OF BURGERS AND FRIES

by Cynthia Celeste Miller

o let me get this straight. You want me to abandon the entire gimmick I've spent the last three years developing here in For The Hunt, move across the

pond, put on a wig and dress like that stupid clown mascot bitch for Sleazeball Burgers?" The athletic-looking woman was as bewildered as she was offended.

Mitchell Rourke had been a talent scout for many years and thought he had seen every reaction there was to see when approaching a prospect about once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. This was certainly a new one to him. Was she intrigued? Was she annoyed? Or was she a little of both? Frankly, he wasn't sure how to proceed.

"Umm... yes? I mean, that's... an oversimplification, but that's... more or less the case, yes. But you'd be working in the NUML, which is every hunter's dream, right?"

The woman's eyes narrowed as she moved her tongue around the inside of her cheek. She was thinking about it, which was a good sign.

"I've never done lethal Urban Manhunt before. You know that right?"

Not wanting to lose her, he quickly spoke up. "Yes, I assumed as much. But you're really good at what you do. Adjusting to the more... terminal environment of the NUML would be a piece of cake. Plus, my benefactors would see to it that you'd receive all the extra training you'd need. Besides... you'd have Fry Critter with you. And he's extremely lethal."

"Fry what?"

Oh, man. He was losing her. He could feel it. He took a gamble and it looked like he rolled snake-eyes. Does she hate animals? Does she hate the Fry Critters on the Sleazeball Burgers commercials? What caused the sudden disconnect?

"The... uh... Fry Criiter. You know, like in the commercials. They created one in the laboratory using the DNA of some chihuahuas, wolverines, badgers and toxic ooze. Or something. I'm not really sure how they did it, but he's really vicious and will help you earn points. The NUML ruled that his hunter would gain



the points for any eliminations he gets. "Fry Criiter," she stated flatly, looking at Mitchell incredulously.

He paused, not knowing what to say. "Yes. Fry Critter."

"Like the silly little bastards on the telly who run around eating up all the goddamn fries."

Was that a question? Mitchell wasn't sure. "Yes, but this one eats up all the goddamn crims instead of the god-damn fries."

At least 30 awkward seconds passed with absolute silence lingering in the air before the woman cracked what could best be called a precursor to a smile. "Alright. Fuck it. Let's do this."

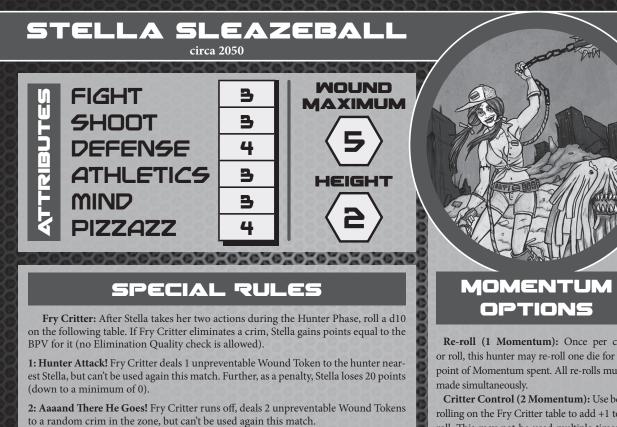
Mitchell finally breathed. He didn't want to go back to the States without her signing a contract and was relieved

that she changed her tune.

"Wait," the woman said, her face showing signs of doubt again. His heart skipped a beat. "This Fry Critter... he'll obey me, yeah? He's not going to chew the shit out of my leg or anything like that, is he?"

Lying through his teeth, he gave her the assurance she was looking for. "No, he's obedient. He's super obedient. Like beyond super obedient really. Nothing to worry about. Nothing at all. Here's the contract. Just sign right here and right here."

When she finds out how wild and unpredictable Fry Critter is, she's going to be livid. But that's a worry for another day. Besides, he doesn't plan on being anywhere within a hundred miles of her when that happens.



3: The Hand That Feeds Him! Fry Critter bites Stella, giving her 1 unpreventable Wound Token.

4-5: Not Helpful! Fry Critter does nothing useful, unless rooting through garbage counts as "useful".

6: Faithful Protector! Fry Critter protects Stella from harm. The first time Stella gains Wound Tokens this turn, you may opt to give them to Fry Critter instead. Roll a d10 for each Wound Token. If any of them roll a 1, Fry Critter may not be used again this match.

7-8: Munch on the Crim! Fry Critter attacks a crim of your choice within 8 inches of Stella, dealing 1 unpreventable Wound Token to it.

9: Flurry of Teeth! Fry Critter attacks all crims within 3 inches of Stella, dealing 1 unpreventable Wound Token to each of them.

10: Nom Nom! Fry Critter deals 2 unpreventable Wound Tokens to a crim of your choice within 8 inches of Stella.

Re-roll (1 Momentum): Once per check or roll, this hunter may re-roll one die for each point of Momentum spent. All re-rolls must be

Critter Control (2 Momentum): Use before rolling on the Fry Critter table to add +1 to the roll. This may not be used multiple times per turn to gain more than +1.

<u>ATTACKS</u>

Burger Flail (Range 2"; Accuracy -1; Damage 3; Extra Rules - • GREASE SPLATTER: If this attack inflicts at least 2 Wound Tokens, a random crim within 2" of the target crim gains 1 unpreventable Wound Token; Keywords — *melee*, *blunt*, *item*)

Sawed-Off Shotgun (Range 8"; Accuracy +3; Damage 2; Keywords — melee, blunt, unarmed)

Sleazeball Burgers is a fast-food franchise known for nasty-tasting grub at a cheap price. The company has been a big supporter of Urban Manhunt since the inception of sponsors. But in 2049, they took things a step further by hiring a hunter to dress as their mascot, Stella Sleazeball, and sending her out into the zone... along with a beast created in a lab to look exactly like the franchise's loveable Fry Critters. Well, almost exactly.

While Stella has proven to be popular enough with fans, it's really Fry Critter they're tuning in to see. His unpredictable behavior is always a hoot to watch and the silly 'omm nomm nomm' sounds he makes while eating the flesh from the faces of crims is nothing short of adorable. What's not to love?

Art by Patrick Sullivan