cults and gangs in the Cursed Earth that are not tied to any one place. It is these groups that are the focus of this chapter beginning with guidelines for Referee's to create their own religious cults and criminal gangs. The rest of this chapter details a number of organisations together with plot hooks, allowing Referee's to use them as required for encounters and scenarios.

ENCOUNTERS AND HAZARDS

This chapter includes guidelines and a quick system for creating settlements. Also detailed are numerous hazards, random encounters, creatures and personalities that can be used as plot hooks and encounters.

EQUIPMENT

The people of the Cursed Earth use anything they can get their hands to survive, from 20th Century automobiles and First World War hand grenades to mutant horses and slaving kits, it is all detailed here.

BEYOND MEGA-CITY ONE

This chapter provides guidelines for running Judge Dredd games in the Cursed Earth, with suggestions for short scenarios and long running campaigns.

THE CARTEL CONNECTION

This scenario provides a good introduction to the Cursed Earth. The players investigate a criminal organisation that has established its power in Mega-City One and beyond. However, nothing is as simple as it seems and the players will soon discover the hardships and dangers of the Cursed Earth.

LIFE IN THE CURSED EARTH

This chapter gives an overview of what life is like in the Cursed Earth; the type of people that live here and the places where they work and inhabit. Details of specific people and places can be found in the respective chapters later in the book.

SETTLEMENTS

Most settlements are quite small, with populations of less than 100 people and only a minority exceed 500 residents. The inhabitants can be any mix of human, mutie and alien, although the larger settlements are more likely to have mixed races.

Architecture can differ depending on the type of settlement. Some communities are lucky enough to occupy ruined or abandoned towns left over from the war, living in the buildings that remain and repairing others as required. However, with so many towns and cities either destroyed or buried, numerous new settlements have been founded on the ashes of the old, being built from scratch.

Building construction varies but they are typically made from wood or stone, depending on the availability of raw materials. Some settlements even have more modern domesteads, sealed environments made from reinforced plastisteel. Shantytowns are also common, either as complete settlements or slum areas of existing towns.

The Cursed Earth is a dangerous place and its inhabitants are always at risk from marauding gangs and wild mutated creatures, so settlements will typically have some sort of defence to protect its inhabitants. This can range from simple wooden fences to stone ramparts with weapon emplacements.

Guidelines for creating settlements can be found in the Encounters and Hazards chapter.

FARMSTEADS

Food production is essential to survival and farmsteads are often located near to established settlements to provide much needed sustenance to the small communities. Smaller

isolated farms can also be found throughout the Cursed Earth where families struggle to survive on their own.

Farmsteads tend to be simple wooden structures built near whatever fertile lands can be found but farming the dry and polluted lands is not easy. The inhabitants of the Cursed Earth have their work cut out for them – crops fail on a regular basis and cattle farming suffers for the same reasons, with many people resorting to hunting the mutated wildlife for survival.

DAY TO DAY LIFE

Life is hard in the Cursed Earth, most folk barely scratch a living from the soil. It is no wonder then that those lacking in moral standards (of which there are many) resort to violence and thievery in order to survive, taking what they need by force, subterfuge and deception.


The tyranny of evil and powerful men is prevalent in the Cursed Earth. Settlements are often taken over by quasi-religious cults and leaders, forcing the populace into servitude to worship false gods. Where religion has no influence, gangs and crime lords impose their own leadership – ruling by fear they exploit the inhabitants, often forcing them into slavery.

The primitive buildings and lawlessness of many such places can be likened to the old Wild West. Some towns have self appointed lawmen ranging from genuine protectors to power hungry leaders. Townsfolk will often volunteer (or in some cases be forced) to join the local militia to help protect their family and homes from the many dangers that prowl beyond the town borders.

TRADE

Trade is vital to the survival of most communities in the Cursed Earth. Although some are self sufficient, the lack of fertile ground means that many places are unable to produce everything they need. Neighbouring settlements often have a symbiotic relationship with each other, trading vital farming tools in exchange for the food they are used to produce.

Trade on this scale is often achieved with the simple exchange of goods, one thing for another. Larger towns are usually equipped to make all the tools and food they need



and are therefore more likely to trade for money and luxury items. Haggling is not just commonplace but expected in most places – the value of goods in the Cursed Earth can be very subjective, for most people an item's value is rated by its usefulness and only the rich elite can afford to spend their money on non-essential items.

The most common coinage in the Cursed Earth is gold coins but any currency is accepted of equal value. For the purposes of game mechanics, all prices are listed in Credits (see Equipment chapter). Those settlements that favour money over barter tend to have less of a community spirit and the rich tend to be more influential, occupying positions of power within the town.

The goods available to buy throughout the Cursed Earth are a primarily a mix of old 20th Century equipment and hand crafted items. New and modern goods are available through the many smugglers that operate out of the Mega Cities with weapons being especially popular.

The slave trade is also very profitable. Numerous towns are ruled by ruthless leaders who rely on slave labour to work the land, mines and so on. Mutie slaves are the most common but humans and aliens are also forced into servitude. Most slavers view slaves as little more than animals.

TECHNOLOGY

Most of the technology available in the Cursed Earth is low-tech. There is a substantial amount of equipment left over from the 20th Century that has now become commonplace, especially weapons and vehicles. Many items are crafted locally from whatever materials are available and are typically of poor quality but functional.

Of course, more modern items are available from those who trade or smuggle out of the Mega Cities but such goods tend to be a lot more expensive. Most people have to make do with what they can scavenge so it is not unusual to come across a variety of improvised equipment such as horse drawn cars and armour made from cooking utensils.

LAW AND ORDER

Crime is rampant in the Cursed Earth. What has become a way of life here is often seen as anarchic and abhorrent to Judges - the strict law and order that is prevalent in the Mega Cities simply does not exist in these tortured lands. If ever there were a place where Judges were needed, it is here in the Cursed Earth.

Although there is no high authority and law of the land, not all settlements are without their own rules. Most towns do have some sort of leadership but laws are few and enforcement is

lacking. Town leadership and government varies greatly from place to place. Small settlements and farming communities tend to have a mutual cooperation or charismatic leaders. Larger towns and places with valuable resources will often have an imposed leadership and in some cases religious dictators rule their subjects.

Where leadership does exist there is usually some level of law for without some rudimentary control, citizens have a tendency to live in a state of anarchy (although such places do exist). Some of the smaller settlements have a local sheriff to prevent the most heinous crimes from being committed and to ensure the protection of citizens. Larger towns often establish a militia to maintain minimal order in the street and to protect the inhabitants from outside threats.

However, even with these systems in place, few activities are prohibited or even considered illegal. The principle focus is survival. Entertainment is hard to come by so what is considered immoral in the Mega Cities is embraced in the Cursed Earth as hobbies and pastimes. Gambling, pit fighting, slavery, recreational drug use, drunken and disorderly behaviour, brawling and even theft are all commonplace and for the most part these activities are socially acceptable. Even murder is legal in many places or at best people just look the other way, not wanting to get involved – out here in the Cursed Earth it is survival of the fittest.

Fortunately there are enough people in the Cursed Earth who still have some morals and there are numerous settlements that will not tolerate such behaviour in their domain. Where law does exist and justice must be meted out, it is often severe. Hard times require tough punishments and they range from public humiliation to execution, although exile is also common.

PEOPLE OF THE CURSED EARTH

The people found in the Cursed Earth are as varied as those found in the Mega Cities. Muties make up the majority of the Cursed Earth's population and account for roughly 60% of the total inhabitants. The remaining population is approximately 35% human and 5% alien.

The Cursed Earth has few of the crazies found in the Mega Cities (most **are** a result of city life) but has its own breed of crazy people. Many people believe that this is a consequence of the radioactive contamination that affects the mind as well as the body. This has resulted in numerous religious cults and the like that are led by individuals with severe mental disorders.

Sample file



MUTIES

Mutants (or muties as they are more commonly known) are native to the Cursed Earth. They were once human but the radiation from the Atomic Wars resulted in widespread mutations. Until recently, muties were prohibited from entering the Mega Cities, left to survive in the harsh wastelands that created them.

However, even now, those mutants that are granted citizenship are treated with hatred, fear and loathing, and being granted citizenship is notoriously difficult. The Mutant Control Judges turn away new applicants by the hundreds every day and those unwilling to leave are hunted down and forcibly removed.

Most muties then are reluctantly forced to make a life for themselves in the Cursed Earth, no matter how difficult and dangerous it can be. Even though mutants are the dominant race here, there are many humans who still view muties as abominations or creatures that can be used for profit and manual labour.

Mutation rules are detailed on page 213 of *Judge Dredd* and a range of new mutations (including mental disorders) are detailed at the end of this chapter.

HUMANS

Referred to by the muties as 'norms', the term humans is usually used to describe non-mutant humans, those with pure genes. Some of the humans in the Cursed Earth were immune to the mutations or were able to avoid contamination by hiding underground in bunkers and shelters. There are also those that have left the Mega Cities for any number of reasons but typically come here to escape the law or extortionists, or they have a misguided view that they can find a better way of life here.

There are also a significant number of humans whose very nature is not compatible with life in the Mega Cities, those who have a desire or impulse to commit crime. It is these individuals who typically form cults and gangs, or who take control of settlements.

ALIENS

Unlike mutants, aliens are more likely to be granted citizenship in the Mega Cities, providing they are wealthy and healthy enough of course. However, there are still those who fail to meet the criteria set out by the Justice Department and are either unable or unwilling to return to their homeworlds. These unfortunate individuals inevitably end up in the Cursed Earth.

Like mutants, aliens are often ill-treated by humans, especially by slavers and religious cults. Before the Atomic Wars, several areas of land were designated as alien reserves to meet the needs of the increasing amount of aliens that travel to Earth. Unfortunately, these areas were destroyed during the war forcing the aliens to find new homes with many being captured and sold into slavery.

CULTS

Since the Atomic Wars there has been a significant increase in the number religious cults, many of them restoring ancient religions and forgotten deities. Many of these cults are led by deranged leaders, mentally unstable individuals affected by the radioactivity or those simply taking advantage of the situation to gain power, using the devastation caused by the war as proof that the gods have forsaken mankind and that humanity must repent for its sins.

Many people are taken in by these false prophets, either believing in the individual or the necessity of faith. The most devout worshippers are typically indoctrinated into the cult to spread the word of their newfound faith. It is important to note that many of these cults are harmless and some are legitimate faiths, providing much needed support to those who suffer a life of poverty and hardship in the Cursed Earth.

Unfortunately, there are some cults that use their faith as a means of control, forcing others to believe in their god or suffer the consequences. Entire towns have been subjugated by such groups, ruling by fear and force of arms, but all in the name of their god. Likewise, there are those that believe in the purity of their race and are doing god's work by eliminating the abominations of mutants and aliens, or forcing them into slavery.

Of course some of these new religions are fake, a few devious individuals see the influence of such cults and use them as a means to power, forcing subjects to worship a god that the leader himself does not believe in.

GANGS & SYNDICATES

Whereas cults use their religion as a means of control or exploitation over others, gangs and syndicates have no such pretence. Syndicates are large, well organised, groups of career criminals that openly run a town or its underworld (more common in larger towns) and typically control the populace (or part thereof) by means of extortion and fear. Gangs tend to be smaller, less organised groups with a propensity for violence and operate in a particular region of the Cursed Earth or within an area of a large town.

Whatever their size and distinction, gangs and syndicates are the bane of many people's lives in the Cursed Earth and the cause of much of the misery and suffering. These groups

take what they want, when they want. If anyone resists they are usually beaten or killed, and some just do this for the fun of it, revelling in violence and the suffering of others.

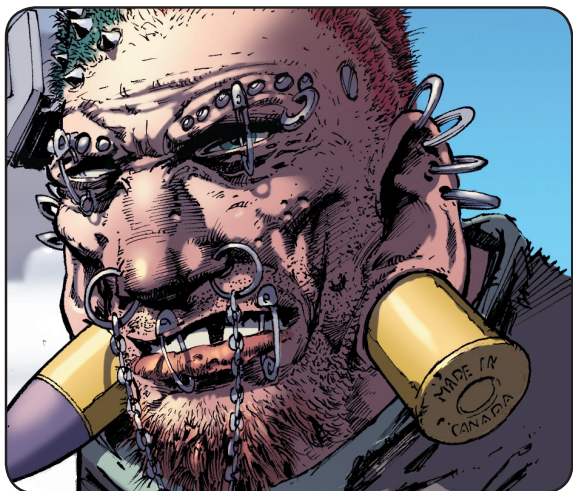
Whilst syndicates exert their influence in one place, slowly building in strength and power, gangs tend to move about, often roaming the Cursed Earth in search of their next victims. Any town with little in the way of defences is a prime target for gangs to attack and pillage, which is why many have barricades and militia to defend their homes. In contrast to this syndicates will usually attempt to take control from within, gaining contacts and influence using a combination of bribery, blackmail and racketeering.

Gang warfare is a common occurrence in many areas. Where more than one group is operating in an area, they will fight to expand or protect their territory. Gang conflicts are not always about borders however, many neighbouring groups are natural rivals who fight simply to prove their dominance and supremacy over each other or for a particular belief or cause.

SLAVERS

Slavers are a particular type of gang that proliferate throughout the Cursed Earth. The slave trade is big business and with life expectancy of the 'goods' being so short there is a constant demand for them. There are many slaver gangs and each usually operates in its own territory but there are also those that travel the Cursed Earth making profit wherever they can. Like most other gangs however, borders are often contests by rival slaver groups.

Slavers are cruel and vicious. Many exclusively hunting down mutants but other gangs are not so concerned with race and will enslave anyone who is fair game. Slaver groups typically sell their catches to known slave traders or at the numerous



slave markets that operate throughout The Cursed Earth. Conflicts of varying scales between rival slavers are not uncommon in such places but local law enforcement (such that it is) usually intervenes in the interest of business.

NEW MUTATIONS

The rules listed here expand upon those detailed in *Judge Dredd* and can be used as required but are not mandatory.

BRAIN MUTATIONS

If the mutated area of a character is the brain and they have one or more mutant traits, then the mutation is mental or psionic in nature rather than physical. The type of mutation can be randomly determined using the table below.

1d6	Brain Mutation
1-4	Mental Disorder
5-6	Psionic Trait

PSIONIC TRAITS

Trait	Effects
Mind Fortress	The mutant is less susceptible to psionic attack, giving opponents a -1 DM to any psionic based roll made against the mutant.
Psionic Talent	The character may choose a second Advanced Talent as detailed in <i>Judge Dredd</i> .
Psionic Technique	The mutant can choose an additional Psi Judge special technique as listed in <i>Judge Dredd</i> .
Sixth Sense	As per the Special Technique on page 52 of <i>Judge Dredd</i> .

HEAD MUTATIONS

If the mutated area is the head then you may roll on the following table to determine which features are affected. Traits can then be chosen as appropriate from *Judge Dredd* or the new mutations listed here.

1d6	Feature
1	Eyes
2	Ears
3	Nose
4	Mouth/Jaw
5	Hair/Scalp
6	Skull/Entire Head

Sample file

