TERRA TERTIA

A post-apocalyptic *Risus* Adaptation of *Gamma World* by Hank Harwell
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In the early 1980's, gaming giant TSR released a science-fiction role-playing game (RPG) entitled *Gamma World*. It was set in a distant future after an unknown apocalypse reduced civilization to Dark Ages levels. However, people were not only struggling against their environment for survival, they had to deal with glowing radioactive cities, monstrous mutations (even some amongst their own kind), gleaming, insane robots, and the occasional mysterious device of the long-dead Ancients. Life became a little harder.

Risus is a fun little game system written by the highly creative S. John Ross. Rather than statting out skills or attributes, characters in *Risus* are described by using clichés.

In order to get the maximum use out of this adaptation, you will need access to a copy of the *Risus* rules (which are free and easily obtainable via the Internet) and a copy of one of the various (1,2,3, or 4) editions of *Gamma World* (which are not free, and only the 3rd and 4th editions are readily available). A copy of *The Risus Companion* is recommended but not required. This conversion *might* make sense without the GW rules; all that is really needed is the setting detail, and you could piece enough of that together by visiting the sites listed below under **References**.

Character Creation

Characters are built using the standard 10-dice method (i.e., spreading ten dice across various clichés to describe your character). Referring to the *Risus* rules, the following advanced options should be used: I, II and III (Hooks and Tales, Pumps, and Double-Pumps). Funky Dice can be used for powerful mutations. From *The Risus Companion*, Lucky Shots and Questing Dice are also recommended. If you don't have the *Companion*, don't worry; these will be summarized below.

As noted above, characters are built by the use of clichés, that describe (in very broad terms) abilities, skills, motivations, philosophy/religion, competency and many other things. The number of dice allotted to each cliché indicates its strength.

Sample Character: Chazz
Pure Strain Human Swordsman (4)
Bitter Deposed Clan Chieftain (3)
Collector of Ancient Trinkets (2)
Questing Dice (destroy all mutant badgers) [] [] [] [] []

Chazz is a Pure Strain Human (PSH), that is, a human with no mutations whatsoever. He was also the chieftain of a small clan of other PSH's, until he was deposed by a rival leader. This occured as a result of his inability to lead his tribe to a fertile area to settle. Although he is a strong fighter, simple economics proved to be his undoing.

His wife and children left with him, only to be slaughtered by a band of Badders, thus establishing his hatred of mutated badgers.

He now wanders the wasteland collecting items of interest in the belief that someday, one of them will return him to power.

Lucky Shots and Questing Dice
The alert reader will note that the clichés listed for Chazz do not total 10. A player can purchase five (5) *Questing Dice* for every one (1) cliché die. If Chazz happened to stumble upon a Badder (mutant badger) patrol, he could spend one of his Questing Dice to supplement a combat roll to boost his chance of success. However they can only be used on rolls involving his quest. *Lucky Shots* are similar. They are purchased at a 3-for-1 rate, but can be used for *any* roll Chazz just has to make.

Suggested Clichés
Cliché [What Its Good For]

Blacksmith	[working with fire, working with iron, making tools]
Cook	[developing recipes, mixing ingredients, preparing food]
Explorer	[reading maps, drawing maps, discovering trails]
Farmer	[knowing the proper seasons for planting, knowing how to get the best crops, plowing, fertilizing, weeding, reaping]
Fisherman	[knowing where to fish, baiting a hook, landing "a big one," casting a net, drawing a net, mending a net, telling "fish tales".
Gambler	[taking risks, knowing cards, calculating percentages, dealing cards, reading faces, rolling dice, loading dice, marking cards, bluffing]
Herbalist	[recognizing herbs, knowing which herbs to use for a given reason, how to find them and use them and how to make healing salves and medicines]
Horseman	[breeding horses for desired abilities, riding horses]
Hunter	[tracking prey, shooting animals, skinning animals]
Leatherworker	[curing leather, carving leather, making leather products]
Loremaster	[knowing history, writing history, keeping track of dusty books, talking about the past]
Mechanic	[building engines, fixing engines, salvaging engines]
Musician	[reading music, playing music]
Sailor	[tying knots, piloting boats, navigating rivers]
Scavenger	[pulling parts from wrecks, selling/trading parts, building contraptions]
Thief	[breaking into houses, stealing things, fencing things, picking pockets]
Trader	[bartering, fast-talking, appraising]
Wanderer ("Disowned")	[going it alone, being weird and antisocial, not bathing]
Weaponsmith	[making weapons]
Weaponsmaster	[using multiple weapons]
Weaver/Tailor	[making cloth, making clothes, repairing clothes]

Woodworker	[carving wood, whittling wood, making tools and furniture out of wood]
Writer	[reading books, writing books]

Of Mutants And Men

PC's & NPC's, flora & fauna

What separates *Gamma World* from other sci-fi games is the availability of mutations. *Terra Tertia* has attempted to maintain this aspect. Mutants come in three main varieties: Humanoids (mutated humans), mutated animals and mutated plants.

Sample Character: Rex

Alpha Male Ark (4) [Greeting by Sniffing, Howling at the Moon, Running in Packs]
Cunning Leader in the Ranks of the Fit (3) [Barking Orders, Leading a Troop of Mutated Animals, Studying Military History & Tactics]
Club-wielding Hunter (2) [Tracking Prey, Clubbing Victims]
Rockhound (1) [collecting pretty rocks]

Sample Mutant Clichés from Gamma World

Cliché	[What Its Good For]
Ark	[Looking like a bipedal sentient dog, howling at the moon, greeting by sniffing, craving the taste of human hands]
Badder	[Looking like a bipedal sentient badger,]
Hoop	[Looking like a large sentient rabbit, communicating by telepathy, transmuting metal to rubber]

In *Terra Tertia*, it is possible to have a "do-it-yourself" mutant. Start with the stock: Human, Animal, or Plant. Add a few mutations (as clichés), and *voila*! Instant Mutant!

Sample Mutations

Cliché	[What Its Good For]
Boring tendrils	[putting down roots, climbing, grabbing]
Carnivorous jaws (Plant)	[eating what bugs you]
Chameleon Powers	[camouflaging]
Cryokinesis	[giving the cold shoulder, freezing things mentally]
Electrical Generation	[shocking people, things who touch, giving off a bolt of electricity]
Explosive and/or radiated fruit or seeds	[shooting or dropping seeds or fruit that explode]
Gas generation	[giving off bad BO]
Heat Generation	[Making things warmer]
Heightened Physical Ability (specify)	[being bigger, being stronger, being faster]
	Heightened Balance
	Heightened Constitution
	Heightened Dexterity

	Heightened Precision
	Heightened Strength
	Increased Metabolism
	Increased Speed
Heightened Sense (Sight, Smell, Hearing, etc.)	[seeing farther, identifying and tracking odors, discerning faint sounds]
	Heightened Hearing
	Heightened Smell
	Heightened Taste
	Heightened Touch
	Heightened Vision
Infravision	[seeing things in the infrared spectrum, seeing heat-producing things in the dark]
Light Generation	[carrying your own light, shining out in the darkness]
Manipulation vines	[grabbing things, moving things, waving]
Mental control over physical state	[slowing down breathing, speeding up metabolism, going into a self-induced coma]
Mental defense shield	[avoiding mental-based attacks]
Multiple Body Parts (specify)	[having extra arms, legs, etc.]
Photosynthetic Skin	[making food from light, giving off oxygen, living off of carbon dioxide]
Poison Resistance	[shaking off annoying snake, insect bites, not getting sick after ingesting poison]
Radiation Resistance	[shaking off exposure to high doses of radiation, not developing mutations]
Partial/total Carapace	[having a hard shell]
Pyrokinesis	[setting things on fire telepathically]
Quills/Spines	[having sharp, pointy, sticky things covering your body instead of hair]
Radiated eyes	[emitting a blast of radiation energy through the eyes]
Razor edged leaves	[cutting through things, people, etc.]
Shapechange	[mimicking the shape and appearance of animal, but not the abilities]
Sonic attack ability	[blasting people with supersonic waves]
Ultravision	[seeing in the ultraviolet spectrum, seeing things that produce radiation energy andelectrical workings]
Wings	[flapping, flying]

We, Robots
'bots & 'droids

Robots and Androids are artificial beings designed to perform various repetitive, dangerous, tedious, or otherwise menial tasks. In *Terra Tertia*, they can be allies, enemies, or obstacles.

Sample Character: GR8-1 (Government Robot 8-1)

Pompous diplomatic android [4] [can translate over 30 language groups, including dialects, observes several national customs, performs protocol functions]
Short-circuiting public service robot (2) [goes off on a Hitler-esque speech tirade, orders executions for no apparent reason, stutters]

Sample Robot Clichés

Cliché	[What Its Good For]
Cargo Lifter (Light, Heavy)	[lifting cargo to and from transports]
Cargo Transport (size)	[moving cargo from one place to another]
Ecology Bot (Agricultural)	[Farming, planting, weeding, irrigating, harvesting]
Ecology Bot (Wilderness)	[studying life in the wild, protecting new growth, putting out wildfires, caring for animals]
Engineering Bot	[making repairs to other mechanical units, building other mechanical units]
Medical Robotoid	[performing surgery, giving first aid, diagnosing illnesses, dispensing medicines]
Security Robotoid	[keeping the peace, patrolling, subduing life forms bent on breaking the peace or harming one another]
General Household Robotoid	[dusting, cleaning, vacuuming, washing]
Supervisory Borg	[controlling lesser robotic units, communicating with think tanks, having organic material]
Defense/Attack Borg	[defending Supervisory Borgs or Cybernetic Installations, attacking agressors]
Warbot	[waging war]

The Six Billion Domar Man
Cyborgs

Cyborgs are organic beings who are enhanced by the implantation of cybernetic equipment, or are cybernetic equipment enhanced by the implantation of organic tissue. Players may wish to redefine a mutation as a cybernetic implant instead.

Strangers In A Strange World
Cryptic Alliances

Cryptic Alliances are quasi-religious/political factions that have aligned themselves toward a common goal. Some are neutral, some are benign and some are hostile. Below is a list of the Cryptic Alliances as clichés that players may want to use for their characters. More detail can be had by consulting any of the Gamma World rulebooks, or by perusing the Internet (see **References**, below)

Sample Cryptic Alliance Clichés
Cliché   [What Its Good For]

Archivists	[worshipping artifacts, storing artifacts, recognizing artifacts and robot types, begging, buying and stealing artifacts]
Brotherhood of Thought	[traveling in threes, seeking peace between races, unifying intelligent creatures, practicing defensive unarmed martial art]
Followers of the Voice	[worshipping computers, living near ancient installations, obeying computers, searching for computers]
Friends of Entropy (The Red Death)	[killing, maiming, looting]
Healers	[treating illnesses and wounds, caring for the injured, wandering the countryside in search of someone to care for, using Ancient technology, knowing about and using medicinal herbs]
Knights of Genetic Purity ("Purists")	[hunting down and destroying mutated humans, fighting with sword or lance, riding, using ancient technology weapons, serving as mercenaries]
Radioactivists	[worshipping radiation god, having a resistance to radiation, lurking in
Restorationists	[recovering ancient information, seeking to rebuild the lost civilization, using Ancient technology weapons, working with robots, avoiding other cryptic alliances]
Seekers	[hating technology, convincing humans and mutants to work together, living in large cities, possessing wealth, being suspicious of animal mutants]
The Created	[working for artificial beings to rule the world, believing that computers, cyborgs, robots and androids should continue, subverting and sabotaging human and humanoid plans]
The Iron Society	[working to destroy Pure Strain Humans, living near radiated areas, using mutant powers and Ancient technology in battle]
Ranks of the Fit	[limiting rulership to mutated intelligent animals, living under a military code, conquering areas, using simple weapons with limited Ancient technology]
Zoopremisists	[being a sentient mutated animal, terrorizing opponents, seeking to establish mutant animals as world leaders, living in secret among other mutants, signaling others telepathically, making bombs, avenging threats or discrimination to animals, opposing the Ranks of the Fit]

Withering Heights
"Dead zones" and Hazards

Many locations in *Terra Tertia* still glow with radiation energy as a result of the Apocalypse. Some mutations allow mutants to emit radiation or poison as a part of their makeup. These become hazards that will be encountered by the characters.

Should the character be exposed to radiation or poison, he will have to make a saving throw. Essentially, the GM should take the cliché rating for the source of the radiation/poison (i.e.,

Glowing Slag Heap That Used To Be Lubbock, Texas [4]), roll the dice, and the result establishes the target number for the player to beat. If the player makes his saving throw, he avoids exposure; if not, he is given a *condition*. Until the player is cured of the radiation/posions exposure, he must beat the saving roll again, or get progressively worse (i.e, lose cliché dice) until he is reduced to zero and dies from radiation sickness/poisoning. The GM will determine how to cure the condition. (credit: Vincent Diakuw's Dungeonautica Site)

Ye Newe Curiosity Shoppe
Technology of the Ancients

The technology of the ancients is still out there, waiting to be rediscovered and used. Many characters in *Terra Tertia* will not understand what certain devices are, nor how to use them. In order for a character to use any device, the GM must first decide if its operational, then how many cliché dice to assign to it. The GM and the player begin a combat round. If the device wins, the character just can't figure it out. If the player wins, he is able to operate the device. All sorts of devices are available to the character to find, from digital music players to exercise equipment to cell phones and ray guns.

References
The Apocalyptic Post (webzine)
DabberDave's Gamma World Website
Digital Fortress: Gamma World
Gamma Hero
Gamma World Net Ring
The Post-Apocalyptic Forge – chock full o' PA goodness!
Universal Gamma World Conversion Chart, courtesy of the Gamma World Mail Group
Vincent Diakuw's Dungeonautica Site
Wasteland Hero

Disclaimer: material presented here is an adaptation of the *Gamma World* system from TSR/WOTC for *Risus: The Anything RPG* by S. John Ross. This material is not official and is not endorsed by TSR/WOTC nor by S. John Ross/Cumberland Games and Diversions.