

THE PAINT

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"RESOLUTELY FIGHT FOR VICTORY."

-Dien Bien Phu's civic motto.

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INTRODUCTION

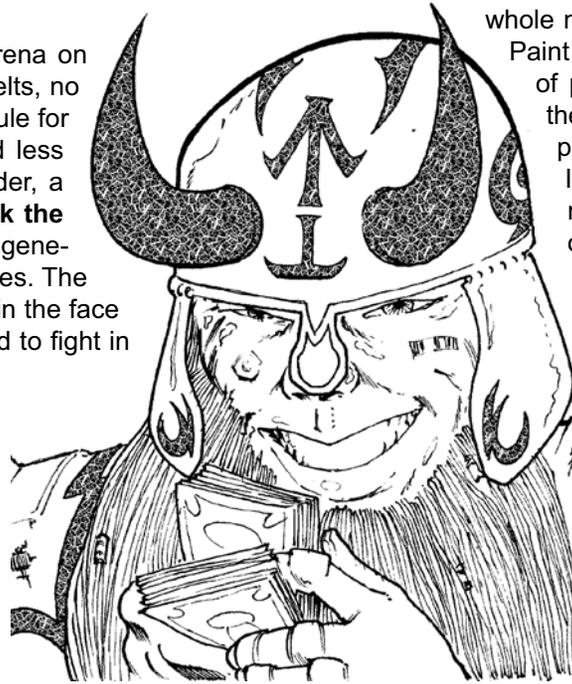
The **Paint** is the most feared and respected arena on the **Global Unlimited Fight** circuit. There are no belts, no weight classes, no titles, no referees and only one rule for signing up: you have to be more than human and less than sane to step into the Paint. The Paint's founder, a cybernetic behemoth who goes by the name of **Erik the Red**, doesn't bother with fancy power scanners or gene-checks to see if potential gladiators have what it takes. The Paint's audition is simple: Erik shoots the applicant in the face at point blank range. Those who survive are allowed to fight in his arena.

Once a potential is "Painted," they are a gladiator until they take a crippling wound or until they win twenty-five matches. Since Painted matches are terrifyingly lethal, most Painted gladiators fight for the rest of their lives. Erik the Red's lover, a beautiful but terrifying girl by the name of **Dead Blue Fish**, tattoos the gladiator and implants a locator chip (the "Paint" process) that allows all other Painted gladiators to locate the new recruit. A Painted gladiator can never refuse a challenge; never remove his brand, and never feel safe ... until they survive enough matches to earn back their freedom, that is.

The Paint's an open secret—an illegal combat sport that knows no borders, respects no laws, and brings in hundreds of millions of dollars of untaxed revenue each year. The Red's cybernetics give him world-wide media access that no government can track or control; "Redcast" bouts are for sale to the highest bidder, and fights between veteran gladiators draw in thousands of viewers, all of whom are numbered among the planet's wealthiest, most powerful citizens. Ringside seats at a Paint match sell for millions of dollars.

Even a Painted rookie can earn a seven figure fight purse; the enormous amounts of cash The Red throws at his fighters ensures there's always a ready supply of new gladiators. Of course, the Painted usually find themselves addicted to the money and fame, even more than they are to the rush

of the kill, and keep fighting match after match even after winning their mandatory twenty-five bouts. Very few gladiators ever leave the Paint alive, and most of those that do look back upon their killing days with longing.



The **Paint** introduces a team of PL 10-12 superhumans to a whole new world of pain. More than a single adventure, The Paint provides the Gamemaster with a wide assortment of plot hooks, subplots and scenes as ways to involve the heroes and Painted NPCs, forming a "mini-campaign" suitable for inclusion into any superhero game. It doesn't matter whether the heroes are in the game to make some quick money by killing down on the Paint or if their mission is to rescue or arrest those who do—every superhuman that encounters The Red and his arena is in for the fight of their life. Muscles and morals will both be tested.

The following scenario focuses on typical Paint matches, detailing the behind the scene preparation, planning and power struggles that accompany a typical bout. There are a variety of different ways for the player characters to become embroiled in the battle. Some might stumble onto the Paint while investigating other crimes, looking for lost comrades, or questing to bring The Red or Dead Blue Fish to justice, while others might fall prey to the lure of easy money or the thrill of the arena. Dozens of plot hooks, minor mysteries, and interesting NPCs and adversaries help bring the Paint to life.

"The Paint" can be played as a stand-alone scenario, as a series of interconnected missions, or form the backbone of an entire superhero campaign. Due to the arena's secretive nature, the Paint can be included in most superhero campaigns, even those taking place in licensed universes, with only a little modification on the Gamemaster's part.

FIRST CONTACT

There are between fifteen and twenty scheduled bouts (**Calendars**) each year, held in secret subterranean arenas across the globe. Erik the

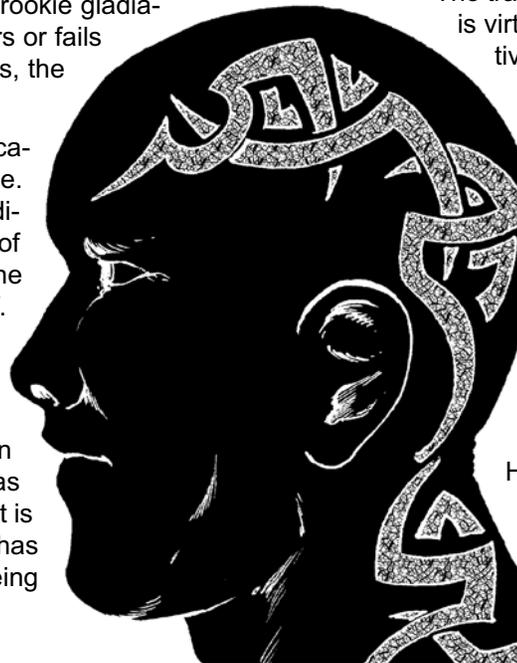
Red schedules these bouts well in advance and ensures his entire stable of Painted gladiators are notified months before a fight. Scheduled bouts are always big money, regardless of the form they take: some are battle royales starring dozens of metahuman martial artists, fighting until only one being is still standing, while others are team competitions, or deadly war games. Despite the risk of death, Erik the Red has never lacked for fighters; even if a few Painted reconsider their career and go to ground. Enough gladiators always show up to make the bouts profitable for all concerned.

Calendars are actually less lethal than one-on-one challenge (**Unlimiteds**). Medics are on hand, and unlike the brutal Unlimiteds, Calendars usually have at least a few basic rules of engagement. When fighting in a Calendar, a gladiator is supposed to stop attacking an opponent who taps out or goes limp, for example. While the rules aren't always followed, Calendar matches are much safer than Unlimited matches. Painted gladiators concerned with surviving to their twenty-five wins usually attend as many Calendars as they possibly can.

Unlimited matches are the Red's way of weeding out cowards and weaklings. When a gladiator is Painted by Dead Blue Fish, they are implanted with (among other nanotech bionics) a nearly infallible GPS locator. Initially, the gladiator's tracking implant is inactive, and if the gladiator proves his or her worth in the arena, it stays that way. However, if the rookie gladiator fails to attend at least one of their first three Calendars or fails to fight in at least one of every five succeeding Calendars, the tracking implant activates.

Once the tracer goes on line, the reluctant warrior's location is broadcast to all other Painted gladiators in real time. The fighter becomes a juicy target for opportunistic gladiators, since killing the fugitive gladiator counts as one of the murderer's twenty-five required wins, and can net the killer an impressive bounty, paid by Erik the Red himself. A number of veteran gladiators rarely fight in the arena, instead hunting down these **skip-fighters** to reach their quota.

Any Painted gladiator can challenge another to an Unlimited, at any time. However, a challenged gladiator has every right to refuse, as long as his or her tracking implant is still dormant. Attacking a Painted in good standing who has refused a challenge always results in the aggressor being classified a skip-fighter.



THE DEAD FISH'S CARESS

Once The Red accepts a gladiator into his circle, the fighter is "Painted" by Dead Blue Fish. The gladiator receives a distinctive, well-drawn tattoo, the placement and design of which varies according to the fighter's whim. In addition to the ink, the tattoo is laced with the girl's proprietary nano-tech, leaving a piece of her within the gladiator. The micro-tech has the following capabilities:

"PAINT" GPS TRACER

When activated, the tracer implant transmits the Painted's current location (accurate to within a 20-foot radius) to Erik the Red, Dead Blue Fish, and all other Painted gladiators. The GPS data-stream automatically updates every round.

The tracer nano-load is carried in the host's bloodstream, and is virtually impossible to remove safely. Removing or deactivating the tracer requires a DC 45 Computers or DC 50 Medicine check made by a physician with access to high-tech medical equipment. Failure indicates that the host suffers 1 point of temporary Con damage.

HEADS UP DISPLAY (HUD)

A fraction of the nano-load from the Painting process implants itself in the host's optic nerve. The HUD allows the gladiator to receive text or video messages from the Red, keeps them informed of upcoming Calendars, along with the names and fight records of opponents. The HUD also shows the current location of all skip-fighters, worldwide. The HUD can be activated or de-activated at will.

OPTIC CAMERAS

Embedded cameras and audio pick ups transmit everything the Painted gladiator sees and hears to Erik the Red, enabling the promoter to in-