

MASS EFFECT™

FATE
RPG



In the year 2148, explorers on Mars discovered the remains of an ancient spacefaring civilization. In the decades that followed, these mysterious artifacts revealed startling new technologies, enabling travel to the furthest stars. The basis for this incredible technology was a force that controlled the very fabric of space and time.

They called it the greatest discovery in human history.

The civilizations of the galaxy call it...

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MASS EFFECT™



CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: THE GAME	9
What Is A Role-Playing Game?	10
What This Book Is Not	11
Bulldogs!	11
<i>Mass Effect: Operation Resurgence</i>	12
Fate Dice	12
Final Thoughts	12
CHAPTER 2: MAKING A CHARACTER	15
Getting Started	16
A Primer In Fate	16
Beyond the Ladder	17
Rolling the Dice	17
Difficulty	17
Other Character Stats	18
Aspects	18
Skills	18
Stunts & Species Abilities	18
Fate Points	19
Stress	21
Resources	21
Making Your First Character	21
Power Level	22
Normal	22
Veteran	22
Hardcore	22
Insane	22
Aspects	23
High Concept	23
Trouble	23
Background	23
The Three Adventures	24
Adventure One	24
Adventure Two	24
Adventure Three	25
Invokes & Compels	26
Skill Tree	27
Skill Packages	27
Character Creation Flowchart	29
CHAPTER 3: SPECIES	30
Choosing Your Species	32
Asari	32
Drell	39
Human	41
Krogan	44
Quarian	51
Salarian	58
Turian	62
CHAPTER 4: SKILLS	71
Academics	74
Alertness	76
Artillery	76
Athletics	77

Biotics.....	78
Contacts	79
Deceit.....	81
Empathy	81
Endurance.....	82
Engineering	83
Fight	84
Guns	84
Intimidation.....	85
Investigation	86
Leadership	87
Medicine.....	87
Pilot.....	88
Rapport	89
Resolve.....	90
Resources	91
Security	91
Stealth	92
Survival	93
Systems	93

CHAPTER 5: STUNTS 96

Creating Stunts.....	98
Sample Skill Stunts	99
Academics	99
Alertness	100
Artillery	100
Athletics	101
Biotics.....	101
Contacts	102
Deceit.....	103
Empathy	103
Endurance.....	104
Engineering	105
Fight	106
Guns	107
Intimidation.....	107
Investigation	108
Leadership	109
Medicine.....	109
Pilot.....	110
Rapport	111
Resolve.....	111
Resources	112
Security	113
Stealth	113
Survival	114
Systems	115

CHAPTER 6: POWERS 117

Biotic Mastery	118
Biotic Explosions	118
Biotic Powers.....	119
BARRIER	121
CHARGE	122
DARK CHANNEL.....	123
DOMINATE.....	124

FLARE.....	125
LASH.....	126
NOVA	127
PULL.....	128
REAVE.....	129
SHOCKWAVE	130
SLAM	131
SINGULARITY	132
STASIS	133
THROW.....	134
WARP.....	135
Tech Mastery	136
Tech Cryo Explosions	136
Tech Fire Explosions	137
Tech Bursts	137
Tech Powers	138
CRYO BLAST.....	139
DEFENSE MATRIX	140
DECOY.....	141
DRONE	142
ENERGY DRAIN	145
INCINERATE.....	146
OVERLOAD.....	147
SABOTAGE	148
SENTRY TURRET	149
TACTICAL CLOAK	150
TECH ARMOR.....	151
Combat Mastery.....	152
Ammunition Upgrades	152
Combat Training.....	153

CHAPTER 7: RULES OF PLAY..... 156

Aspects	158
Using Aspects	158
Invoking Aspects	159
Compelling Aspects	160
Encountering Other Aspects	164
Making Character Aspects	166
Creating & Discovering Aspects In Play	170
Getting Stuff Done.....	173
Using Shifts.....	173
Taking Action.....	174
Running Conflicts.....	176
Other Common Situations	187
Explosions.....	188
Minions	190
Allies.....	191
Companions.....	192
Advancement	193

CHAPTER 8: WEAPONS & GEAR..... 197

Buying Things	198
Making a Purchase.....	198
Resource Aspects.....	199
Selling Things	199
Weaponry.....	199
Guns.....	200

Personal Defense	205
Armor	205
Kinetic Shields	207
Armor & Shield Upgrades	208
Personal Items	210
Bio-Amps	210
Omni-Tools	213
Explosives	217
Archaic Weapons	219

CHAPTER 9: RUNNING THE GAME 223

Good Fate Techniques	224
When to Compel	224
Declarations	225
Assessments	226
Describing Aspects In Play	226
When To Roll?	226
Using Spin	228
Distributing Fate	228
Applying Modifiers	228
Mental & Social Combat	229
Starship & Vehicle Combat	229
NPCs & Threats	230
Basic NPCs	230
Supporting NPCs	231
Main NPCs	232
Templates	232
ASARI COMMANDO	233
ATLAS	233
BATARIAN THUG	234
BLUE SUNS MERCENARY	234
CERBERUS CENTURION	235
CERBERUS TROOPER	235
CERBERUS NEMESIS	236
COLLECTOR TROOPER	236
HUMAN MARINE	237
HUMAN RUFFIAN	237
KROGAN BATTLEMASTER	238
GETH TROOPER	238
GETH HUNTER	239
GETH PRIME	239
PROTHEAN VANGUARD	240
REAPER HUSK	240
REAPER CANNIBAL	241
REAPER BRUTE	241
REAPER MARAUDER	242
VORCHA ENFORCER	242

APPENDIX A: ARTISTS CREDITS 243

INDEX 244



CHAPTER 1

THE GAME



The Universe is an ever-evolving tapestry. Just as humanity seems to find their place amongst the stars they are just as rudely reminded that they are not alone. The discovery of the mass effect relays heralded in a new age of discovery but also, in that same time, a new era of war. For many millennia we believed ourselves to be one of many intelligent species. We were not prepared for what lay beyond. Some races—such as the asari—proved themselves to be keepers of knowledge and shepherds of the truth, having discovered the mysterious trappings of the Citadel. Others, like the turians, were more warlike in nature and viewed humanity as another insistent threat, much like the geth that had gone unheard of centuries before, separated from their quarian masters. From the simplest of seeds could evil spring and the largest personification of that evil—the Reapers—had returned.

These are the times of the *Mass Effect* universe. It is a period of exploration, defending the innocent, and helping shape the course of destiny for the better. In some cases war may be calling and a select few will need to rise up from the ashes and show themselves for the heralds that they are. While this book in no way attempts to be a comprehensive reference for the events of the *Mass Effect* games, it does serve to set the foundation for you to shape and tell your own stories.

The results of which only you will have the ability to shape into your own epic.

What Is A Role-Playing Game? —

As children you no doubt engaged in games of cops and robbers, cowboys and indians, or even some far-fetched science fiction dream of your imagination. In those games there existed very few rules. If you were shot you fell down. For how long, who could say? Until it became more interesting for something else to happen. You'd rescue the damsel tied to the (fictional) train track, saving her in the nick of time. You'd have these grand adventures with little consideration as to how fast you could draw your gun, if the big invisible creature in your backyard could take five or six well aimed shots, or when oxygen on the planet ran out (usually right when it was time to go home for supper).

A role-playing game (RPG) quantifies a number of these activities. We can tell you how far you can run, who draws their gun first, or in some dire circumstances, that you may just not recover from that batarian who punched you through the chest cavity. So how does that happen? There's a Game Master (GM) whose job is to adjudicate the rules and craft the adventures. On the surface it may sound very difficult and challenging (and it is!) but it's also incredibly rewarding. While some games may let you get away without having a GM in charge, *Mass Effect* is not one of those games. You'll need a GM, hopefully someone who is familiar with the setting, is comfortable absorbing the rules, and doesn't mind sitting at the head of the table and being the star of the show. Think of the GM as the Director of the movie. They may have the story and script, help frame the scenes, but you—the actors—are what really make the game interesting. There's enough responsibility going on both sides of the table so that everyone is important and able to have fun.

There are a number of game systems out there that seek to solve these issues in a number of ways. The one we've settled upon is Fate. You might have heard of it as it has a long, illustrious career starting back in the day as FUDGE. It's since been updated and with the convention of the Open Gaming License (OGL), vast parts of it are available through the kindness of the publisher, Evil Hat Productions. But, much like computer coding, there are many "forks" of Fate that exist out there, each tweaking things slightly to meet specific needs. While Fate "Core" certainly met our needs very well, we were extremely impressed with one particular version out there, called **Bulldogs!** (The exclamation is not optional, by the way!) **Bulldogs!** is published by Galileo Games and is available in hardback form as well as PDF. We highly recommend picking it up; it's the only way you'll have a copy of the rules that we use to lovingly hold, smell, and lick. The creator of **Bulldogs!**, Brennan Taylor, has even given us special dis-

pensation to use portions of his rules in this game. So, consider this game, if you will, another “fork” in the many versions of Fate that exist. And it would not exist without the assistance of many publishers and creators who share their fine work within this industry. To Brennan and Galileo Games—and all those who have offered their assistance—we salute you!

You have permission to print this document to your heart’s content but you cannot sell or receive any remuneration for it. If you can talk your gaming group into splitting a pizza for you, go ahead and take that.

We’ve organized the book in such a way that you should be able to start from the beginning, create a character, understand how to do stuff, and then have advice for running your own games. If you get lost we’ve got a handy index waiting for you in the back. Also use the color coded stripes on the side of the book to jump to the relevant section you may need. We’ve divided the book up into the following sections which should hopefully make sense to you.

- 🐾 **The Game** (Where You Are Now)
- 🐾 **Species**
- 🐾 **Making A Character**
- 🐾 **Skills**
- 🐾 **Stunts**
- 🐾 **Powers**
- 🐾 **Rules of Play**
- 🐾 **Weapons & Gear**
- 🐾 **Running The Game**
- 🐾 **Index**

What This Book Is Not

To be clear, this is **not** a licensed *Mass Effect* property. *Mass Effect* is the property of Bioware, a division of Electronic Arts. This is a work of fiction and done without their permission or involvement. No attempt to challenge their legal authority is intended in the publication of this material. Instead, it is our hope to expand the outreach of the *Mass Effect* property to another segment of games—role-players—who have long coveted a way to bring the events of Commander Shepard to life at their gaming tables. This product comes with one very important and unconditional stipulation:

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY THIS PRODUCT BE CHARGED FOR
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As the sole property of Bioware/Electronic Arts, only they have the rights to benefit from the *Mass Effect* Universe. As such, this work is the result of countless unpaid hours and volunteer work to make it possible to bring to you. Why? Because we’re gamers too and we love *Mass Effect* just as much as you do!

Bulldogs!

We’ve already discussed **Bulldogs!** in passing but feel it deserves some special consideration. First, it’s very easy to use. Its tag line, “Sci-fi That Kicks Ass,” really tells you everything you need to know about it. In general, **Bulldogs!** puts you and your crew on board a tramp freighter with the entire galaxy as your playground. Your Game Master (GM) will direct your deeds and your ship will take on a life of its own. If you’re looking for a sci-fi game and perhaps a break from *Mass Effect*, we can think of no greater recommendation. Look it up! You’ll be glad you did!

Bulldogs! is available through the Galileo Games website, sites such as RPGNow, and your friendly, local, gaming store (FLGS).

Because we've used **Bulldogs!** as our core basis, the *Mass Effect RPG* may feel familiar to those of you who've played **Bulldogs!** before. However, we have made some changes to account for biotic and tech powers, combat mastery, and the nature of weaponry. So look closely; you'll see some changes.

Finally, there is a new version of Fate Core available from Evil Hat Productions. I did consider updating this game to use the new iteration of the rules, but I like the level of "crunch" that **Bulldogs!** has. It's not overwhelming and has just enough to make Fate interesting and have some fiddly bits to play with. If you feel otherwise, you should be able to convert this book over to Fate Core with little issue.

Mass Effect: Operation Resurgence

I'd be remiss to not discuss the Obsidian Portal game created by James Silvers, called **Mass Effect: Operation Resurgence**. It was the genesis for many of the ideas found in this book and what you're reading wouldn't exist without his fine work. While we've taken that inspiration much, much further, some of James' work still exists within: the design work he did for guns, armor, and kinetic shields remain nearly untouched from their originals. So thank you, James, for providing us with a leaping off point and a great campaign site!

Fate Dice

Because this game uses Fate you'll need—ideally—a set of your own Fate dice. They look like normal six-sided dice but have two  symbols on them, two  symbols on them, and two blank faces (). In a pinch you could use just any old six-sided dice you have around. You'll need four of them to make a Fate roll. We'll be discussing more on Fate dice and how they'll be used later in the book. But beyond that, some pencil and paper, and your imagination, you're ready to embark on your own trip into the *Mass Effect* Universe.

Final Thoughts

I could talk at length regarding *Mass Effect*, my love of it, my 30+ years in the gaming industry, or my previous credits and design work. The reality is that it's all—in the grand scheme of things—somewhat meaningless. I do *this* for fun. For me, I gain a real joy in knowing that someone out there, tonight, is reading the *Mass Effect RPG* and a myriad of ideas are flowing through their brain and that those ideas may see fruition at their gaming table, someday. I've spent a lot of my own time, money, and energy in bringing this product to you. I hope that you enjoy it for what it is: *Mass Effect*...for the masses.

If you have a suggestion, question, or spot an error that needs fixing, please contact me at feedback@masseffectrpg.org. I'd love to hear from you.

Oh, and if it wasn't obvious already for those that haven't finished playing the *Mass Effect* games: spoilers abound!

Don Mappin, June 2014





CHAPTER 2
MAKING A
CHARACTER

You may be tempted to read ahead because you're a Fate expert or one of those folks who peeks at the last page of a book. Don't! Making a character isn't particularly difficult but it does vary slightly from other iterations of Fate. It'll be a lot less confusing if you bear with us through this short chapter and then venture into the other chapters.

If you're new to role-playing and/or Fate then this is definitely the right place for you to begin!

Getting Started

You'll need a few supplies along with these rules to play *Mass Effect*. Here are some items that will benefit you as well as make your life easier at the gaming table:

Stuff you must have to play:

- ✦ **Four Fate dice for each player and the GM (unless you want to share them around but that's just icky).** If you don't have Fate dice, see Evil Hat Productions, Indie Press Revolution, or your local role-playing game dice supplier for a pack of dice. Support your friendly, local gaming store (FLGS), please.
- ✦ **A character sheet for each player, or at least blank paper to record characters.** A character sheet is available as a separate download for you to use. Feel free to make as many copies as you'd like.
- ✦ **Writing utensils, preferably pencils.** You'll be making notes, marking off damage, and generally writing stuff down a lot.
- ✦ **A couple of friends who are willing to take a leap of faith with you into the realm of *Mass Effect***

Bonus items that can certainly help but aren't absolutely necessary:

- ✦ **A set of glass beads, spent shell casings, or something similar to use to count your available fate points**
- ✦ **Index cards to write aspects on, to pass notes with, and to make notes on things that come up in play.** We'll talk more about aspects later but they're the fuel of the game.
- ✦ **Snacks!** It's a time-honored tradition of gamers everywhere to share food and break bread over the course of a game.

A Primer In Fate

Before we set down the path of having you make your first character, it's important to give you a basic understanding of how the Fate system works. In short, you roll four dice. Positive  results are good, negative  results are bad. Blank results are, well, blank. That means on any given roll your dice (before bonuses or penalties) will yield you results between -4 to +4. Typically somewhere in the middle.

So how good is a roll? Great question! Fate has a skill ladder that consists of a series of num-

The Fate Ladder

Here's how Fate scales successes and failure by shifts and descriptive adjectives.

+8	Legendary
+7	Epic
+6	Fantastic
+5	Superb
+4	Great
+3	Good
+2	Fair
+1	Average
+0	Mediocre
-1	Poor
-2	Terrible

bers and adjectives to explain degrees of success. In short, the higher the number the better you did. This is also a handy way to measure up your own skills or your competition.

You can choose to remember the values or the adjectives; it doesn't matter. Just as long as you feel comfortable in understanding your character's level of power. Some players may directly compare values: "I have a +4 in Guns!" while others may simply slyly respond, "Well, watch out, because I'm Superb with Biotics." Technically the ladder has no upper or lower limit, but you'll be hard-pressed to find needs higher or lower than those listed here. Well, maybe if you run into a Reaper.

While most people in the galaxy are Average (+1) at the things they do for a living, you aren't an average person. You live on the edge and push hard at the boundaries of what "normal" people are capable of. You'll most likely be Great (+4) or better at whatever your main skill is.

The adjectives and numbers are interchangeable, so if you're more comfortable with numbers, you can say Pilot +3 or Academics -1. We'll use both, as in a Good (+3) Pilot or Poor (-1) Academics.

BEYOND THE LADDER

It's possible to get results that go past the end of the ladder. You really can't roll below Terrible (-2), but it's quite possible to get results past Legendary (+8)—sometimes way past it. There are bonuses you can add in—we'll cover these in more detail later in the book. If you happen to have fortune smile so strongly upon you, rejoice! You can just use the number (+9, +10, or whatever). If you feel sad that there's no adjective, make one up. Hell, if you roll that high, you deserve the privilege of assigning an official adjective to the appropriate number!

Rolling the Dice

When you make a roll in *Mass Effect* you will always do so with all four of your Fate dice in hand. Remember, because each die has two , two , and two  faces on them, your typical roll will be nil; or specifically, Mediocre (+0). Of course, simple math tells us you can actually get anything from +4 to -4 and everything in between. Why? Because each  result cancels out—removes—a  result (and vice-versa). Blank () results do nothing. When you roll the dice it's called an **effort**; your character is trying to do something. What happens after you add up the numbers is called the **result**.

If you don't have access to Fate dice just use regular six-sided dice that you have in pretty much any board game laying around the house. Treat a roll of 1-2 as a  result, a 3-4 as a  result, and 5-6 as a  result.

Example: Alloryn is sitting down and playing in her first *Mass Effect* Fate game. It just so happens that her human—an ex-military that survived the turian Contact Wars—is trying to score a berth on a departing starship and its vorch crew. Alloryn wants her character, Jenel, to look tough and try to intimidate the vorch into taking her on board—with full pay. The GM rules that this is certainly interesting and has the potential to further the story and/or add a complication. Alloryn will be rolling Intimidation versus the vorch's Resolve (an opposed test, page 185). Alloryn grabs her Fate dice and rolls! She gets a , , , and a . The  immediately cancels out a  and the  does nothing—it doesn't help or hinder Alloryn's character. This leaves her with a net result of . Better hope Jenel has a high Intimidation bonus!

DIFFICULTY

When you make a roll and get a result, you're trying to meet or exceed a target value. The target value is the **difficulty** for the roll. As you might suspect, the difficulty indicates how hard it is to do something. You measure difficulties on the same ladder as everything else. For example, finding a clue at a crime scene with Investigation might be a Mediocre (+0) difficulty to notice something obvious. In fact, in such a case a roll may not be even required! However, to find a more elusive clue hidden behind a fabricated work of art could require a Good (+3) difficulty. Finding this clue is not a foregone conclusion. Fortunately, GMs receive advice on how to set difficulties later on page 227, in the *Running the Game* chapter.

After you make your roll, the difference between the **result** and the **difficulty** is the **magnitude** of the effect, which is measured in **shifts**. Shifts represent degrees of success, a reduction in the amount of time/effort required, or some other way to show that you not only succeeded, but succeeded *well*. If you receive enough shifts on your roll (3 or more) you may have also achieved **spin** (page 174).

Other Character Stats

There's a lot of other stuff on your *Mass Effect* character sheet. It's the most important information for you to know about your character. In later chapters we'll cover these in a lot more detail, but here are the salient points.

ASPECTS

Every character—in fact just about any item in the *Mass Effect* game—has a set of attributes called **aspects**. An aspect can be about your character's background, the environment you find yourself in, or the quality of a gun. These aspects together tell a story about the world you interact in, how your character fits in, what they're connected to, what's important to them, and what's important *around* them. Aspects can be relationships, phrases, credos, descriptors—anything that tells you something about the character/item/place. Here are a few as a matter of example.

Sample Aspects

THROWN INTO THE FIRE

ARDHAT POTENTIAL

THEY MADE ME A SPECTRE TO SAVE LIVES

TWO TAPS TO THE HEAD

THE BEST KIND OF GETH IS A DEAD ONE

These are just samples so you can start imagining your own. Aspects are so important they get their own expanded section (page 158, **Rules of Play** chapter) where we'll discuss them in much more detail. What you need to know now is how we'll be using aspects to essentially “assemble” your character into a living, breathing component of the *Mass Effect* Universe.

In general, if you can think of a way that an aspect may help you during play you can **invoke** it. Doing so is very powerful; it costs a fate point to do (page 158). The aspect gives you a bonus to the action you're performing, if you can describe via role-playing how that aspect is related. Running into a burning building to save an innocent caught in the crossfire of a gang war could call upon your **THEY MADE ME A SPECTRE TO SAVE LIVES** aspect.

There's another way aspects can be used, and that's to make the story more interesting. Every coin has a backside and for an aspect that's called a **compel**. You can use aspects to bring complications and story twists into the game by leveraging them. When there's a situation where your aspect could cause you trouble you can mention it to the GM as an opportunity. The GM, on their own, can also point out that one of your aspects is likely to cause you trouble (it's advisable for the GMs to be familiar with the aspects of all characters in play).

No matter who makes the call, if it's agreed upon that the aspect will hinder you, your aspect is compelled and it limits your character or the story in some way. The GM will give you a fate point for your troubles.

SKILLS

Every character has **skills**, like Fight or Alertness, that are rated (on the ladder, page 16) and tell how good you are at doing something. When you make a Fate roll, you're adding in your applicable skill bonus to that roll. Now, in some cases you may be completely unskilled—you don't have it! That's fine, you're still considered to have a Mediocre (+0) rating. There are a ton of actions covered by skills, thus they have their own chapter defined (**Skills**, page 72).

STUNTS & SPECIES ABILITIES

Stunts are things you can do which stretch or break the rules—they are the things that normal people can't do. Because of this, stunts have very specific uses and requirements, detailed in their own chapter (**Stunts**, page 98).

In addition, the alien species templates (page 32, **Species**) also include special stunts of their own. Each one of them allows members of that species to stretch or break the rules. Unlike stunts, which anyone can take, only members of the particular alien species have access to that species' special abilities.

FATE POINTS

We've touched on fate points briefly already, and whatever refresh you have left when you start the game is the amount of fate points that you will start each session with. That number varies, but you'll never start play with less than one. Fate points give you the ability to exercise some control over the game, invoke an aspect to gain a bonus, fuel a special power, or even declare something specific happens in the scene!

Fate points are best represented by tokens, such as glass beads or poker chips. You may, at any point, spend a fate point to invoke an aspect, make a declaration, or fuel a stunt.

Invoke an Aspect

Aspects (page 158) are those little phrases that really describe your character and her place in the story. When you have an aspect that's applicable to a situation, you can invoke it to receive a bonus. After you've rolled the dice, you can pick an aspect—one of your own or one in the situation or area—and describe how it'll help you in this situation. If the GM agrees that it's appropriate, you can spend a fate point and do one of the following:

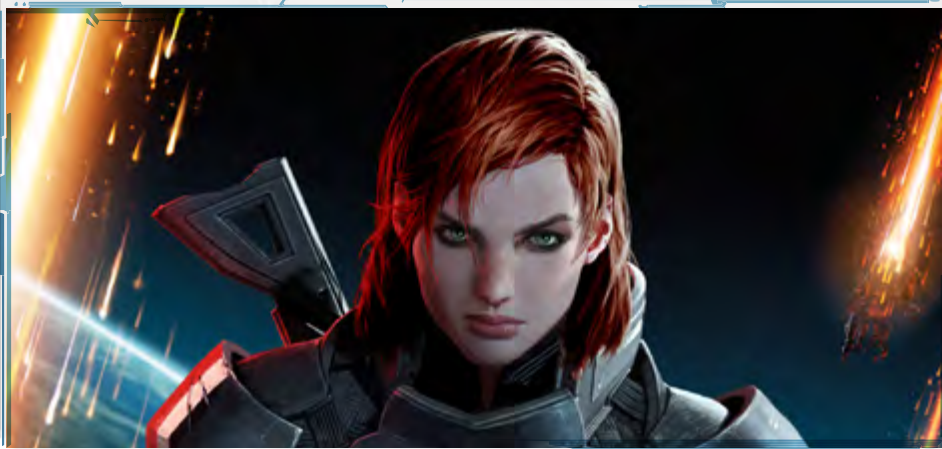
- 🔥 **Reroll all the dice, using the new result, or**
- 🔥 **Add +2 to the final die roll (after any rerolls have been done)**

You can do this multiple times for a single action as long as you have multiple aspects that apply and fate points to spend. You can't use the same aspect more than once on the same skill use, though you may use the same aspect on several different rolls throughout a scene, at the cost of one fate point per use. Remember, you can elect to invoke an aspect *after* you roll the dice!

Power a Stunt, Species Ability, or Power

Some stunts have particularly potent effects and require that you spend a fate point when you use them. If a stunt requires a fate point to be spent, it'll say so in the description (page 98, **Stunts** chapter).

All biotic and tech powers (page 118, **Powers**) can spend fate points for extra effects. For some powers—those listed as maneuvers—they may actually come with a free invoke that can be used on the power.



Make a Declaration

You can simply spend a fate point and declare something, and if the GM accepts it, it's true. This lets you do small things in a story that would usually be something only the GM could do. You can't use fate points to drastically change the plot or just win a scene. Declaring that "the head of the Red Sands gang raises his hands and surrenders without a fight at all!" right at the dramatic conclusion of your adventure isn't fun at all; it's boring. Your GM should reject this idea.

However, declarations are handy for convenient things that happen to your character. A spare pistol "just happens" to be in the inventory crate you open. Crash landed on Noveria and have no cold winter gear? Spend a fate point and have an emergency survival kit sitting in the snow nearby. One of the best uses of a fate point is to use it to declare that your character is there at the right time. This could be tricky and doesn't bend space and time, but instead of searching for clues in cargo bay 94 when the boss fight starts, spend a fate point and you "happen" to wander in right as initiative is rolled!

The GM is the boss and has veto power over declarations but they are heavily encouraged to allow the use of declarations if it makes the game more interesting for everyone at the table (not just you). So the cooler your declaration, the better the chances the GM will approve. Also, it's perfectly reasonable to negotiate the expenditure of a fate point for a declaration. Perhaps your idea is a bit too much—a portable missile launcher is in the consular's private luggage is asking a lot—but it's much more reasonable that her bodyguard has a spare hold-out pistol on him that he can toss to you as a free action.

Declarations spent this way, via fate points, never have die rolls associated with them to see if they work. However, the declaration may generate an effort to then resolve for a result.

Refreshing Fate Points

You usually regain fate points between sessions when a refresh occurs. Sometimes, say during a cliffhanger, no refresh may happen between sessions. Inversely, if the GM feels that a scene was particularly noteworthy, well role-played, or had a dramatic effect on the story, she may allow a refresh to occur mid-session.

The number of fate points you get at a refresh is called your **refresh rate**. The refresh rate is determined when you build your character (page 21). When a refresh occurs, you bring your number of fate points up to your refresh rate. If you did a number of compels and you happen to have more fate points than your refresh rate, your total doesn't change—you get to the keep the extras, but you don't add any more, either.

Earning More Fate Points

You earn fate points when your aspects create problems for your character. When this occurs, it's said that the aspect **compels** your character. When you end up in a situation where your compelled aspect suggests a problematic course of action, the GM will offer you a choice: You can spend a fate point to ignore the aspect, or you can act in accordance with the aspect and earn a fate point.

As a player you can trigger compels as well, either by suggesting that an aspect could complicate things or by playing to your aspects as a normal course of play and reminding the GM after the fact that you were, in a sense, compelled. The GM may not agree with you on the compel and grant you a fate point, but by participating in the activity you've at least earned the opportunity to ask for a fate point.

GM's can also hand out fate points as in-game rewards for a clever plan, adding greatly to the spirit of the game, or perhaps from a witty reply.

STRESS

Every character, NPC, minion, and a plethora of other stuff has a **stress track**. Stress is a measure of one's ability to shrug off damage, be it mental, physical, or social. Stress is fairly abstract; it could be a bullet grazing your temple, a particularly painful comment during a social encounter, or a mental assault that drains your energy. In short, a successful attack on you inflicts a certain amount of stress (page 181, **Rules of Play** chapter). Stress can usually be shaken off between scenes, once you have some time to gather yourself. In *Mass Effect* all characters have one stress track that represents everything: physical, mental, and emotional stress. Neat and tidy.

Your character is going to start with a minimum of three stress to begin play, probably more. A high Endurance or Resolve skill can raise this amount.

RESOURCES

Resources represent the cash and credit a character has on hand or can muster to make purchases. Resources are represented by several skills as well as resource aspects, covered in the **Skills** chapter (page 72). These temporary (or sometimes permanent) aspects can be used to increase a Resource rating. If you have enough resources, you get the item! Complete rules on Resources can be found in the **Weapons & Gear** chapter, page 198.

Making Your First Character

Character creation within *Mass Effect* is similar to that of the game setting, in that characters in *Mass Effect* drive towards a larger common goal, be it under the auspices of being Spectres, Cerberus agents, or some unnamed organization or fellowship that binds them together. This is something that your group of players should agree on prior to play. You could all be part of the Alliance, a mixture of various specialists called on to do jobs too dirty for the Citadel Counselors to sully their hands with, or legitimate members of the military. Spectres are a good choice for this reason as well as their legitimate power and reasoning to go to various places across the galaxy and look into things.

Prior to play the GM will need to determine the power level of the game. This determines each character's starting refresh and maximum skill ranks.

In general, the following steps take place during character creation by each player:

Species: Choose a species to play, using its template, and determine any optional abilities that will be purchased. If you'd like you can create your own species using the rules found in **Bulldogs!**, pages 37-42.

Aspects: Come up with six aspects for your character. These are the most important parts of your character and are used to help shape the story of your character as well as fuel the Fate economy of the game. No pressure, but make them good!

Skills: Decide what skills your character is good at and build the skill tree to reflect your choices.

Stunts: Spend refresh—your most valuable commodity—to determine what special abilities or powers (biotics/techs/combat mastery) your character possesses that sets them apart. You can also select **skill stunts** (**Stunts**, page 98), that let you do unique and different things with your skills.

Power Level

The GM can customize the power level of the game to reflect how skilled and competent the characters begin the game as. The higher the power level the more powerful the characters are and the larger the challenge they will be able to overcome. Lower power levels can make even the most mundane encounter potentially life-threatening. Each power level indicates five things:

Refresh: Your character's starting refresh is the number of fate points you begin with at the start of each session. Starting refresh goes down depending on the alien species and stunts later during character generation. You can never start with a refresh less than 1.

Skill Points: The number of skill points determines how powerful your character is at the beginning of play. The more points you have available to spend, the higher your character's skills will be.

Skill Cap: This is the maximum rating you can have in a skill at the start of play. The GM may raise the skill cap higher during the course of play but at the outset you cannot create a character with a skill greater than the cap.

Free Stunts: This is the number of free stunts (**Stunts**, page 98 and **Powers**, page 118) your character may select at no charge (does not lower your starting refresh).

Free Skill Stunts: This is the number of free skill stunts your character may select at no charge (does not lower your starting refresh). A skill stunt cannot be spent on any Powers, only the stunts found in **Chapter 5: Stunts**, page 98, or ones that you create yourself.

NORMAL

6 refresh, 20 skill points, skill cap at Great (+4), 1 free stunt, 1 free skill stunt

At this point the characters are well trained agents or perhaps a talented beginner. Some races might not be a viable option. The character will have to work really hard to survive the grim realities of the galaxy and death is a very real option.

VETERAN

7 refresh, 25 skill points, skill cap at Great (+4), 2 free stunts, 2 free skill stunts

This is probably where Shepherd and allies began in *Mass Effect*. At this level almost all the species are a viable choice and a character will be skilled enough to hold their own in most situations. Characters will still have plenty of room to grow over the course of a campaign.

HARDCORE

8 refresh, 30 skill points, skill cap at Superb (+5), 2 free stunts, 2 free skill stunts

The character has gained quite a reputation and few can match their skill. The truly heavy hitters of the galaxy will take notice of such a character which is both a blessing and a curse depending on the day of the week. Expect to be called upon to save the galaxy on a fairly frequent basis.

INSANE

10 refresh, 35 skill points, skill cap at Superb (+5), 3 free stunts, 3 free skill stunts

You have a reputation throughout Citadel Space as a major player and there is very little you can't accomplish. Suicide missions through the Omega 4 Relay are actually conceivable at this point.

Aspects

Your character's aspects are the cornerstone of your character and define who they are and how they came to be. They are part background, part psychological profile, and part of what drives them. By reading a character's aspects you should have a very clear picture of what motivates them within a few sentences. Choose your aspects before doing stunts or skills as your aspects should drive your mechanical decisions, not the other way around. Each aspect (there are six) plays a particular role in defining your character. We'll cover each of those in turn.

HIGH CONCEPT

Perhaps the most important aspect, the **high concept** should include the character's career and calling. Biotics and those with tech powers should select a high concept that includes those qualities in it. It is the character's job, his life, and his obligations. It should speak to the very core of the character on a fundamental level and provide both positives and negatives to the character. Like all aspects, a character's high concept should also be a double-edged sword that can be compelled or cause complications in a story.

It's also okay if multiple characters have a high concept with some of the same components in them, they just shouldn't be identical. Be creative! Your high concept should tell someone the most important bits about your character in one quick sentence.

Examples: BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING; THEY MADE ME A SPECTRE TO SAVE LIVES; GHOST IN THE MACHINE.

TROUBLE

Trouble should be the driving influence of the character that forces him to go out and face off against impossible odds. It can be either internal like the Justicar's Code that Samara adheres to or external like Shepherd's obligations to the Alliance. But most of all, your trouble complicates your character's existence in some way. Be wary that your trouble doesn't overlap too closely with your character's high concept; they're not intended to go hand-in-hand. Your trouble can have components or be tangentially related to your high concept, but not hang off of it. In short, your trouble should be able to stand on its own.

As a complication, your character's trouble shouldn't be something that is easily fixed or changed, or else your character already would have done so. It could be a personality quirk or flaw, an obligation or debt that hangs over you, or a code of conduct or way of life that you always strive to uphold.

Despite its name, a trouble can also be positively used (invoked) during play. You could have learned from your trouble how to better handle a situation, or it could represent a level of commitment that fuels you during a scene.

Examples: SEEK THE TRUTH NO MATTER THE COST; MY GUT OUTRANKS YOU; I ONLY HUNT PREDATORS.

BACKGROUND

The **background** aspect is unique in that it must include your species in some capacity. Every species template found in Chapter 3 includes an aspect that sums up the qualities most frequently associated with that race. Anytime your species comes into play as an aspect during the game, your background should be referenced first. Thusly, your species has both good and bad qualities that can be invoked and compelled, respectively. These might be minor things, like how your species is perceived or having to wear protective gear, like a quarian. As part of a quarian's background, their weak immune system could potentially be compelled, for example.

Example: Don's character, Vala, is an asari working undercover and needs to curry favor from a human bartender to try to discover a piece of information. The GM will have Don make a skill check as you would expect, but because asari tend to be viewed as attractive and alluring, allows Don to invoke Vala's asari species Background, **EMBRACE ETERNITY**,

DEFEND THE INNOCENT, for an additional +2 to the roll by spending a fate point. Conversely, the GM could have compelled Vala's **EMBRACE ETERNITY, DEFEND THE INNOCENT** aspect, stating that getting the information will be particularly difficult, as the waitress doing the rounds has a dislike for asari in general, offering up a fate point should Vala elect to question her instead.

In addition, your background can speak to things such as: what region is your character from? How did they grow up and what was it like? Did they have hardships along the way? How are they viewed by their family or other members of their species? How were you educated? What were your friends like? Did you get into trouble much?

Examples: EMBRACE ETERNITY, DEFEND THE INNOCENT; FAVORED SON OF THE TURIAN MILITARY ACADEMY; NOT ENOUGH GAME ON KAHJE.

The Three Adventures

The next part helps bind your character with the others at the table, the presumption being that there are at least three players in your *Mass Effect* game. If not, we'll handle that slightly differently.

The three adventures are episodes or missions that took place in your character's past with the other characters. You'll write something down that happened during that adventure, creating an aspect about that event. Then you'll share with your fellow players who will each add to the story. The key here is to add something *interesting* to the story. However, don't be a jerk about it. You can add a complication, or potentially something good happens, but you can't have the character get their leg blown off by a krogan. That's just not cool, man.

ADVENTURE ONE

What was your first adventure? Choose a story title and an aspect to reflect the events of your initial trial by fire. This could be their grand coming of age story that set them down their current path.

Using index cards (see sidebar), write your character's name at the top. Then describe your first adventure and the important events in it. This should only be a few sentences. You can reference your other aspects in the adventure if you'd like. At the end of your description, create a new aspect that encompasses your adventure and how it affected your character.

A point to remember is that this is *your* character's story. Your character will be the star, so make sure to put them in a position where they can shine. Your fellow players will be contributing to this story but not as much as your character did.

Once you've completed your first episode pass the index card to the player on your right.

ADVENTURE TWO

At this step you will have an index card from another player—the player to your left—which contains their first adventure. Go ahead and read it as well as the aspect that it created for their character. This can provide clues as to how the adventure affected the other character.

Now add to the story with how your character could conceivably be involved in this adventure. Perhaps you show up to lend assistance? You were hired to hunt down the other

Index Cards

During the three adventure phase of character creation it is very helpful to have access to index cards. The reason being that the cards (adventures) will be passed around the table a few times. Resorting to whatever paper you have around is fine too.

For the first episode, make sure to write your character's name at the top of the card so everyone will know it's yours. Then write your adventure and the aspect that spawned from it. Like your other aspects, be creative! The more interesting and descriptive, the better.

character and nearly caught up? Essentially your character now has a supporting role in the other player's adventure. So what should you add to an adventure? Preferably something interesting, something that ties the two characters together even more closely or gives them a common reference point. In general, try to follow these rules:

- ✦ **Make things more difficult:** Your character's involvement made the adventure more complex than originally intended. Perhaps the original adventure involved a heist of illegal firearms and your turian C-Sec officer discovered the smuggled goods. But, most importantly, do not resolve the adventure! You're in the middle of the story, not the beginning or end of it.
- ✦ **Assist:** Your character was helpful in the adventure and assisted in some manner. Perhaps your turian C-Sec officer looked the other way when the smuggled goods were discovered? Your addition to the story should advance it in such a manner that the outcome looks to be positive. You don't have to go into details as to specifically how your character assisted, just the end result.
- ✦ **Complicate and solve:** Previously we said not to solve the adventure. In this instance you do, but in doing so create a new problem to be solved. So your character may have looked the other way with C-Sec but in doing so had to go on the run, causing a new adventure problem.

Having looked through your options, write down in a few sentences what outlines your character's involvement in the adventure. Next, create an aspect for yourself that captures the essence of what happened. This aspect is specific to *your* character, no one else's.

In general, consider yourself a supporting cast member when taking part in another character's adventure. You're important to be sure, but you're not the star. That stays with the character that created the adventure, just like the one you created for your own.

Take your index card and pass it to the player on your right.

ADVENTURE THREE

This third adventure should include two pieces of a story created by your fellow players: the start of the adventure and a middle that advanced the story, complicated it, or created an entirely new issue to resolve. Consider your character's potential involvement in this episode and how they help complete the adventure. That's the important part: the adventure should be resolved by the end. Now it isn't necessarily resolved by your character—you may have just played a part in doing so—but the adventure is complete. Of course, there could easily be many unanswered questions in this episode that lead to full-blown adventures created by the GM.

Just like the previous episode, your character plays an important role but you're not the star. That's still the person who created the adventure in the first place. In a few sentences describe what your character did to complete the episode and how it affected them by creating an aspect.

When the adventures are completed, return each index card to the owner whose name is at the top.

Sharing Adventures

It's completely optional, but a great idea is to have each player read aloud their adventures and how they changed. It feels a bit like playing a Mad Libs game but in the end should paint a very clear picture about each of the characters in the group to all the players.

Fewer Than Three

The assumption is that you have three players in your *Mass Effect* game when creating your three episode aspects. That may not be the case. If you have only two players, one option is to simply resolve each story by the second player. Another option is for both players to jointly create a third episode that they are in, creating aspects for themselves.

Example: Our sample adventure starts with Martin's character, Nex, a drell assassin. Nex's aspects thus far have displayed him as competent, having a code of a warrior, and being curious. He wants his first adventure to really underscore Nex's ability to get the job done, even if it's morally questionable. He starts his adventure stating that while on a secret mission to take out some slavers that there are several hostages involved—children—with bombs strapped to them. Those children are being used as shields while the slavers make their escape. Not taking any chances, Nex coldly places one of the bombs in his sights and detonates it. Martin writes down the aspect, **STG BAG MAN**. When there's a dirty job to be done, Nex is your man.

Martin's adventure card is passed to the right to Jaben. His character, Tal, is a turian Spectre as part of his high background. Reading what happened in the first part of the adventure—and knowing that it isn't resolved yet—Jaben makes his contribution, adding that Tal spotted the bombs prior to their detonation and used his leadership to ensure no additional civilian lives were lost. He chooses the aspect **STAY VIGILANT**, as Tal has learned a valuable lesson in keeping an eye out for threats. Jaben passes Martin's card to the right, to Don.

Looking the adventure over and knowing that it's time to bring it to a conclusion, Don's character, Vala, helps capture the slavers before they get away. A keen investigator, Vala discovers that it may have been possible to disarm the bombs with her biotic powers. This mission leaves a bad taste in her mouth and she takes the aspect, **THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY** as a reminder.

The adventure card is returned to Martin who reads off the entirety of the adventure. Not only did all the characters pick up an aspect, but because Nex was secretly working for the STG at the time, both Tal and Vala were unaware that he was the one that preemptively set off the bomb. Intrigued by the two Spectres, Nex later (in a different adventure) offers his services.

INVOKES & COMPELS

When creating a character aspect you should always think of a positive way that you can invoke that aspect for a bonus—when does it come into play?—and, conversely, a negative way that aspect can be compelled against you. In this way you've set a great example of how an aspect benefits and hinders you. When you use the aspect positively (invoked) you gain a bonus to your roll or a reroll by spending a fate point. When your aspect is compelled to make the story more interesting you receive a fate point in return. If you don't like the compel or it complicates things too much for your character, you can spend a fate point to ignore the compel.

Sample Aspects

THROWN INTO THE FIRE

Invoke: When confronting a new situation and rising to the occasion to overcome

Compel: Her naivety blinds her to the situation that others would otherwise see through (“Why are the criminals running? I said ‘halt.’ Do we shoot them now?”)

STANDS BY HIS REPORT

Invoke: Convince people of his party's skill (if truthful)

Compel: Relying on bad or incomplete information (she is great at finding and disarming traps); stubborn when changing opinion

WORDS CAN BE WEAPONS

Invoke: Lying or intimidating people

Compel: When he needs people to trust him or feel at ease

TAL OWES ME ONE

Invoke: Help a friend or companion

Compel: Leap into a situation without considering the consequences or turn down a request for assistance from someone close to her

THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY

Invoke: Exercise creative thinking to provide an alternate solution to a problem

Compel: Miss an otherwise obvious twist in events (e.g. a trap) because it's too obvious

Example: Don decides that his character, Vala, is an asari **BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING**. That's his high concept, as he sees Vala as a wet-behind-the-ears initiate who was forced into service and is doing the best she can. She's not used to carrying a gun but does like showing off her badge!

Her trouble is the fact that she's a pure investigator, through-and-through. She just can't let a problem go and will **SEEK THE TRUTH, NO MATTER THE COST**. Even if every fiber of her being says a party is guilty she has to find that evidence to put them away. It's a big part of what makes the character go; she'll do a lot for her Trouble.

Vala's background is pretty easy, as it has to include her species and biotic powers. So she chooses **EMBRACE ETERNITY, DEFEND THE INNOCENT**. Both speak to her character: she uses her biotics to uncover the truth and until proven guilty will fight for someone until the bitter end.

Next, Don works with the other two players at the table to build their adventures. In the first episode things don't go particularly well for Vala's Spectre boss, Tal, and she ends up nursing him back to health on a distant world. Doing so created a bond between them, **TAL OWES HER ONE**, which comes into play for Vala to help when Tal—or a close companion—is in trouble or to resist the urge to leap in to his defense. Like any aspect, it can be invoked and compelled for good or bad reasons depending on the situation and what's cool to role-play.

Don's next episode goes even worse, as Val has a hard time dealing with some traps during a Spectre frontal assault. Some . . . deaths were involved, even though, afterwards, she figured out that **THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY**. This caused some friction with another of her team members, Nex, an assassin they have to work with on occasion. Val's final episode had her help her two companions and go undercover, something she wasn't prepared for. It ended well but she took away from the experience **THROWN INTO THE FIRE**; sometimes she has to just adapt to the situation and react. Conversely, her naivety can sometimes show itself, causing her to place herself in dangerous situations when compelled.

With all the character aspects completed, Don now has a very clear picture of Vala, her history, and how she's interacted with her other teammates. Equally, they also did adventures and have their own special aspects that speak to their characters!

Skill Tree

Skills determine how good you are doing a variety of things. It can represent intensive training, natural ability, or some unique capability that you came to understand all on your own. What's important to know is that not everyone can do everything well; you'll have to choose what things you'll be great at, which ones pretty good, and those that you simply stink at. One of the advantages of the Fate system is that as a campaign progresses you'll often have the ability to swap around—and raise—skills. So you don't need to feel locked into making the “best” decision right away. Do what makes the most sense for your character based on the aspects and background you've put together thus far.

Mass Effect uses a skill tree methodology where skills are arranged (purchased) in **skill columns**; to purchase a skill at a certain level you must first purchase all the skills underneath it to form a column. For example, a Good (+3) skill must have a Fair (+2) and an Average (+1) skill underneath it. To raise that skill later to Great (+4) requires another skill at Good (+3) to hold the new skill up.

A complete list of skills and their descriptions is found in its own chapter, **Skills**, on page 72.

SKILL PACKAGES

Depending on the power level of your game (page 22), your character gets between 20 and 35 skill points to spend, plus 1 to 3 free skill stunts. Also, you cannot purchase any skill during character creation higher than the defined power level (skill cap). Once your GM has defined your game's power level, chose a package from the list below or freely spend the points yourself, keeping in mind the rules for the aforementioned skill columns.

Normal

You have 20 points at this level to spend. You can be really good at one thing or spread yourself out a bit more to be a jack-of-all-trades. You get one free stunt and one free skill stunt.

Well-Rounded: 11 total skills: 3 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Focused: 10 total skills: 1 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 4 at Average (+1).

Specialist: 8 total skills: 2 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 2 at Fair (+2), 2 at Average (+1).

Veteran

You have 25 points at this level to spend. You can be really good at two things or have a broad breadth of skill with a little effort. You get two free stunts and two free skill stunts.

Experienced: 13 total skills: 4 at Good (+3), 4 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Broad Specialist: 14 total skills: 1 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 4 at Fair (+2), 7 at Average (+1).

Tactical Specialist: 12 total skills: 2 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Hardcore

With 30 points to spend you've got no trouble in being skilled in a variety of areas. You're well trained and it shows. You get two free stunts and two free skill stunts.

I've Seen a Bit of Everything: 15 total skills: 5 at Good (+3), 5 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Don't Ask, Because I'm Not Telling: 14 total skills: 2 at Great (+4), 3 at Good (+3), 4 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Laser Focused: 12 total skills: 3 at Great (+4), 3 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 3 at Average (+1).

Spectre: 10 total skills: 2 at Superb (+5), 2 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 2 at Fair (+2), 2 at Average (+1).

Insane

At 35 points there's nothing you're not great at. Your enemies will be probably equally adept so don't be afraid to push the skill cap. You get three free stunts and three free skill stunts.

Mastered It All: 19 total skills: 5 at Good (+3), 6 at Fair (+2), 8 at Average (+1).

I'm The Best At What I Do: 17 total skills: 3 at Great (+4), 3 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 8 at Average (+1).

Shepard Loyalist: 15 total skills: 1 at Superb (+5), 2 at Great (+4), 3 at Good (+3), 4 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Reaper Killer: 14 total skills: 2 at Superb (+5), 2 at Great (+4), 2 at Good (+3), 3 at Fair (+2), 5 at Average (+1).

Example: Daniel looks over the group and the type of game he's wanting to run. He wants the characters to be semi-experienced Spectres; not the best like Saren, but able to hold their own. Looking at the power levels he chooses **Veteran** as a good starting point. Martin likes to be good at what he does and what he does is shoot people dead. He selects **Tactical Specialist** to get two Great (+4) skills, one of which will be Guns!



Character Creation Flowchart

		Normal	Veteran	Hardcore	Insane
1	Determine Power Level	Refresh 6	7	8	10
		Skill Points 20	25	30	35
		Skill Cap Great (+4)	Great (+4)	Superb (+5)	Superb (+5)
		Free Stunts 1	2	2	3
		Free Skill Stunts 1	2	2	3
2	Select Speices	Asari (page 32), Drell (page 39), Human (page 41), Krogan (page 44), Quarian (page 51), Salarian (page 58), or Turian (page 62)			
		<i>Deduct species cost from starting Refresh</i>			
3	Create Aspects	Determine High Concept , Trouble , and Background (page 23)			
4	Adventure One	Describe an adventure in a few sentences that your character is the star of. Create an aspect that relates to the adventure and pass to the player on the right (page 24).			
5	Adventure Two	Build off another character's starting adventure and how your character was involved. Add to the adventure but do not complete it. Create an aspect that reflects your character's involvement (page 24).			
6	Adventure Three	Build off another character's starting adventure and how your character was involved. Complete that adventure. Create an aspect that reflects your character's involvement (page 25).			
7	Select Skills	Choose skills (page 72) and stack in supporting columns. No skill can exceed the Skill Cap (above). Use pre-built skill packages as examples, if necessary (page 27).			
8	Select Stunts	Choose any power stunts (page 118) for your character using your free allotment first. These stunts can also be used for skill stunts. <i>Beyond free allotment, deduct stunt costs from starting Refresh</i>			
9	Select Skill Stunts	Choose skill stunts (page 98) for your character using your free allotment first. Skill stunts may not be used to purchase powers. <i>Beyond free allotment, deduct skill stunt costs from starting Refresh</i>			
10	Final Steps	Choose starting equipment (page 198). Remaining Refresh becomes character's starting Fate (minimum 1 required).			

CHAPTER 3

SPECIES





We've told you the basics of the game system, now its time to apply what you've learned and create your first *Mass Effect* character. It can be inspired by the computer games, your own idealized version of Commander Shepard, or that plucky character who pulls themselves out of nothing to stand amongst the greatest heroes of the stars. The choices yours!

Choosing Your Species

The first thing you'll need to do is pick a starting species. Now there are many species available for play in the game, but some are better suited for a "well performing" group. With your GM's permission and a strong character concept you could even choose to make something entirely unique. It's up to you. Out of the gate, however, the standard species in *Mass Effect* are:

-  **Asari**
-  **Drell**
-  **Humans**
-  **Krogan**
-  **Quarian**
-  **Salarian**
-  **Turian**

Each species includes a detailed writeup so you can be familiar with their customs, origins, and mannerisms. In addition, each species has a refresh cost; this is the amount of your starting refresh (page 22) that you must reduce to select this species. You can never start the game with less than 1 refresh. Some species have optional aspects that you may elect to take if you are willing to incur the additional cost.

Every species also has an aspect associated with it, as discussed in the previous chapter on **Making a Character**. This aspect represents the fundamental parts of the species that help you identify with the character.

Asari

The asari, native to the planet Thessia, are often considered the most powerful and respected sentient species in the galaxy, and are known for their elegance, diplomacy, and biotic aptitude. This is partly due to the fact that the asari were among the earliest races to achieve interstellar flight after the Protheans, and the first to discover and settle the Citadel.

A mono-gender race, the asari are distinctly feminine in appearance and possess maternal instincts. Their unique physiology, expressed in a millennia-long lifespan and the ability to reproduce with a partner of any gender or species, gives them a conservative yet convivial attitude toward other races. Favoring compromise and cooperation over conflict, the asari were instrumental in proposing and founding the Citadel Council and have been at the heart of galactic society ever since.

The asari were the first species to discover the Citadel. When the Salarians arrived, it was the asari who proposed the establishment of the citadel council to maintain peace throughout the galaxy. Since then, the asari have served as the mediators and centrists of the Council.



Embrace Eternity (Species Aspect)

The asari are exceptionally long lived and have outlooks that lend themselves to distant and wise thinking, sought after as consorts. Amongst most species, the asari are considered beautiful and desirable, in part due to their heightened sensuality. Their long life also holds them ripe within the grasp of beauty for hundreds of years.

Natural Biotic (-2)

Asari control of their nervous systems for the purpose of merging themselves with others to mate allows them to be talented biotics as well as gives them limited ability to telepathically meld with others during the embrace. Asari gain an innate ability to use the Biotics skill and receive a +1 to their skill rolls and access to biotic powers found in Chapter 4. As such, an asari may never use biotic implants (bio-amps).

Ardat-Yakshi (-1) (Optional)

The character is a pureblood, doomed to the sirens call of the embrace when mating to take the other's life. In doing so, the Ardat-Yakshi gains some measure of power and revitalization as well. Openly displaying this condition is cause for execution by asari, or at best, sequestering at an asari monastery. After each embrace during an adventure, receive a +1 bonus to all Biotics rolls for the duration of said adventure, ignoring the skill cap.

Heightened Reflexes (-1) (Optional)

Because of their situational awareness when moving as part of another activity, asari may move one additional zone without taking the -1 penalty for a supplemental action.

An all female race, the asari reproduce through a form of parthenogenesis. Each asari can attune her nervous system to that of another individual of any gender—and of any species—to reproduce. This capability has led to unseemly and inaccurate rumors about asari promiscuity.

Asari can live for over 1,000 years, passing through three stages of life. In the Maiden stage, they wander restlessly, seeking new knowledge and experience. When the Matron stage begins, they “meld” with interesting partners to produce their offspring. This ends when they reach the Matriarch stage, where they assume the roles of leaders and councilors.

BIOLOGY

A typical asari individual has a blue to purple complexion; the gas giant Sharblu was named after a famous asari soprano with a distinctive skin tone that resembled the planet's atmosphere. Some asari can also have a teal complexion, but this seems to be a rarity. Many asari have facial markings, which are unique color patterns that vary for every asari. Some of these facial markings are associated with eyebrows by humans, but the asari do not think of the markings as such themselves. In the place of head hair, asari possess semi-flexible, cartilage based scalp crests that grow into shape. These structures are rigid, and are not flexible as some may be led to believe. Asari also have a robust cellular regenerative system; while they do not heal faster than other species, they are known to reach over 1,000 years of age. Asari blood is deep purple.

There is some conflicting information regarding the gender of the asari. Though they resemble females, at least to humans, asari are non-gender specific, with no concept of gender differences. Their species is considered “mono-gendered”—male and female have no real meaning to them—and is a matter of some discussion amongst non-asari. Despite this, the Codex states that the asari are an all-female race, and the Galactic Codex: Essentials Edition 2183 explains that “while asari have only one gender, they are not asexual like single-celled life—all asari are sexually female.”

However asari gender is defined, they are innately different from humans, for asari can mate and successfully reproduce with any other gender or species. Although they have one gender, they are not asexual. An asari provides two copies of her own genes to her offspring, which is always an asari, regardless of the species or sex of the “father,” and in the case that the offspring is of two asari, the father is the one who does not give birth. The second set of genes is altered in a unique process called melding, also known as the “the embrace.”

During melding, an asari consciously attunes her nervous system to her partner’s, sending and receiving electrical impulses directly through the skin. A common phrase used before melding is “embrace eternity,” presumably to help focus the partner’s mind. Effectively, the asari and her partner briefly become one unified nervous system. This unique means of reproduction is the reason asari are all talented biotics. Their evolved ability to consciously control nerve impulses is very similar to biotic training. The partner can be another asari or an alien of any gender. However, since the asari began encountering other sentient species, non-asari mates have become preferred for the diversity they provide. This reproductive process can lead to some confusion among non-asari, who might expect offspring with “mixed” genes. However, the offspring is always 100% asari as no DNA is taken from the partner, but is rather used as a “map” to randomize the genes of the offspring.

An asari’s melding ability extends to a mental connection as well, which can be considered the true union between an asari and her partner. It allows the asari to explore her partner’s genetic heritage and pass desirable traits on to any offspring. During mating an asari and her partner share memories, thoughts, and feelings. It is also possible for an asari to meld with another for the sole purpose of transferring thoughts, without reproduction. This technique is used sparingly by most asari due to the uncomfortable feeling it can inspire in their partners. The ordeal can be extremely intense and debilitating.

Asari pass through three climacteric life stages, marked by biochemical and physiological changes:

The Maiden stage begins at puberty and is marked by the drive to explore and experience. Most young asari are curious and restless, and it is not uncommon for many to try their hand at dancing in bars or working as mercenaries during this time.

The Matron stage of life begins around the age of 350, though it can be triggered earlier if the individual melds frequently. This period is marked by a desire to settle in one area and raise children.

The Matriarch stage begins around 700 years of age, or earlier if the individual melds rarely. Matriarchs become active in their community as sages and councilors, dispensing wisdom from centuries of experience. Their knowledge and guidance may be one reason why Matriarchs are rarely seen outside asari space.

However, it should be noted that each stage can be started whenever an asari feels that she has reached the correct level of maturity. While each stage of life is marked by strong biological tendencies, individuals do make unexpected life choices. For example, there are Maidens who stay close to home rather than explore, Matrons who would rather work than build a family, and Matriarchs who have no interest in community affairs.

HISTORY

The asari arose on Thessia, a rich world with abundant quantities of element zero that caused much of life on Thessia to exhibit biotic tendencies. Instrumental to the rise of asari civilization was the intervention of the Protheans. Upon discovering the asari, the Protheans crafted the guise of Athame, a benevolent goddess who imparted gifts of wisdom to the asari through her guides Janiri and Lucen, a deception that allowed the Protheans to rapidly accelerate asari development. The Protheans also genetically altered the asari to grant them biotic capabilities, and defended Thessia from an asteroid strike and the resource-hungry oravores.

When the Protheans departed, they left a single beacon on Thessia, around which the asari later built a lavish temple devoted to Athame. This beacon contained Vendetta, a Prothean VI, and over the following centuries was the source of countless technological advances that allowed the asari to eventually become the most powerful race in the galaxy. The beacon's existence became a closely-held state secret, as its revelation would have discredited the virtually universal belief that the asari attained such heights on their own merit. By 2183 CE, few outside the highest echelons of the asari government were aware of the part the Protheans played in asari history.

Forming the Citadel Council

The asari were the first contemporary race to achieve spaceflight and discover the mass relay network. When they found the Citadel in 580 BCE, the asari also encountered the keepers, whose mute assistance enabled them to quickly settle on the station and learn how to operate its systems. Sixty years later, the salarians made first contact with the asari, and together the two species agreed to found the Citadel Council in 500 BCE, a galactic governing body that would come to unite dozens of species. In later years, the asari continued to explore the galaxy and welcomed several other species to the burgeoning galactic community.

The Reaper War

During the Reaper invasion in 2186 CE, the asari refrained from supporting the other races in the war as they were reluctant to take resources away from the defense of their own worlds. Despite this caution, the Reapers tore through the asari defenses and deployed forces throughout asari space. Asari hit-and-run tactics managed to slow the Reaper advance, if but for a time.

Desperate, the asari government authorized their Councilor to reveal the existence of the Prothean beacon concealed in the Temple of Athame on Thessia to in the hopes that it would provide the key to completing the Crucible, the galaxy's only means of defeating the Reapers. Thessia was assaulted by Reaper forces, the first time the asari homeworld had been attacked since the Rachni Wars, and swiftly fell.

Out of options, the asari finally joined the Allied war effort, providing numerous resources to bolster the Allied fleets and complete the Crucible. Asari forces went on to fight alongside the other Allied races in the final confrontation with the Reapers over Earth.

CULTURE

Because of their long lifespan, asari tend to have a "long view" not common in other races. When they encounter a new species or situation, the asari are more comfortable with an extended period of passive observation and study than immediate action. They are unfazed that some of their investments or decisions may not pay off for decades or centuries. Matriarchs can seem to make incomprehensible decisions, but their insight is evident when their carefully-laid plans come to fruition. In interstellar relations, this long view manifests in the unspoken policy of centrism. The asari instinctively seek to maintain stable balances of economic, political, and military power.

Traditionally, asari spread their influence through cultural domination and intellectual superiority. They invite new species of advanced development to join the galactic community, knowing that their ideals and beliefs will inevitably influence the existing culture. The asari tend toward communal, consensus attitudes among themselves too: for example, they prefer to live in shared spaces aboard starships even if there are alternatives available.

Asari believe that their offspring acquire the best qualities of the "father" from the melded genes, but evidence is anecdotal. They frown upon intraspecies conception, since genetic traits and cultural insight is gained from mating outside their species, so it's considered wasteful for asari to reproduce together. The results of such unions are occasionally referred to

as “purebloods,” a great insult among contemporary asari. A rare genetic defect known as Ardat-Yakshi, which makes asari destroy the partner’s mind during melding, occurs much more frequently among the daughters of purebloods.

Asari are well aware they tend to be attractive, and are comfortable expressing their sexuality, as can be witnessed in places like Chora’s Den or Afterlife with asari erotic dancers. Young males of other races tend to have a fascination with asari.

Ardat-Yakshi

Ardat-Yakshi (meaning “Demon of the Night Winds” in an old asari dialect) is a rare genetic condition in asari, specifically affecting their nervous systems. Although the condition does not harm the asari, during mating the Ardat-Yakshi’s nervous system completely overpowers and dominates that of her mate’s, causing hemorrhaging in the victim’s brain, and ultimately death in extreme cases. As a result, the Ardat-Yakshi becomes smarter, stronger, and deadlier after each encounter. Ardat-Yakshi also have the innate ability to dominate the minds of others. Less severe cases that can demonstrate some measure of self-control are supposedly more common, including up to 1% of the population.

The condition is impossible to identify until the asari reaches maturity, by which time it is too late to correct. When diagnosed, afflicted asari are given a choice: live in isolation or be executed. The asari do this to the Ardat-Yakshi because it is an addictive condition; they feel compelled to mate, and the compulsion grows stronger each time they succeed. While it is not known how much the Ardat-Yakshi’s strength increases after each mating—or whether the victim makes any difference—continuous use of their condition over centuries allowed them to match the power and experience of comparable Matriarchs, despite the 500 year difference between them.

Ardat-Yakshi are a disgrace to the asari culture. It is suspected that this condition is what lies at the root of the asari prejudice against purebloods. The condition is as old as the asari species, and that it appears only among purebloods.

Because of their natural sensuality and ability to mate with any species, asari are sometimes rumored to be promiscuous. In fact, asari have to accept that if they mate outside their own species, they will almost inevitably outlive their partner (with the notable exception of the krogan, who have a similarly immense longevity). Therefore, they have had to apply their philosophical long view to relationships as well, savoring the time they spend with their partners rather than focusing on their inevitable loss.

The asari celebrate the springtime fertility ritual Janiris, named for the goddess Athame’s guide Janiri, which marks the start of the new year. During this time, they create wreaths of flowers and distribute them among their friends and loved ones. As is the case with the holidays of some other Citadel species, the celebration of Janiris has been adopted by other species that operate in Citadel space.

A few asari abandon all but a few personal possessions to become justicars, members of an ancient order of asari adhering to a strict code. Justicars operate inside of asari space correcting injustices, often through harsh means, including death. It is rare for a justicar to leave asari space as it could cause a diplomatic incident with other species.

Economy

The asari possess the largest single economy in the galaxy. They have extensive trade and social contacts. Craft guilds, such as those within the cities Serrice and Armali, hold a virtual monopoly on advanced biotic technology. Given their political influence, an embargo by the asari would prove disastrous to the Alliance.

Religion

The pantheistic mainstream asari religion is siari, which translates roughly as “All is One.” The faithful agree on certain core truths: the universe is a consciousness, every life within it is an aspect of the greater whole, and death is a merging of one’s spiritual energy back into greater universal consciousness. Siarists don’t specifically believe in reincarnation; they believe in spiritual energy returning to the universal consciousness upon death will eventually be used to fill new mortal vessels.

Siari became popular after the asari left their homeworld and discovered their ability to embrace with nearly any form of life. This ability is seen as proof that all life is fundamentally similar. Siari priestesses see their role as promoting unity between disparate shards of the universe’s awareness.

Before the rise of siari pantheism, asari religions were as diverse as their political opinion. The strongest survivor of those days is the monotheistic religion worshipping the goddess Athame. Like the asari, the goddess cycles through the triple aspects of maiden, matron, and matriarch. Asari often swear “by the goddess,” though this may be a cultural legacy rather than reflecting an individual’s belief.

GOVERNMENT

The asari came late to the concept of world government. For centuries, their homeworld of Thessia was dotted with loose confederacies of great republican cities. The closest Earthly equivalent would be the ancient Mediterranean city-states. Since the asari culture values consensus and accommodation, there was little impetus to form larger principalities. Rather than hoard resources, the Asari bartered freely. Rather than attack one another over differing philosophies, they sought to understand one another.

Only in the information age did the city-states grow close. Communication over internet evolved into an electronic democracy. Asari have no politicians or elections, but a free-wheeling, all-inclusive legislature that citizens can participate in at will. Policy debates take place at all hours of the day, in official chat rooms and forums moderated by specially-programmed virtual intelligences. All aspects of policy are open to plebiscite at any time. In any given debate, the asari tend to lend the most credence to the opinions of any Matriarchs present, nearly always deferring to the experience of these millennia-old women.



In modern times, the asari normally act as the diplomatic arm of the Citadel Council, and asari exploration efforts have discovered many races over the years. In approximately 200 BCE, the asari made first contact with the elcor and played a key role in helping them establish a regular trade route to the Citadel. In 2184 CE, the asari cruiser *Azedes* encountered the pre-spaceflight raloi, who were officially welcomed into the galactic community a year later.

Achieving consensus through public debate may take too long in a crisis. In cases where prompt, decisive action is required, the asari defer to the wisdom of local matriarchs.

MILITARY

The asari military resembles a collection of tribal warrior bands with no national structure. Each community organizes its own unit as the locals see fit, and elect a leader to command them. Units from populous cities are large and well-equipped, while those from farm villages may be only a few women with small arms. There is no uniform; everyone wears what they like. The asari military is not an irregular militia, however; those who serve are full-time professionals.

The average asari huntress is in the maiden stage of her life and has devoted 20-30 years studying the martial arts. Asari choose to be warriors at a young age, and their education from that point is dedicated to sharpening their mind and body for that sole purpose. When they retire, they possess an alarming proficiency for killing.

Huntresses fight individually or in pairs, depending on the tactics preferred in their town. One-on-one, a huntress is practically unbeatable, possessing profound tactical insight, a hunter's eye, and a dancer's grace and alacrity. Biotics are common enough that some capability is a requirement to be trained as a huntress; lack of biotic talent excludes a young asari from military service.

While fluid and mobile, asari can't stand up in a firestorm the way a krogan, turian, or human could. Since their units are small and typically lack heavy armor and support weapons, they are almost incapable of fighting a conventional war, particularly one of a defensive nature. So asari units typically undertake special operations missions. They are adept at ambush, infiltration, and assassination, demoralizing and defeating their enemies through intense, focused guerrilla strikes. Asari huntresses were among the first individuals to be chosen as Spectres and played a key role in the Krogan Rebellions.

As a popular turian saying puts it, "The asari are the finest warriors in the galaxy. Fortunately, there are not many of them." Despite this, the asari military is still very large.

The asari possess one of the most powerful navies in the galaxy. The asari navy had 21 dreadnoughts in 2183 CE, including the *Destiny Ascension*, a formidable warship boasting almost as much firepower as the rest of the asari fleet combined and the flagship of the Citadel Fleet. Despite the considerable force their numerous dreadnoughts can bring to bear, the asari prefer using fleets composed mainly of frigates and fighters, embodying their hit-and-run mindset with a nimble swarm rather than a slower collection of vessels.

Weapons developed by the asari include the Acolyte heavy pistol and Disciple shotgun. The Acolyte excels at stripping enemy shields and barriers, but is less effective against armor; the shooter's biotics are expected to make up for that shortcoming. The Disciple uses shells packed with microscale submunitions to deal staggering amounts of damage, stunning even shielded enemies.

Notable units of the asari military include the Second Fleet, Sixth Fleet, Serrice Guard, and Armali Sniper Unit.

Drell

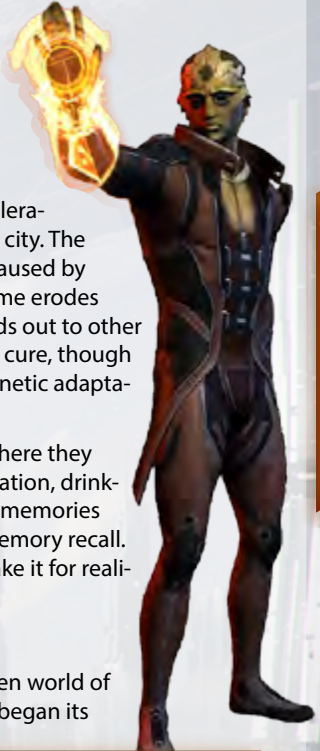
Drell are omnivorous reptile-like humanoids with an average lifespan of 85 galactic standard years. Drell appearance is very similar to asari and humans, but their muscle tissue is slightly denser, giving them a wiry strength. They appear to have five fingers on each hand, although the ring and middle fingers are fused. Their skin is infused with a venom mild enough to be served in drinks, and may cause mild hallucinations on "oral contact." They also have two sets of eyelids, akin to the nictitating membrane possessed by certain animals such as reptiles. The inner lid is milky-white and closes from the left and right, while the outer lid is black and closes from top and bottom. Much like humans or asari, drell possess the ability to shed tears.

Because the drell ancestors emerged from arid, rocky deserts, the humid, ocean-covered hanar homeworld of Kahje proved tolerable only when the drell stayed inside a climate-controlled dome city. The leading cause of death for drell on Kahje is Kepral's Syndrome, caused by cumulative long-term exposure to a humid climate. This syndrome erodes the ability of drell lungs to take in oxygen, and eventually spreads out to other organs. It is noncommunicable, and there is currently no known cure, though leading hanar scientific authorities are working on creating a genetic adaptation.

The drell possess eidetic memory, an adaptation to a world where they must remember the location of every necessary resource (vegetation, drinkable water, and prey migration paths) across vast distances. The memories are so strong that an external stimulus can trigger a powerful memory recall. These recalls are so vivid and detailed that some drell may mistake it for reality. This process can be involuntary.

HISTORY

The drell ancestors emerged from dry, rocky deserts on the barren world of Rakhana. Eight centuries ago, the already-arid drell homeworld began its



Species

Drell (-1 or -2 Refresh)

Eidetic Scorpion (Species Aspect)

As a cold blooded species, the drell need external heat or sources to regulate their body temperature. Failure to do so can cause them great discomfort. Conversely, drell excel in arid climates and their bodies have adapted to compensate and thrive.

The drell ability to recall with perfect clarity can be both a great boon or a great curse. In the case of the latter, a drell's involuntary recall could hinder them greatly in an inopportune time if reminded of some previous life event. Of course, remembering details from the past with absolute clarity also allows the drell to leverage their body's life experiences.

Crystal Clarity (-1)

You occasionally gain insights and detailed recollections from previous experiences that provide inspiration. Once per scene, explain as you leverage this knowledge to your advantage to receive a +1 bonus to any skill roll.

Predatory Reflexes (-1) (Optional)

When moving as part of another activity, Drell may move one additional zone without taking the -1 penalty for a supplemental action. Drell also gain +1 to Alertness rolls and when determining initiative.

swift descent into lifelessness due to disastrous industrial expansion. At the time, the drell lacked interstellar flight capacity, and with their population bursting at eleven billion, they faced certain doom. It was around two centuries ago that the hanar made first contact with the drell race. In the following ten years, the hanar would transport a total of 375,000 drell to the hanar homeworld, Kahje. The remaining billions left on Rakhana would perish on their dying planet, warring against each other for diminishing resources. The drell now thrive co-existing with the hanar and have been a part of the galactic civilization for roughly two centuries. The debt of gratitude that the drell owe the hanar is referred to as the Compact, which the drell fulfill by taking on tasks that the hanar find difficult, such as combat. Any drell may refuse to serve, but as being requested to serve is a great honor, few turn down the offer.

CULTURE

Most drell are content to live on Kahje. They are afforded every opportunity to thrive by the hanar, yet some outsiders and even some hanar regard the drell as second class citizens. However it is quite the opposite, they have integrated themselves into every level of hanar society as respected, productive citizens.

Those who leave Kahje tend to be adventurers. These solitary drell travelers often seek out new species elsewhere, and in turn adopt that species' culture. Such drell number in the thousands, and are scattered across the galaxy, tending towards quiet, integrated lives.

Some drell grow a close, personal relationship with the hanar. So much so that the hanar will even tell the drell their "soul name." Drell have adapted to communication with hanar by getting implants in their eyes to allow them to observe the bioluminescence the hanar use for communication. For example, this may allow a drell to see ultraviolet light as a silvery color, though might lose differentiation between colors at the opposite end of the spectrum, such as the difference between dark red and black.

Religion

Most drell are deeply religious, believing that they have souls separate from their bodies. They see death as a departure from the body, and they also state that a person's body and soul form a Whole. When the soul is traumatized or otherwise disrupted, or the body is ill or injured, a person is no longer Whole. They also believe that their body can be directed as a separate entity from themselves. The drell religion is also polytheistic, with the drell having multiple gods whom they pray to in varying situations. This religion included at least three gods: Amonkira, Lord of Hunters; Arashu, Goddess of Motherhood and Protection; and Kalahira, Goddess of Oceans and Afterlife.

Many of the older traditions of the drell have begun to die out. The younger generations no longer believe the old ways of their ancestors can help them now, with so many other ways to interpret one's place in the universe. Many drell have embraced the hanar Enkindlers or the asari philosophies.



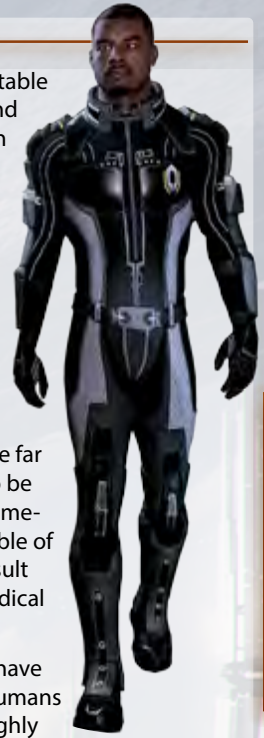
Human

Humans, from the planet Earth, are the newest sentient species of notable size to enter the galactic stage and are the most rapidly expanding and developing. They independently discovered a Prothean data cache on Mars in 2148, and the mass relay networks shortly thereafter.

BIOLOGY

Humans have a fairly robust physiology. Their internal makeup and reproductive processes are typical of most bipedal mammals, and their size and proportions give the appearance of being strong, fast and agile. In comparison to the Council races, humans are roughly physically on par with turians (as a human in or around peak physical condition can overwhelm a similarly fit turian, making them near equals in a hand-to-hand combat situation), and less agile than asari (whom they closely resemble), though fit human males are likely to be far stronger than the average asari. Humans would appear on average to be stronger than salarians but not as fast, due to the extremely elevated metabolisms of the latter. Like most organic races, humans are also capable of producing biotic individuals. All cases of biotics in humans are the result of pre-natal exposure to element zero, which carries a high risk of medical complications.

Humans can live to about 150 years, and recent medical advances have eradicated almost all known diseases that afflict them. However, as humans only emerged on the galactic stage within the last thirty years, it is highly likely that the introduction of new technology into their society will greatly increase their average lifespan. Humans reach physical maturity at approximately eighteen years of age, at which point they have usually finished their academic education and either directly enter the workforce or begin training for a profession.



Humanity (0 to -2 Refresh)

Upstart Species (Species Aspect)

Many races resent the fact that humanity gained a seat on the council so soon after first contact. The batarians in particular clashed with human interests in the Verge, blaming them for depriving them of valuable resources. Because of this humans tend to be looked on negatively by the other species of the galaxy and viewed as aggressors after the events of the First Contact War.

As is their way throughout history, humans remain adaptable to most conditions and situations, overcoming obstacles through guile, power, or ingenuity.

Genetically Engineered (-2) (Optional)

While genetic engineering has been a long-practiced area of science amongst humanity for many centuries, it had fallen into disservice, primarily with the realization that humanity was not alone in the universe and "perfection" within that context was not possible. Minor tweaks to the genome have already eliminated most genetically-passed conditions and allow parents to tailor their child's eye or hair color prior to birth. However, some still practice genetic engineering at an invasive level: expanding mental and physical capabilities, neural responses, and even the addition of biotic controls. A character with this stunt receives a floating +1 bonus to a skill roll usable once per session as well as a permanent +1 skill point of their choosing which may exceed the campaign's maximum skill cap for power level (page 22).

It has been noted that humans are unusual in the galactic community because they have far greater genetic diversity compared to other species with more peaks and valleys. This makes human genetic material useful in biological experiments, as a control group.

HISTORY

Human space exploration began in earnest in the late 21st century. In 2069 CE, Armstrong Outpost in Shackleton Crater on Luna was founded as humanity's first extraterrestrial settlement. In 2103, the European Space Agency established Lowell City in Eos Chasma on Mars, paving the way for additional settlements and scientific outposts throughout Sol, such as Gagarin Station near Pluto, which was under construction by 2142.

In the early years, however, some were dissatisfied with the pace of official exploration, leading to a series of private ventures. In 2070, billionaire Victor Manswell began funding his own extrasolar colonization endeavor. The Manswell Expedition, as it became known, successfully launched five years later with 300 cryogenically-frozen colonists bound for the Alpha Centauri system, but communications with the expedition's ship were soon lost and the colonists classified as missing. The pre-FTL expedition was forgotten until 2186, when the colonists were discovered alive and well on a planet in Alpha Centauri by an asari exploration team.

Discovery of the Mass Relay

In 2148, human explorers on Mars uncovered a long-ruined Prothean observation post, with a surviving data cache that proved Protheans had studied Cro-Magnon humans millennia ago. While religions tried to assimilate this discovery into their doctrine, a global rush began to decipher the petabytes of data from the outpost. Discovering information on a mass relay orbiting Pluto, explorers managed to open the Charon Relay and discovered it led to Arcturus. With the help of the fledgling Systems Alliance, humans expanded to other systems, opening any mass relays they could find.

The First Contact War and Expansion

Humans first came to the attention of the galactic community after a brief but intense conflict with the turians, known by humans as the First Contact War, begun in 2157. The conflict began when the turians attacked a human fleet attempting to activate a dormant mass relay (illegal under Council law) and then occupied the human colony of Shanxi.

Led by Admiral Kastanie Drescher, the Second Fleet then launched a massive counter-attack, which caught the turians by surprise and expelled them from Shanxi. The conflict caught the attention of the Citadel Council, which wasted no time brokering a peace, thus introducing humans to the galactic community. As a consequence of the Alliance's swift and decisive action during the First Contact War, the Alliance became the representative and supranational governing body of humanity. Since then, humans have rapidly risen in prominence.

In 2165, humanity was granted an embassy on the Citadel in recognition of their growing power and influence in the galactic community. The timing of this achievement, less than a decade after first contact, caused some friction with other Citadel races who had waited decades for such recognition.

Humanity continued to expand to unclaimed star systems on the edge of Citadel space, which eventually led to competition with the batarians. When the batarians tried and failed to convince the Council to declare the Skyllian Verge "a zone of batarian interest," they closed their embassy and withdrew from Citadel space. Viewing humans as the cause of their fall from grace, batarians frequently came into conflict with human colonies, especially batarian slavers. Tensions between humans and batarians persist for decades.

The Eden Prime War

Humans were caught off-guard by the geth attack on Eden Prime, humanity's most prosperous colony, in 2183. Systems Alliance forces were involved in several operations against geth incursions into Alliance territory. The conflict between the Systems Alliance and geth later became known as the Eden Prime War, and culminated in the Battle of the Citadel, where a massive invasion fleet led by the flagship *Sovereign* tore through Citadel defenses. With the timely aid of the Alliance's Fifth Fleet, the geth were defeated. Thanks to their efforts in the Battle of the Citadel, humanity rises to a new level of prominence in the galaxy.

Vanishing Colonies

Less than two years after the Battle of the Citadel, contact with some human colonies in the Terminus Systems is lost. Investigations reveal that the colonies' inhabitants have completely disappeared, with no trace of what happened to them. The Systems Alliance does little to intervene and can offer no explanation for the disappearances. Humans on fringe colony worlds perceive this lack of action as an unwillingness to aid them, and begin to harbor resentment against the Alliance. The Alliance tries to rebuild trust through goodwill efforts, such as providing Horizon with new anti-starship defense turrets, but suspicion still lingers.

Eventually the colony abductions cease just as mysteriously as they began. While the Alliance publicly blames the abductions on Terminus Systems slaver rings, the fate of the thousands of missing colonists is never conclusively resolved.

The Reaper War

In 2186, the Reapers invade the galaxy through batarian space and storm human territory. Numerous human colonies go dark, but the nature of the threat remains unknown until the Reapers arrive at Earth. Their assault rapidly overwhelms the Alliance Navy and Earth's military forces. With Earth fallen, Admiral Steven Hackett orders the remaining Alliance forces to retreat. Throughout the war, the majority of human worlds remain under Reaper control as they begin their harvest. Millions of humans perish.

After the species of the galaxy unite to fight the Reapers and the Crucible is constructed, the Alliance leads the charge to take back Earth. As the galaxy's Allied Sword fleet engages the Reapers in Earth's orbit, Hammer ground forces land and coordinate with resistance forces led by Admiral David Anderson. The offensive suffers massive casualties, but succeeds in getting to the Citadel, which the Reapers had moved to Earth for safekeeping after learning of the Crucible. The Crucible is activated, saving the galaxy from the onslaught of the Reapers and the premature ending of the "cycle."

CULTURE

Humans are generally seen to be very intelligent, abnormally ambitious, highly adaptable, individualistic and thus, unpredictable. They have a powerful desire to advance and improve themselves, and do so with such assertion that the normally staid Council races have been taken aback by their restlessness and relentless curiosity. Their economy, while much smaller than any of the Council races, is very powerful relative to their size, and their military prowess is amongst the greatest in the galaxy, despite the fact that only 3% of humans volunteer for the Alliance military, a far smaller proportion than other races. Their ability to engage the turians in the First Contact War demonstrated graphically the potential of human military strength and is therefore a subject of concern for many races, who fear the consequences of another human-turian conflict.

Government

The Systems Alliance, which represents a majority of humans, has had an embassy on the Citadel since 2165. Many other species dislike their sudden ascendancy compared to their

status as relative newcomers on the galactic stage. Some species feel that humanity is overly expansive in its colonization efforts and aggressive attempts to advance its position in galactic affairs. It took other species centuries to achieve what humanity has done in decades.

Humans have also been doing what the Council could not: colonize planets in the Attican Traverse, the Skyllian Verge and along the borders of the Terminus Systems, all volatile regions where the Council has little authority. Human forces came into minor conflicts with the batarians over the Verge, which the batarians had been attempting to colonize themselves. When the batarians asked the Council to declare the Verge a “zone of batarian interest,” they were refused; in response, the batarians became a rogue state, blaming humans for depriving them of valuable resources, and human-batarian relations have been hostile ever since.

Unlike many species in Citadel space, humans have no close allies among the other races, though they are trade partners with the turians and asari. Without alliances or key political positions, humans have had to follow the edicts of the Council without having much influence on their decisions. Human ambassadors finally had their wishes answered when the first human was admitted into the Spectres, the Council’s elite operatives, and even further when they were given a seat on the Council. However, now that Humanity has a seat on the Council, they are able to influence the Council’s rulings, protect their own interests and have a say in the governing of Citadel space.

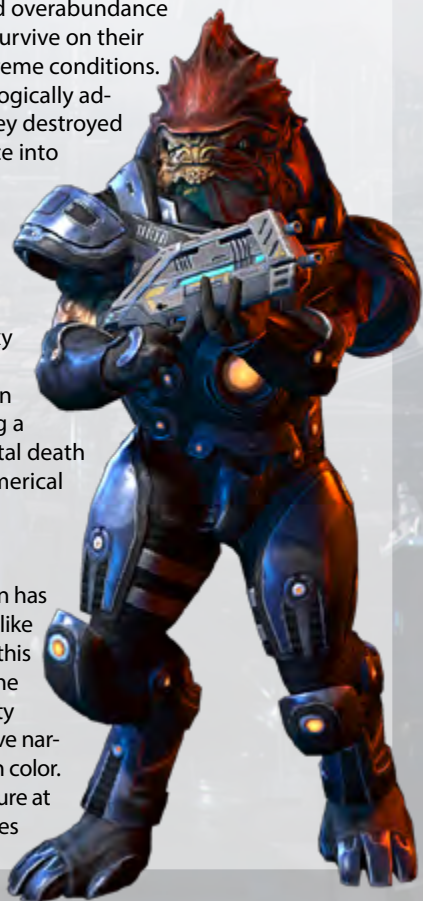
Krogan

The krogan are a species of large reptilian bipeds native to the planet Tuchanka, a world known for its harsh environments, scarce resources, and overabundance of vicious predators. The krogan managed to not only survive on their unforgiving homeworld, but actually thrived in the extreme conditions. Unfortunately, as krogan society became more technologically advanced, so did their weaponry. The end result is that they destroyed their homeworld in a nuclear war that reduced their race into primitive warring tribes.

With the help of the salarians, the krogan were “uplifted” into galactic society, and lent their numbers and military prowess to bring an end to the Rachni Wars. Ironically, after the rachni were eradicated, the rapidly-expanding krogan became a threat to the galaxy in turn, starting the Krogan Rebellions and forcing the turians to unleash the genophage. This genetic infection dramatically reduced fertility in krogan females, causing a severe drop in births secondary to prenatal and postnatal death and, ultimately, population, eliminating the krogan numerical advantage.

BIOLOGY

Due to the brutality of their surroundings, natural selection has played a significant role in the evolution of the krogan. Unlike most sentient species, krogan eyes are wide-set; on Earth this is common among prey animals, and in this case it gives the krogan 240-degree vision, giving them greater visual acuity and awareness of approaching predators. Krogan eyes have narrow pupils. Their irises may be red, green, amber, or blue in color. Prior to the genophage, krogan could reproduce and mature at an astonishing rate. Females are known to produce clutches of up to 1,000 fertilized eggs over the course of a year.



Krogan (-4 to -5 Refresh)

Built for War (Species Aspect)

A krogan's demeanor is well-suited for battle but little else. They rarely make friends, often offend, and spoil for a fight. Being calm and rational is not their first instinct, but instead to hit whatever annoys them. The krogan history of war and rapid colonization to even normally inhospitable worlds makes them resilient in most situations and to extreme environments.

Due to the genophage, most krogan have a short, bleak, outlook on life that colors their decision-making, thinking of the short term—or solely themselves. Krogan are not easily influenced and fulfill their commitments when made. Thus, they display a strong level of tenacity and rarely give up.

Great Strength (-1)

The high gravity and harsh environment of the Tuchanka has made krogans extremely strong. They gain a +1 to all Fight rolls. Roll Fight at +1 whenever using that skill in conjunction with grappling. This also allows you to inflict a Damage: 2 hit on an opponent as a supplemental action during a grapple for free.

Krogan Tough (-1 or -2)

All krogan may take an additional mild physical consequence and gain a stress box at a cost of 1 refresh. They may decide to improve this benefit even further and gain an additional stress box as well for an additional point of refresh.

Extraordinary Regeneration (-2)

Out of combat krogan recover physical consequences as if they were one level lower (a moderate recovers as if it were mild, etc.). Additionally, in combat, once per scene, a krogan may clear away a mild physical consequence with a supplemental action. No wound is permanent for krogan. Even extreme consequences will heal given enough time—usually a couple of years, but sometimes as fast as a few months. Krogan are also extremely long lived.

Their large shoulder humps store fluids and nutrients, enabling them to survive extended periods without food or water. A bigger shoulder hump is seen as a sign of high status, showing how successful an individual krogan is at hunting. Their thick hides are virtually impervious to cuts, scrapes or contusions, and they are highly resistant to environmental hazards, including toxins, radiation, and extreme heat and cold. Consequently their diets can include food and drink which would prove very dangerous to other species—a fact reflected in the krogan liquor of choice, ryncol, which is said to “hit aliens like ground glass.” Younger krogan have yellow or green markings on their hides. These markings darken to brown or tan over time, showing their age.

Krogan typically stand over 7 feet and weigh roughly one ton in armor. Biotic individuals are rare, though those who do possess the talent typically have strong abilities. The most amazing physiological feature of krogan biology is the multiple instances of major organs. These secondary (and where applicable, tertiary) systems are capable of serving as backups in the event of damage to the primary biological structures. They have, for example, two hearts, four lungs, and four testicles. Krogan also have a secondary nervous system using a neuro-conductive fluid, meaning they are almost impossible to paralyze. Krogan bleed a yellow or orange fluid when shot, which may be this fluid or actual blood.

Aside from redundant systems, the legendary krogan “blood rage” adds to the race’s reputation for being notoriously difficult to kill or incapacitate in normal combat scenarios. In this state, krogan become totally unresponsive to pain and will fight to the death regardless of injury level, with the side effect of reducing their capacity for logic and self-control.

Sheer physical hardiness means an individual krogan can expect to live for centuries. Krogan can live for well over a thousand years, as evidenced by Warlord Okeer, a veteran of the Krogan Rebellions who died (of decidedly unnatural causes) well over a thousand years after the Rebellions ended.

Despite their natural propensity for toughness, krogan do have physical weaknesses. According to Zaeed Massani, if one lodges a knife at a certain spot near the frontal plate on a krogan's head, the plate can be ripped off. It is apparently the one thing krogan do fear.

HISTORY

Ancient krogan society was once rich with cultural, architectural, and artistic accomplishments. However, the krogan birth rate exploded despite the natural limits of their predatory homeworld once they achieved industrialization. Technology made life “too easy” for them, so when they looked for new challenges they found those in each other. Wars were fought over dwindling resources as the krogan expanded.

Four thousand years ago, at the dawn of the krogan nuclear age, battles to claim the small pockets of territory capable of sustaining life escalated into full scale global war. Weapons of mass destruction were unleashed, transforming Tuchanka into a radioactive wasteland. The krogan were reduced to primitive warring clans struggling to survive a nuclear winter of their own creation, a state that continued until they were discovered by the salarians two thousand years later.

Rise of the Krogan

The krogan were liberated from their primitive state by the salarians, who uplifted the race by giving them advanced technology and relocating them to a planet not cursed with lethal levels of radiation, toxins, or deadly predators. The salarians even gave the krogan the means to stabilize Tuchanka's atmosphere by means of the Shroud.

But the salarian intervention was not without an ulterior motive. At the time the Citadel was engaged in a prolonged galactic war with the rachni, a race of intelligent space-faring insects. The salarians hoped the krogan would join the Citadel forces as soldiers to stand against an otherwise unstoppable foe. The plan worked to perfection: within two generations the rapidly breeding krogan had the numbers not only to drive back the advancing rachni, but the ability to endure the harsh conditions of the rachni worlds. They were able to pursue them to their home worlds, find the rachni queens, and eradicate the entire species.

For a brief period the krogan were hailed as the saviors of the galaxy and were given not only the conquered rachni worlds but other planets in Citadel space to colonize, in gratitude for their help. The Citadel Council even commissioned a statue for the Presidium—the Krogan Monument—to honor the krogan soldiers who died defending Citadel space.

But without the harsh conditions of Tuchanka to keep their numbers in check, the krogan population swelled to unprecedented numbers. Overcrowded and running out of resources, the krogan spread out to forcibly claim other worlds—worlds already inhabited by races loyal to the Citadel. There was always “just one more world” needed. The final straw was when the krogan began settling the asari colony of Lusia. When the Council ordered them to leave, Overlord Kredak, the krogan ambassador, stormed out of the Chambers, daring the Citadel races to take their worlds back. War broke out soon afterward.

Rebellion & Decline

The resultant Krogan Rebellions continued for nearly three centuries. The krogan sustained massive casualties, but their incredible birth rate kept their population steadily increasing. Victory seemed inevitable. In desperation, the Council turned to the recently discovered Turian Hierarchy for aid. The turians unleashed the genophage on the krogan home worlds:

a terrifying bio-weapon engineered by the salarians. The genophage caused near total infant mortality in the krogan species, with only one birth in every 1,000 producing live offspring.

No longer able to replenish their numbers, the krogan were forced to accept terms of surrender. For their role in quelling the Krogan Rebellions, the turians were rewarded with a seat on the Citadel Council. The krogan, on the other hand, still suffer from the incurable effects of the genophage.

Over the last millennium krogan numbers have steadily declined, leaving them a scattered and dying people. Faced with the certainty of their extinction as a species, most krogan have become individualistic and completely self-interested. They typically serve as mercenaries for hire to the highest bidder, though many still resent and despise the Citadel races that condemned them to their tragic fate.

Krogan of Today

Despite announcements about failed, krogan-funded research into the genophage by 2183, most krogan have not worked toward a cure as they are more interested in combat than science. Unless one is discovered and used, the extinction of the krogan seems inevitable.

In 2185, Mordin Solus explains that the krogan are in fact evolving to undo the damage of the genophage. To prevent overpopulation, Mordin's Special Tasks Group team created and applied a modified version of the genophage, which he claims will keep the population down but still allows for a viable population, indicating the krogan race isn't as doomed as they believe. Mordin states that both the original and new genophage were designed to stabilise the krogan birth rate at pre-industrial levels—one viable birth per thousand. Given the prodigious krogan birth rate, it would appear that the enormously violent nature of krogan culture is actually responsible for their dwindling numbers. Ironically, this means that if the krogan were not so convinced that they, as a species, are doomed, and consequently spent less time roaming the galaxy spoiling for a fight, their numbers might increase. They are essentially being killed by their own fatalism.

The Reaper War

In 2186, the Reapers invaded Earth, forcing the humans to look for allies, which included the krogan. The turian army needs the krogan to help them defend their homeworld of Palaven and the krogan agree, in exchange for a cure for the genophage.

CULTURE

The harsh krogan homeworld conditioned the krogan psychology for toughness just as it did the body. Krogan have always had a tendency to be selfish, unsympathetic, and blunt. Sometimes, when krogan disagree, one of them will head-butt the other to show dominance. They respect strength and self-reliance and are neither surprised nor offended by treachery. A krogan's worst insult is to say, "someone's not worth killing."

The weak and selfless do not live long. Krogan have powerful territorial instincts which serve them well in combat, but can create problems; when traveling on starships, for example, krogan find sharing quarters nearly impossible.

Most krogan trust and serve no one but themselves. This solitary attitude stems in part from a deep sense of fatalism and futility, a profound social effect of the genophage that caused krogan numbers to dwindle to a relative handful. Not only are they angry that the entire galaxy seems out to get them, the krogan are also generally pessimistic about their race's chances of survival. The surviving krogan see no point to building for the future; there will be no future. The krogan live with a generally violent and short-sighted attitude of personal gain.

Female krogan rarely leave their home worlds, focusing on breeding in an attempt to keep krogan numbers from declining too quickly. The few remaining fertile females who can carry



young to term are treated as prizes of war, to be seized, bartered or fought over. Recently, it has been noted that the females of the krogan species live in clans separate from that of the males. Envoys are sent out from the female clans to determine who amongst the males is worthy to visit the female clans. Due to the effects of the genophage and the lack of fertile females, this happens often and many male krogan sire children from one female. Krogan females also appear much more level-headed than males

Krogan children are raised within the females' camps. On occasion the females send them over to the males for training. If a male wishes to claim his offspring, he can request the right of parentage.

Marks of the krogan psyche past and present can be observed in their architecture and infrastructure. Ancient krogan built towering pyramidal edifices, gigantic monuments and cities, complete with interior paintings of what could be called art. Millennia later, the ruins haven't yet lost to the ravages of time and survived to remind the latter-day krogan of their glory days, although places like the "city of the ancients" were long-abandoned by then.

Every krogan building is huge and built to last. At the present day, even hospitals are built strong enough to withstand a bunch of krogan undergoing blood rage. Blocky ruins litter Tuchanka's surface, a portion of them still livable by krogan standards.

Religion

Krogan are not shown to have strong religious beliefs. The closest they come is to establish ritualistic burial grounds called the Hollows, where the skulls of their ancestors are displayed to remind them of "where we all come from, and where we all go." The Hollows are as sacred as any krogan place can be, and violence there is forbidden.

Ancient krogan deities include Vaul, a god who stood watch for the enemies of his pantheon. The planet Vaul is named for this god, and its moons are named for Vaul's myriad eyes and ears.

Krogan are also shown to believe in some form of afterlife. Several krogan mention a place called "the Void" where krogan go to die. Additionally, the planet Kruban takes its name from a mythological paradise in which honorable krogan warriors feast on the internal organs of their enemies.

Clans

Krogan are divided into numerous clans. Membership in a clan allows a krogan to own property, join the army and apply to serve under a battlemaster. Young krogan undergo a rite of passage that is overseen by a shaman respective to the clan the krogan wishes to join. In Clan Urdnot, this rite consists of battling various wild fauna on Tuchanka, ending with an encounter with a thresher maw. Merely surviving for five minutes is considered proof of worthiness, but killing the thresher maw increases the initiate's prestige and standing.

Few outsiders have seen a rite of passage take place, even though there are no rules in krogan tradition that state that a non-krogan can't help with the undertaking of the rite by acting as the participant's *krantt*. The rite of passage and all other rites and traditions are preserved by the clan shaman. The shaman must undergo lengthy and torturous rites to assume the position, and is required to give up his name. Because of this level of commitment, the shaman is one of the most respected members of a clan.

Known krogan clans:

Clan Drau: Drau Sorze is a "ru zad," or "judge," in the Republic of Ghurst on Tuchanka.

Clan Forsan: This clan's leader declared being hit by pyjak dung is grounds for executing the trader responsible for introducing them to Tuchanka.

Clan Ganar: Ganar Wrang, an exiled krogan battlemaster, founded the Blood Pack mercenary group.

Clan Gatatog: Led by Gatatog Uvenk on Tuchanka.

Clan Hailot: Clan leader Hailot Wrund controlled Garvug prior to the corporatist invasion in 2185.

Clan Jorgal: A clan known to have one of the longest krogan breeding lines.

Clan Jurdon: An enemy of Clan Urdnot on Tuchanka.

Clan Khel: Khel Burrum is a krogan competing at Pinnacle Station.

Clan Nakmor: A small clan located in the Kraddack Wastes; Warlord Nakmor Krall is a clan member.

Clan Quash: Quash Hurgott is a Blood Pack commander.

Clan Raik: Source of the word "Aralakh," meaning "Eye of Wrath," which became the common name used by the galaxy to refer to Tuchanka's star.

Clan Ravanor: The clan runs a mining operation on Tuchanka; Warlord Ravanor Tusk is a clan member.

Clan Talyth: A clan who projected to rebuild a dreadnought on the planet of Tuchanka with the help of Elis Valterus.

Clan Thax: The clan of krogan businessman Thax Vorak.

Clan Urdnot: Led by Urdnot Wrex, best known for being a warrior-companion to the human Spectre, Commander Shepard.

Clan Weyrloc: A defunct clan, eradicated for their experiments against humans and other krogan.

GOVERNMENT

After their defeat in the Rebellions, the very concept of krogan leadership was discredited. Where a warlord could once command enough power to bring entire solar systems to heel and become Overlord, these days it is rare for a single leader to have more than a thousand warriors swear allegiance to him. It is speculated that their instinctive aggression and territorial nature prevent the krogan from forming any kind of centralized government or parliament that is not based on fear or obedience.

The krogan homeworld of Tuchanka is divided into multiple nation-states, including the Republic of Ghurst, which was embroiled in a rebellion in 2185.

MILITARY

Traditional krogan tactics were built on attritional mass-unit warfare. Equipped with cheap, rugged gear, troop formations were powerful but inflexible. Command and control was very centralized; soldiers in the field who saw a target contacted their commanders behind the lines to arrange fire support.

Since the genophage, the krogan can no longer afford the casualties of the old horde attacks. The Battle Masters are a match for any ten soldiers of another species. To a Battle Master, killing is a science. They focus on developing clean, brute-force economy of motion that exploits their brutal strength to incapacitate enemies with a swift single blow of overwhelming power. This change of focus from mass-unit warfare to maximal efficiency has increased employment demand in the fields of security and "muscle for hire." Due to the unsavory reputation of the krogan, most of these jobs are on the far side of the law.

Battle Masters are not paragons of virtue but they do believe in being well-armed and equipped, preferably with a gun for each limb. They are callous and brutal, but methodical and disciplined. They use any means at their disposal to achieve their goals, no matter how reprehensible. Hostage-taking and genocide are acceptable means to ensure a quiet occupation with few krogan casualties.

Biotics are rare among the krogan, especially since the practice of surgically creating krogan biotics has been discontinued due to the high mortality rate. Those that exist are viewed with suspicion and fear. The krogan see this aura of fear as a useful quality for an officer, and often promote them. Combat drones and other high-tech equipment are likewise in short supply.

Krogan military doctrine has a different take on what “scouting and reconnaissance” means. While other races’ scouts prefer stealth and discretion in carrying out their tasks, krogan scouts instead opt to deal psychological warfare when they find the enemy by way of occasional harassment or intentionally exaggerating their numbers. The reasoning is that it is a lot easier to count enemy numbers when some of them get blown up.

Weapons developed by the krogan include the Graal Spike Thrower shotgun and Striker Assault Rifle. The Graal was designed specifically for hunting thresher maws, and so has predictably grisly effects when used on humanoid targets. The Striker is a fully-automatic weapon that fires high-impact explosive slugs with high recoil, making it a difficult weapon for non-krogan to keep on target despite it being designed with them in mind.

The krogan once possessed a powerful fleet that included many dreadnoughts. Since the end of the Krogan Rebellions, however, they have been prohibited from constructing warships. This ban is enforced by the Council Demilitarization Enforcement Mission arm of the Citadel Council, which maintains garrisoned outposts throughout the Krogan DMZ. Every few years, another krogan warlord violates the ban, but usually an alliance of rivals ends his dreams of hegemony before Citadel forces even have to fire a shot.

Relics of the Krogan Rebellions, such as defunct long range ground-to-space anti-ship batteries that dot Tuchanka’s surface, serve as monuments to the krogan’s past glory and military might, but have little practical value.

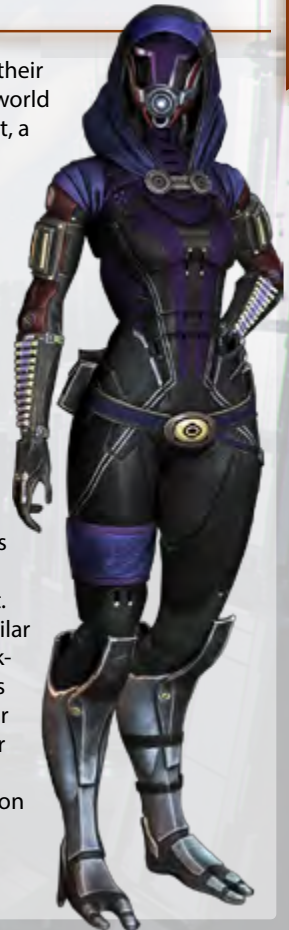
Quarian

The quarians are a nomadic species of humanoid aliens known for their skills with technology and synthetic intelligence. Since their homeworld Rannoch was conquered, the quarians live aboard the Migrant Fleet, a huge collection of starships that travel as a single fleet.

Approximately three hundred years before the events of 2183, the quarians created the geth, a species of rudimentary artificial intelligences, to serve as an efficient source of manual labor. However, when the geth gradually became sentient, the quarians became terrified of possible consequences and tried to destroy their creations. The geth won the resulting war and forced their creators into exile. Now the quarians wander the galaxy in a flotilla of salvaged ships, secondhand vessels, and recycled technology.

BIOLOGY

Quarians are generally shorter and of slighter build than humans. Quarians have an endoskeleton, lips, teeth, and two eyes with eyelids and tear ducts; they also have three thick fingers on both hands which include a thumb, an index finger, and a long finger, similar to the middle fingers for humans, as well as three toes on each foot. Quarian facial structure and hair actually makes them the most similar to humans in physical appearance. Their lower legs are bowed backwards significantly, compared to asari or humans. Aside from hands and legs, their general body shape and sexual dimorphism is similar to humans. Male quarians, however, appear to lack a third toe. Their ears or ear analogues differ in a noticeable fashion from those of humans, with references made to what passes for the quarian version of an ear. Also, like humans, quarian blood is red.



Quarian (-2 or -3 Refresh)

Those Damn, Thieving Quarrians! (Species Aspect)

The quarrians have not been accepted with open arms into the greater Citadel society. Many still remember the geth uprisings and look upon the quarrians with ill-trust because of it. Worse, their nomadic and unattached lifestyles have given rise to rumors of trickery and a tendency towards theft. Most quarrians are seen as the “refugee rabble” of the galaxy, moving from one port of call to the next.

A quarian’s environmental suit is their lifeline. While it protects them from inhospitable atmospheres, without it many pathogens would prove deadly to them due to their weakened immune system. A tear in a suit or damage during battle may not be immediately life-threatening, but can potentially cause them complications.

Quarian Tech Training (-2)

All quarrians receive intensive technical training as youths so they are able to do their part to maintain the fleet. This provides a +1 bonus to Systems rolls and the Tech Mastery power.

Heightened Reflexes (-1) (Optional)

When moving as part of another activity, quarrians may move one additional zone without taking the -1 penalty for a supplemental action.

The most distinguishing feature of quarian biology is their weak immune system, compounded by centuries of living in sterile environments. As a result, all quarrians by necessity dress in highly sophisticated enviro-suits, to protect them from disease or infection if they are injured. Their suits can be compartmentalized in the event of a tear or similar breach to prevent the spread of contaminants (similar to a ship sealing off bulkheads in the event of a hull breach). Along with their suits, quarrians often have extensive cybernetic augmentations integrated into their bodies to counteract degenerative organ failure. A quarian’s lifespan is roughly equal to a human’s, but is considerably less if infection breaks into the suit.

Quarian immune systems have always been relatively weak, as pathogenic microbes were comparatively rare in their homeworld’s biosphere. Furthermore, what few viruses and other microbes were native to their homeworld were often at least partly beneficial to them, giving them a symbiotic relationship with their environment. After living aboard the Migrant Fleet for generations, the quarrians’ immune systems have atrophied further still due to the years in the sterile environment of the Migrant Fleet. As such, quarrians are given various vaccinations and immunizations to help ward off disease. However, they prefer the safety of their suits even in clean environments and are reluctant to remove them without a good reason.

A quarian who wishes to remove their suit must take antibiotics, immuno-boosters, herbal supplements, or the like in order to do so safely, and even then there are inherent risks. As a result, physical acts of affection are difficult for quarrians, even for the purposes of reproduction. Ships in the Migrant Fleet often contain sterile rooms where quarrians can give birth or undergo medical procedures in relative safety, though there are always risks. The most intimate thing quarrians can do is link their suit environments. However, doing so guarantees a quarian will get sick, although they will usually adapt over time.

Like turians, the quarrians are a dextro-protein species of reverse chirality from humans and asari. The food of levo-protein races such as humans or asari is at best inedible and at worst poisonous, most likely triggering a dangerous allergic reaction. Quarrians who want to taste something (other than the refined edible paste issued to all who leave on their Pilgrimage) can eat specially purified turian cuisine, though the typical quarian diet is vegan, as livestock were found to possess an inefficient resource-to-calorie ratio when stored on the Migrant Fleet.

HISTORY

Somewhat sadly, the aspect of quarian history that they are most known for is the creation of the geth, the loss of their homeworld, and the scourge that spread outward from it.

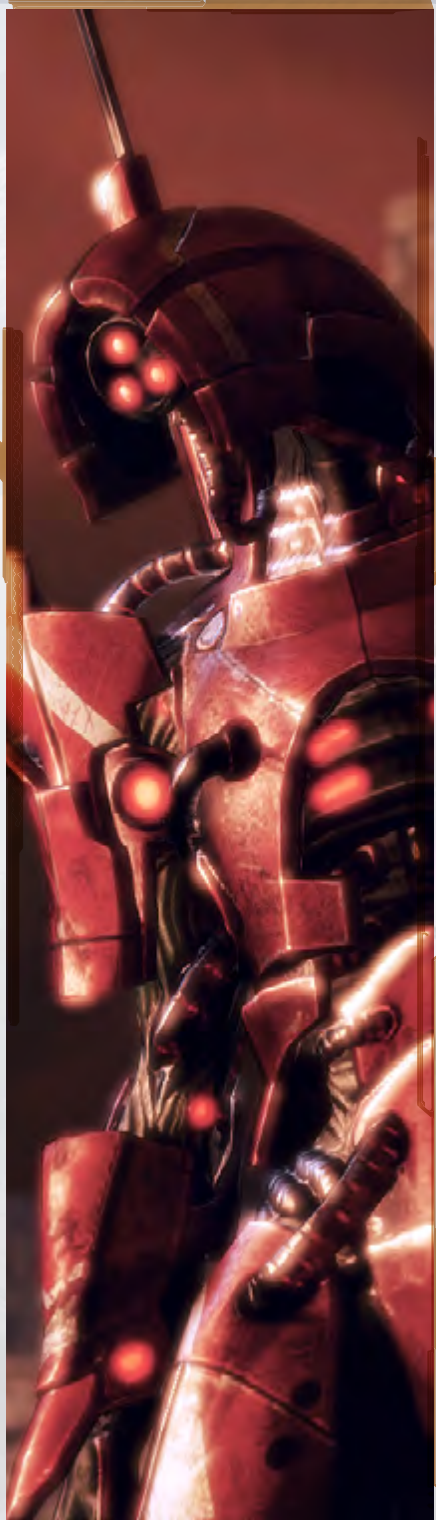
The Geth War

Hailing from the world of Rannoch, the quarians were always a technologically capable species. They created the geth around the late 1850s CE to be used as laborers and tools of war. The quarians kept their programming as limited as that of any VI, nothing close to an AI, remaining mindful of the Citadel Council's laws against artificial intelligence. But as the quarians gradually modified the geth to do more complex tasks, developing a sophisticated neural network, these changes altered the geth to such an extent that they became sentient. One day, a geth unit began asking its overseer questions about the nature of its existence. According to Legion, while this was not the first time a geth unit had asked if it had a soul, it was the first time doing so had caused fear.

Panicked, the quarian government ordered the immediate termination of all geth in the hopes of preventing a revolution. Many quarians did not want to oppose the geth, but were forced to give up or terminate their geth servants. After the quarian government declared martial law on Rannoch, those who sympathized with the geth were outnumbered, and an indeterminate number of them were either detained or killed. The quarian sympathizers have since been forgotten by their own people, though they are remembered by the geth themselves.

The quarians severely underestimated the power and sophistication of the geth's neural network. The geth reacted to defend themselves, and the resulting confrontation erupted into a planetwide war. Billions of quarians died, and the survivors were eventually driven from their homeworld. The only reason quarians were able to escape was because after they had fled to a certain distance, the geth no longer recognized them as a threat and ceased pursuit.

After being refused aid by the Citadel Council, the quarians fled the system in what remained of their fleet. Shortly thereafter, the Council stripped the quarians of their embassy as punishment for their carelessness, though a treaty was agreed upon forbidding an attack on the geth in order to



avoid provoking them. Ever since, the quarians have drifted from system to system, searching for resources to sustain the Migrant Fleet and also for a new world to colonize. They even retain hopes of someday reclaiming Rannoch from the geth.

The Fight for Rannoch

Prior to the Reaper invasion in 2186, the Special Projects arm of the Migrant Fleet developed a series of effective countermeasures against the geth, giving them a strategic edge in terms of military strength. The Admiralty Board voted in favor of launching an assault to retake Rannoch, and the quarians began arming all of the ships in their Civilian Fleet.

The quarians opened the war by launching precision strikes on four geth systems and driving them back to Tikkun, the quarian home system. The fleet also attacked a Dyson sphere that the geth had been building, the culmination of centuries of work intended to unite all geth into a single optimized network that would maximize their processing power. The destruction of the sphere rattled the geth, and they decided to accept upgrades from the Reapers to avoid destruction.

Upgraded with Reaper code, the geth's processing power increased dramatically, allowing them to neutralize the quarian countermeasures. The war shifted in their favor and the Migrant Fleet began to sustain heavy losses. The geth fleet trapped the quarians within the Tikkun system and pushed them in range of a powerful anti-ship cannon on Rannoch that destroyed several ships.

With Commander Shepard's help, the quarians counterattacked a Geth Dreadnought and destroyed a *Destroyer*-class Reaper embedded in a bunker on Rannoch's surface in order to cut off the Reaper signal emitting the upgrade code. With the signal gone, the geth broke free from Reaper control and attempted to harness the Reaper upgrade program to strengthen themselves independently of the Reapers, while the Migrant Fleet took the opportunity to launch a final assault against the geth.

Eventually the quarians are stopped from attacking and reach a compromise with the geth that allows both races to agree to peacefully coexist. Both surviving fleets join the Allied forces in the battle for Earth.

CULTURE

The quarians' top priority is the survival and sustainability of the Migrant Fleet. Most of their laws and customs revolve around this goal. It is illegal for couples to have more than one child, so that the fleet can maintain zero population growth. Should the population begin to shrink, this rule is temporarily lifted, and incentives may be provided to encourage multiple births. Families are thus very small and close-knit. Because every quarian depends on his or her crewmates to survive, they are much more community-minded than individualistic species like the krogan. Loyalty, trust, and cooperation are highly prized qualities. Even in their ancient past they were a very emotional people, which the Protheans believed was a side-effect of their eco-symbiotic society.

Quarians enjoy storytelling as a means of escape from their often trying lives aboard the fleet, and are known to hold dancers in high esteem.

Young quarians are required to undertake a Pilgrimage outside the fleet in order to pass into full adulthood. The Pilgrimage is an opportunity for quarians to experience the world outside the Migrant Fleet, interact with other cultures, and learn to appreciate life among their own people. Their departure is a major event; the whole crew assembles to see them off, and they are given many gifts to aid them on their journey, along with immunity-boosting injections and advice on surviving on the outside. The young quarian cannot return to the flotilla until they have found something of value to bring back, be it information, money, or supplies. When they return, they do not go back to their birth ship, but instead select a new

ship to join; this helps maintain genetic diversity by preventing intermarriage between close relatives. The quarian presents their gift to the captain of the new ship to prove they will not be a burden on the crew. Although the gift may be rejected if it is subpar, this is very rare, as most captains are eager to welcome a new shipmate on board. Having a large crew is a prestigious thing, as it means the captain has the financial and material means to provide for many people.

Conditions aboard most quarian ships are extremely cramped. It is not uncommon for all family members to share the same small living space, which in turn is in close proximity to many other families' quarters. These spaces are often uncomfortable and ill-designed for living in, having been reappropriated from other functions such as storage. Families decorate their individual dwellings with colorful quilts, which serve to muffle sound and also to make the environment more hospitable. Quarrians place low value on personal possessions, instead evaluating objects by their usefulness and bartering them for other items once they are no longer needed. Every ship has a designated trading deck where those looking to barter can gather to do business.

Quarrians wear their environmental suits at all times, partly in case of a hull breach and partly in response to the lack of personal space aboard the flotilla. Because their suits make it hard to identify individuals on sight, quarrians have developed the habit of exchanging names whenever they meet.

Over time, the environmental suits themselves have gained symbolic and cultural significance, and being fitted with their first suit is considered a rite of passage. After returning to the fleet after their pilgrimage, they may alter their suit to reflect their new status as adults. Linking suit environments is seen as the ultimate gesture of trust and affection.

Due to their history with the geth, quarrians are reluctant to place complete trust in virtual or artificial intelligences, but they also show surprising compassion towards them and are far more likely than other species to treat them as living beings.

Quarrians refer to commanding officers of any ships, quarian or non-quarian, as captain, regardless of rank. Their reasoning is that the CO's decisions always carry great weight on his/her own ship.

Economy

The quarrians have a very different economic system from the rest of the galaxy. While credits influence what is available in Citadel space, currency is non-existent in quarian society. Quarrians value the little space they have above all else, so no unused items are kept to maximize space. When a quarian has an item they do not need, they place it in a public area in what resembles a market. The items available are put into storage lockers and those in need may simply take what they find. Since quarian society is based around honor and loyalty to their fellow quarrians, there is rarely disagreement.

However, food and medicine are handled more strictly. The food coming from both the Liveships and from scout ships is put into a central stock and distributed carefully to individuals. Outgoing food is tracked carefully, so as not to put the Migrant Fleet at risk of food shortage, or worse, mass starvation. Medicine is also distributed carefully. However, since the quarrians wear their enviro-suits everywhere—even when aboard the Migrant Fleet—they are at a very low risk of sickness. Controlling the flow of medicine also creates an emergency stockpile in case of a widespread outbreak, which is necessary since the quarian immune system is so weak.

Another means of resource income for the Fleet is from whatever system that the Migrant Fleet is passing through at the time; the quarrians will strip-mine any promising planets for resources with well-trained efficiency. Any other races with industrial or corporate interests

in that system will often offer a “gift” of ships, food, or other supplies to encourage the Fleet to leave. Usually, the Admiralty Board accepts the gift, as the Migrant Fleet is in no position to decline resources. In addition, some ships may linger in orbit over inhabited worlds to sell refreshments, supplies, and various trinkets to the locals.

Religion

The quarians used to practice a form of ancestor worship. This involved taking a personality imprint from the individual and developing it into an interface similar to a VI. The quarians began experimenting with making these imprints more and more sophisticated, hopefully leading to the wisdom of their ancestors being preserved in an imprint that could be truly intelligent. However, the geth destroyed the quarians’ ancestor databanks when they rebelled. Some quarians saw their subsequent exile as punishment for their hubris, but most accept that the geth rebellion was a mistake, not a punishment.

However, respect for their ancestors is still prevalent in quarian society. Admiral Shala’Raam vs Tonbay opens an Admiralty Board proceeding offering thanks to their ancestors, who saved them from the geth by founding the Migrant Fleet.

Language

Now that the quarians are reduced to a small, insular population, they have one common language known as Khelish. Words from the language listed below are taken from intra-quarian conversation.

nedas — nowhere

tasi — no-one

***vas* [ship-name]** — crew of

***nar* [ship-name]** — child of

keelah — “By the homeworld”

keelah se'lai — “By the homeworld I hope to see one day.”

bosh'tet — curse/insult, likely being relative to “son-of-a-bitch” or “bastard”

geth — “Servant of the People”

Rannoch — “walled garden”

von — “one who has a weak bladder”

Quarian names are composed of four parts: the quarian’s given name and clan name separated by an apostrophe, the title (“nar” means “child of,” referring to their birth ship, while “vas,” adopted after the quarian has completed their Pilgrimage and joined a ship, means “crew of”) and the name of their vessel.

GOVERNMENT

There are roughly 17 million quarians on the Migrant Fleet (also called the Flotilla). It is technically still under martial law but is now governed by bodies such as the Admiralty Board and the democratically-elected Conclave, though ship captains and onboard civilian councils tend to address most issues “in-house” before it gets that far. Quarians are divided into several clans that can be spread across several ships, or restricted to one.

Law

Although the Conclave establishes civil law much as any planet-based democracy, enforcement and trials are more unique. After the flight from the geth, there were few constables to police the millions of civilians aboard the Fleet, so the navy parceled out marine squads to maintain order and enforce the law. Today, quarian marines have evolved training and tactics akin to civilian police, but remain adept at combat in the confined spaces of a starship, and fully under the command of the military.



Once taken into custody, the accused is brought before the ship's captain for judgment. While the ship's council may make recommendations, tradition holds that the captain has absolute authority in matters of discipline.

Most are lenient, assigning additional or more odious maintenance tasks aboard the ship. Persistent recidivists are "accidentally" left on the next habitable world. This practice of abandoning criminals on other people's planets is a point of friction between the quarians and the systems they pass through. Captains rarely have another choice; with space and resources at a premium, supporting a non-productive prison population is not an option. Crimes that carry exile as a penalty include murder, treason, repeated violent episodes, and sabotage against vessels, food stores or the Liveships themselves. Quarians also practice capital punishment as mutiny or hijacking starships is punished with execution. Exile is generally the preferred punishment, as any offspring an exile may have are welcomed back to the Fleet.

Cases involving treason are particularly rare, as quarians are only accused of treason if their actions conceivably harmed the entire Flotilla, not just a single ship. The accused are given a hearing with the members of the Admiralty Board acting as judges, and if found guilty, they are sentenced to exile. If the treasonous act is deemed only a tragic mistake in judgment, the guilty party might be granted a small ship and supplies for their exile. Prior to 2185, an engineer named Anora'Vanya vas Selani was the last quarian tried for treason. She had given sensitive defense schematics to batarians who had been contracted to upgrade the Flotilla's defense systems, but the batarians shared the schematics with a pirate gang, jeopardizing the Flotilla's security. Before she could be convicted, Anora'Vanya destroyed the pirate gang in a suicide attack, and was posthumously pardoned by Admiralty Board.

MILITARY

In the early years, many quarian freighters were armed and used as irregular "privateers." Civilian ships still show a strong preference for armament, making them unpopular targets for pirates. Indeed, it is mentioned that almost all ships in the Migrant Fleet carry ship-to-ship armaments of some sort and to varying degrees. Though they have rebuilt their military, there are still mere hundreds of warships to protect the tens of thousands of ships. The quarian navy follows strict routines of patrol, and takes no chances. If the intent of an approaching ship can't be ascertained, they shoot to kill.

For this reason, young quarians on their Pilgrimage are given code phrases to repeat upon their return, as they often arrive back in vessels they have bought or scavenged which are unknown to the Flotilla. One phrase denotes a successful Pilgrimage and the quarian navy will permit them to rejoin the Fleet; the other alerts the navy that the quarian is returning under duress, and their ship will be immediately destroyed.

The quarian military utilizes weapons specifically designed to counter synthetics such as the geth. The Adas Anti-Synthetic Rifle is an electrical weapon optimized for medium and long-range firefights. Other weapons include the Arc Pistol, based on the Arc Projector, and the Reegar Carbine, a more powerful iteration of the Arc Pistol named for the famed quarian Reegar family.

Salarian

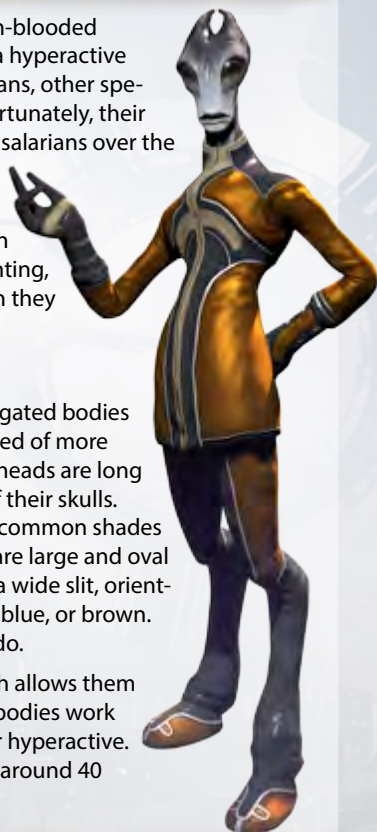
The second species to join the Citadel, the salarians are warm-blooded amphibians native to the planet Sur'Kesh. Salarians possess a hyperactive metabolism; they think fast, talk fast, and move fast. To salarians, other species seem sluggish and dull-witted, especially the elcor. Unfortunately, their metabolic speed leaves them with a relatively short lifespan; salarians over the age of 40 are a rarity.

Salarians are known for their observational capability and non-linear thinking. This manifests as an aptitude for research and espionage. They are constantly experimenting and inventing, and it is generally accepted that they always know more than they are letting on.

BIOLOGY

The salarians are a bipedal race of amphibians, with tall, elongated bodies well-suited for their high metabolism, and skeletons composed of more cartilage than those of other races such as humans. Salarian heads are long and thin, and have a pair of horns protruding from the top of their skulls. Skin varies in color, from bright reds and greens to the more common shades of blue or grey. Their blood is a greenish color. Salarian eyes are large and oval and have thin membranes in place of eyelids. The pupils are a wide slit, oriented horizontally, and the irises can be dark green, purple, red, blue, or brown. Salarians blink upwards, rather than downwards as humans do.

Salarians are noted for their high-speed metabolism, which allows them to function on just one hour of sleep a day. Their minds and bodies work faster than most sapient races, making them seem restless or hyperactive. The drawback of this active metabolism is a short lifespan of around 40 human years.



Salarians (-2 Refresh)

Fish Out of Water (Species Aspect)

Salarians are equally at home in air or liquid environments and can move as easily through liquid as they walk on land. They can also breathe normally in water or air based environments.

The salarian high metabolism makes them see the world around them as moving more slowly than themselves. Their speech, movement, and thought processes are all similarly sped up. On average the salarian only needs an hour of sleep each day, making them highly productive. Unfortunately this same high metabolism gives them a shorter lifespan than most other species, typically around 40 years.

Non-Linear (-1)

A salarian approaches everyday problems and conundrums from a variety of angles, often doing so with a unique point of view or approach not previously considered. This makes them very flexible in situations, able to adapt quickly. This is a highly-prized skill within the ranks of the STG. Once per scene, when making a skill roll, substitute the bonus of another of your skills in its place with an explanation as to how the creative approach worked.

Speed of Thought (-1)

Salarians' high metabolism makes them excellent academics and scientists, as their thought processes move so quickly and can find patterns that others may not see. Select one mental skill and receive +1 to all skill rolls due to this fast speed of thought.

The salarians are amphibian haplo-diploid egg-layers; unfertilized eggs produce males and fertilized eggs produce females. Once a year, a salarian female will lay a clutch of dozens of eggs. Social rules prevent all but a fraction from being fertilized. As a result, 90% of the species is male.

Salarians have photographic memories and rarely forget a fact. They also possess a form of psychological “imprinting,” tending to defer to those they knew in their youth. Salarian hatching is a solemn ritual in which the clan Dalatrass (matriarch) isolates herself with the eggs. The young salarians psychologically imprint on her and tend to defer to her wishes. During the hatching of daughters, the Dalatrasses of the mother and father’s clans are present at the imprinting. This ensures the offspring have equal loyalty to both, ensuring the desired dynastic and political unity.

Salarian sex drive and reproduction differ from that of humans, not being hormone-based. Reproduction is more of a necessity and salarians do not seem to desire sex for pleasure, although they are attracted to other species, such as the asari.

HISTORY

Salarians were already thriving on Sur’Kesh 50,000 years before, albeit in a thoroughly primitive state. According to Promethean records, the salarians of this time were classified as “lizard people.” They used to eat flies, licked their eyes, and their body parts were considered delicacies. In addition to livers, salarian kidneys were apparently best served at room temperature, preferably with the salarian still alive as its fear adds “spice.”

Eventually, they progressed technologically to the point of colonizing planets beyond their own. On their first three interstellar colonies, the salarians planted settlements named Aegohr, Mannovai, and Jaëto. These settlements remain at the heart of salarian territory to this day.

The salarians were the second species to discover the Citadel, only a few decades after the asari. They opened diplomatic relations at once and became one of the founding species of the Citadel Council. In a gesture of trust, the salarians opened the records of one of their intelligence services, the League of One, but this quickly created problems when the League’s members found themselves in danger as a result. The League slaughtered the entire Union inner cabinet, but were later hunted down, leaving only relics behind.

The salarians also played a significant role in the advancement of the krogan species. The salarians provided the krogan with advanced technology and a new, tranquil home planet in order to manipulate the krogan into eradicating the rachni for the Council. The peaceful home planet and better technology put less strain on the krogan as a species; they no longer had to worry about simply surviving on a dangerous planet with primitive technology, as they did before contact with the salarians. This comparatively easy life, combined with their exceedingly high birth rate, allowed the krogans the time, numbers, and energy to spread through Citadel space, aggressively claiming formerly allied planets as their own. In order to end these affronts the salarians then provided the turians with the genophage, a biological weapon that effectively sterilized the krogan species, resulting in almost all krogan pregnancies ending in stillbirth.

Though their military is nothing special, salarians are currently seen as the premier intelligence and information-gathering arm of the Council. As such they are well respected, but some races, including a few humans, see the salarians as manipulators. In some circles every salarian is considered a spy of some kind.

CULTURE

Salarians excel at invention, preferring to use cutting-edge technology rather than settle for anything less. For example, their GARDIAN starship defenses put emphasis on high performance over reliability even though a malfunction could cost lives.

The salarians see information gathering and even spying as a matter of course when dealing with other races, but this is not underhanded: they simply embrace the dictum of "knowledge is power." Alliance counterintelligence agencies are constantly uncovering salarian agents and cyber-warfare incursions, but there is little they can do to stop them. As a salarian information broker once told David Anderson, "Your species has been transmitting data across the extranet for less than a decade. My species has been directing the primary espionage and intelligence operations for the Council for two thousand years."

Normally, the rare salarian females are cloistered on their worlds out of tradition and respect. Powerful female Dalatrasses are dynasts and political kingpins. They determine the political course of their respective regions through shrewd negotiation. Though male salarians rise to positions of great authority in business, academia, or the military, they rarely have any input on politics; one notable exception to this rule is Valern, a male salarian representing his race on the Citadel Council in 2183.

Due to their method of reproduction, salarians have no concept of romantic love, sexual attraction, or the biological impulses and social rituals that complicate other species' lives. Male-female relationships are rare (due to the scarcity of females) and more akin to human friendship. Sexuality is strictly for the purpose of reproduction. Ancient social codes determine who gets to fertilize eggs, which produces more daughters to continue the bloodline. Fertilization generally only occurs after months of negotiation between the parents' clans, and is done for purposes of political and dynastic alliance. No salarian would imagine defying this code.

Salarian names are quite complex. A full name includes—in order—the name of a salarian's homeworld, nation, city, district, clan name and given name. For example, a salarian named Gorot II Heranon Mal Dinstet Got Inoste Ledra would be called either by his clan name, Inoste, or his given name, Ledra.

The salarian race also includes the Lystheni "offshoot." How the Lystheni are distinct from mainline salarians and why they are currently unwelcome in Council space is unrevealed. Lystheni salarians may be found living among batarians, exiled quarians, and other galactic refuse at Omega.

Salarians celebrate "Betau," the first day of their New Year. Traditionally, it marks the end of winter in the southern hemisphere on the salarian homeworld, Sur'Kesh. During this occasion, they repay debts, and petition favors from one another.

When it comes to keeping secrets, salarians have two types of social cues. The first type is personal or guilt-based, and invites suspicion and exploration. The second type is for secrets deemed dangerous if discovered, and signals discourage curiosity for protection of the relevant parties. Reflexive body language conveys the type of secret and cannot be faked convincingly; an analogue is that of a human faking a yawn.

Economy

The salarian economy is the smallest of the three Council races, but still far larger than the Alliance. It is based on advanced technologies; salarian industries are leaders in most fields. They make up for a lack of military quantity by holding a decisive superiority in quality and cutting-edge features.

Religion

Salarians are not notably religious, but as free-willed sentients there are exceptions. One of the less favored salarian religions (which the Council deems a “cult”) worships a goddess, and claims that a certain pattern of overlapping craters in the southern hemisphere of Trelyn resembles her.

GOVERNMENT

The salarian government, since at least the formation of the Council in 500 BCE, is called the Salarian Union. It is a labyrinthine web of matrilineal bloodlines, with political alliances formed through interbreeding.

In many ways, the salarian political network functions like the noble families of Earth's Medieval Europe. Structurally, the government consists of fiefdoms, baronies, duchies, planets, and marches (colonization clusters). These are human nicknames, as the original salarian is unpronounceable. Each area is ruled by a single Dalatrass (matriarchal head-of-household) and represents an increasing amount of territory and prestige within the salarian political web.

Approaching 100 members, the first circle of a salarian's clan comprises parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, and cousins. The next circle includes second cousins, etc., and escalates to well over 1,000 members. The fourth or fifth circle of a clan numbers into the millions. Salarian loyalty is greatest to their first circle and diminishes from there. Their photographic memories allow salarians to recognize all their myriad relatives.

MILITARY

In principle, the salarian military is similar to the Systems Alliance, a small volunteer army that focuses on maneuver warfare. What differentiates the salarians is not their equipment or doctrine, but their intelligence services and rules of engagement. The salarians believe that a war should be won before it begins, a doctrine also espoused by some of humanity's greatest generals, such as Sun Tzu.

The unquestioned superiority of their intelligence services allows them to use their small military to maximum effectiveness. Well before fighting breaks out, they possess complete knowledge of their enemy's positions, intentions, and timetable. Their powerful intelligence network is spearheaded in the field by the Special Tasks Group (STG), which is responsible for monitoring developing situations and taking necessary action, usually without the shackles of traditional laws and procedures. This may be as simple as scouting and information gathering, or as complex as ensuring a conveniently unstable political situation stays that way. The effectiveness of the STG during the Krogan Rebellion is what provided the template for the Council to establish their Spectre program immediately afterward.



In every war the salarians have fought, they struck first and without warning. For the salarians, to know an enemy plans to attack and let it happen is folly; to announce their own plans to attack is insanity. They find the human moral concepts of “do not fire until fired upon” and “declare a war before prosecuting it” incredibly naive. In defensive wars, they execute devastating preemptive strikes hours before the enemy’s own attacks. On the offense, they have never issued an official declaration of war before attacking.

Biotics are virtually unknown in the salarian military. Those with such abilities are considered too valuable to be used as cannon fodder and are assigned to the intelligence services.

While capable of defending themselves against most threats, the salarians know that they are small fish in a universe filled with sharks. As a point of survival, they have cultivated strong alliances with larger powers, particularly with the turians. Though the relationship between the two species was rocky at first due to the krogan uplift fiasco, the salarians take pains to keep this relationship strong enough that anyone who might threaten them risks turian intervention.

The salarian navy has sixteen dreadnoughts, which is considerably less than the maximum they are allowed to build under the Treaty of Farixen. This slowdown in dreadnought production was a consequence of the increasing complexity of the salarians’ designs. After covertly obtaining and researching stealth technology used by the *SSV Normandy* and *Normandy SR-2*, the salarians were able to produce dreadnoughts with stealth capabilities, a previously unthinkable feat. Salarian dedication to adopting bleeding-edge technology is also demonstrated by their ships’ costly armament. Warships are equipped with the latest GARDIAN defense systems and utilize ultraviolet antiship lasers, which are more expensive and energy demanding than standard infrared lasers, but more effective. Even salarian scouting flotillas are armed with hull-mounted Thanix cannons.

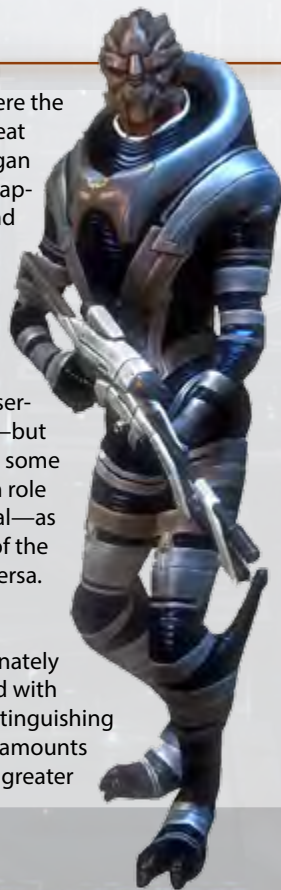
Turian

Known for their militaristic and disciplined culture, the turians were the third race to join the Citadel Council. They gained their Council seat after defeating the hostile krogan for the Council during the Krogan Rebellions. The turians deployed a salarian-created biological weapon called the genophage, which virtually sterilised the krogan and sent them into a decline. The turians then filled the peacekeeping niche left by the once-cooperative krogan, and eventually gained a Council seat in recognition of their efforts.

Originally from the planet Palaven, turians are best known for their military role, particularly their contributions of soldiers and starships to the Citadel Fleet. They are respected for their public service ethic—it was the turians who first proposed creating C-Sec—but are sometimes seen as imperialist or rigid by other races. There is some animosity between turians and humans, largely due to the turian role in the First Contact War. This bitterness is slowly beginning to heal—as shown by the cooperation of the two races on the construction of the *SSV Normandy*—but many turians still resent humans, and vice versa.

BIOLOGY

Turians typically stand over six feet tall, have two long, proportionately thick fingers and an opposable thumb on each hand, each tipped with talons, and a set of mandibles around their mouths. The most distinguishing feature of turians is their metallic carapace, which contains trace amounts of thulium. The turians evolved this trait as a defense against the greater



Turian Might (Species Aspect)

The might of the turian military machine is unparalleled, known across the galaxy as one of the key civilized races. A large, disciplined, fighting force, the turian fleet is the backbone of keeping peace within Citadel space. Turians are unfazed in the face of danger and do not back down from threats or attempts to intimidate them. In fact, a turian can lend a commanding stare of their own when necessary, drawing on their inner discipline.

Because of the increased radiation levels on the turian homeworld of Palaven, turians are highly resistant to radiation and its effects.

Master & Commander (-1)

When you give an order to someone, they comply immediately. Your command allows another character, on their turn, to gain +2 to their roll if they obey. The order must be a specific use of one of the character's skills, such as "Lay down suppressive fire on those commandos!" You may do this once per scene.

To Serve the Hierarchy (-1)

As part of mandatory service in the military, all turians are dedicated to a speciality as assigned to them by the Turian Hierarchy. Select one physical skill and receive +1 to all skill rolls.

Turian Toughness (-1)

Turians are innately tough, pushing through incredible pain. They can take an additional mild consequence and receive an additional stress box.

levels of solar radiation that penetrate their homeworld's weak magnetic field. Turian features are avian, making them resemble humanoid birds or raptors, however unlike most Earth avian creatures, turians are viviparous and give birth to live young. Turians are also recognizable by their voices, which have a distinctive flanging effect. Males and females do not differ greatly in physical appearance, but female turians lack the crest of horns found in the males of the race. The lifespan of a turian is comparable to that of a human.

Since the Unification War, turians normally wear elaborate tattoos marking their colony of origin, though it is not known which markings distinguish which colony or if color has any meaning. These markings are usually white—particularly on turians with darker carapaces—but can be of other colors such as blue or red. The lack of facial markings is looked down upon in turian society; the turian term "barefaced" refers to one who is beguiling or not to be trusted. It is also a slang term for politicians.

Turians exhibit the characteristics of predators rather than those of prey species (compare to krogan biology). Their forward-facing alert eyes give the impression that they possess outstanding eyesight and their teeth and jaws mimic the structures possessed by apex predators such as crocodiles or ancient, carnivorous dinosaurs. Needless to say, their talons on both their feet and hands seem capable of ripping flesh. As such, their diet is primarily meat-based. Their slender bodies also seem to suggest that they are also capable of moving at high speeds.

The turian homeworld, Palaven, has a metal-poor core, generating a weak magnetic field and allowing more solar radiation into the atmosphere. To deal with this, most forms of life on Palaven evolved some form of metallic exoskeleton to protect themselves. Their reflective plate-like skin makes turians less susceptible to long-term, low-level radiation exposure, but they do not possess any sort of natural armor. A turian's thick skin does not stop projectiles and directed energy bolts. Turian blood has a dark blue coloration.

Although life on Palaven is carbon-based and oxygen-breathing, it is built on dextro-amino acids. This places the turians in a distinct minority on the galactic stage; the quarians are the only other sapient dextro-protein race. The food of humans, asari, or salarians (who evolved in levo-amino acid-based biospheres), will at best pass through turian systems without providing any nutrition. At worst, it will trigger an allergic reaction that can be fatal if not immediately treated.

HISTORY

Turian civilization spans fifteen thousand years of history. Before the dawn of their civilization, the race was known to elder spacefaring species like the Protheans, who viewed them as primitive as the other ruling races of the modern era.

The Unification War

The turians had already discovered several mass relays and spawned colonies throughout the galaxy when the asari reached the Citadel. At about the time the asari were forming the Council with the salarians, the turians were embroiled in a bitter civil war next door. The Unification War, as it was later named, began with hostilities between the colonies furthest from the turian homeworld, Palaven.

These colonies were run by local chieftains, many of whom had distanced themselves from the Hierarchy. Without the galvanizing influence of the government, the colonies became increasingly isolated and xenophobic. Colonists began wearing emblems or facial markings to differentiate themselves from members of other colonies and open hostilities became common.

When war finally broke out, the Hierarchy maintained strict diplomacy and refused to get involved. After several years of fighting, less than a dozen factions remained and the Hierarchy finally intervened. By that time, the chieftains were too weak to resist; they were forced to put an end to fighting and renew their allegiance to the Hierarchy. Though peace was restored, it took several decades for animosity between colonists to fade completely. To this day, most turians still wear the facial markings of their home colonies.

The Krogan Rebellions

In the midst of the Krogan Rebellions, the Citadel Council made first contact with the turians. At the Council's behest, the turians brought their considerable war machine to bear on the krogans, now a recognized threat. While the initial turian offensive was successful in routing many krogan war bands, it provoked a massive counterattack from the krogan which devastated several turian colonies. Three turian worlds were rendered completely uninhabitable after the krogan used fusion torches to throw asteroids at them, and the bloodiest battle in turian history occurred at Digeris, where the planet was severely bombarded and the turians sacrificed many frigates and fighters to take out a fleet of krogan dreadnoughts. Rather than scaring off the turians with this show of force, the turians only fought with more resolve to quash the krogans utterly. Eventually, the turians implemented the salarian-developed genocide. With their advantage in numbers removed, the majority of krogan were subdued by 800 CE, although scattered insurgent actions would continue for decades.

By 900 CE, the turians were granted full membership on the Citadel Council in gratitude for their service during the Krogan Rebellions. The turian military fills the military and peacekeeping niche left by the decimated krogan.

The Relay 314 Incident

In 2157 CE, following Council laws in place since the Rachni Wars which prohibited the activation of uncharted mass relays, a turian force opened fire on explorers from an as yet unknown

race: humanity. One human starship managed to escape and warn the Systems Alliance, which retaliated and destroyed several turian vessels. The situation quickly escalated to war.

Over the next several weeks, the outnumbered Alliance lost multiple scouting parties and patrols to turian offensives. The conflict came to a head when a turian fleet broke through Alliance lines and besieged the human colony of Shanxi. With no other options, the Alliance garrison on Shanxi surrendered, and the turians proceeded to occupy the world, confident that the majority of Alliance forces had been defeated. However, one month later the Alliance's Second Fleet caught the turian occupiers by surprise and evicted them from the planet. Both sides began preparations for a protracted interplanetary war.

Before that could happen, the Citadel Council intervened and revealed the galactic community to humanity. Terms of peace were negotiated and the conflict effectively brought to an end. The turians were ordered by the Council to give heavy reparations to the Alliance for their part in instigating the conflict, known to the galaxy as the "Relay 314 Incident." Mistrust between both races would linger for years to come.

The Reaper War

During the Reaper invasion in 2186, the turian colony of Taetrus is one of the first worlds the Reapers attack following their conquest of Khar'shan and Earth. The Turian Hierarchy made two attempts to liberate Taetrus, but were unsuccessful. As the Reapers began to pour into the Trebia system and assault Palaven, they broadcasted images of Taetrus's destruction to the turian comm buoy network.

The Reapers met with heavy resistance from the turians during their invasion of Palaven and Menaë; much of the turian fleet remained operable after the Reapers' initial assault, and the turian citizenry was heavily armed and capable of supporting turian troops. Although the Hierarchy maintained that Palaven had not fallen and the battle for it continued, the Reapers nonetheless made significant gains and turian casualties rapidly mounted.

Relief came with the help of an unlikely ally: the krogan, who had agreed to join the war once the genophage was cured. The combined turian and krogan counterattack caught the Reapers off-guard. While the Reaper fleet orbiting Palaven was distracted by an apparent turian offensive, transport craft carrying krogan reinforcements landed on Palaven and coordinated with turian resistance forces, handing over warp bombs and fission weapons. These weapons were smuggled aboard Reaper processor ships and detonated simultaneously across the globe, allowing large swathes of territory to be retaken. News of the victory gave a much-needed boost to the morale of the turian resistance and the galactic public, but it was not long before the Reapers retaliated.



Realizing the hopelessness of the situation, Primarch Victus ordered the remaining turian warships to withdraw from the Trebia system in order to participate in the Allied assault on Earth. The only way to end the war was to activate the Crucible, and doing so required the Citadel, which the Reapers had moved to Earth orbit for safekeeping. Turian forces heroically assisted in the space and ground battles during the period necessary to trigger the Crucible.

CULTURE

Turians are noted for their strong sense of public service. It is rare to find one who puts his needs ahead of the group. Every citizen from age 15 to 30 serves the state in some capacity, as anything from a soldier to an administrator, from a construction engineer to a sanitation worker. Turians have a strong inclination toward public service and self-sacrifice, so they tend to be poor entrepreneurs. To compensate, they accepted the mercantile volus as a client race, offering protection in exchange for their fiscal expertise.

Turian society is highly regimented and very organized, and the species is known for its strict discipline and work ethic. Turians are willing to do what needs to be done, and they always follow through. They are not easily spurred to violence, but when conflict is inevitable, they only understand a concept of “total war.” They do not believe in skirmishes or small-scale battles; they use massive fleets and numbers to defeat an adversary so completely that they remove any threat of having to fight the same opponent more than once. They do not exterminate their enemy, but so completely devastate their military that the enemy has no choice but to become a colony of the turians. It is theorized that another conflict between the rapidly advancing humans and the turians could annihilate a large portion of known space.

The turian military is the center of their society. It is not just an armed force; it is an all-encompassing public works organization. The military police are also the civic police. The fire brigades serve the civilian population as well as military facilities. The corps of engineers builds and maintains spaceports, schools, water purification plants, and power stations. The merchant marine ensures that all worlds get needed resources.

Other species see turians as a species of action, and they are generally regarded as the most progressive of the Citadel races (though some species believe humans are rivaling this position). Since their culture is based on the structure of a military hierarchy, changes and advances accepted by the leadership are quickly adopted by the rest of society with minimal resistance.

While turians are individuals with personal desires, their instinct is to equate the self with the group, and to set aside all personal desires for the good of all. Turians are taught to have a strong sense of personal accountability, the “turian honor” that other races find so remarkable. Turians are taught to own every decision they make, good or ill. The worst sin they can make in the eyes of their people is to lie about their own actions. Turians who murder will try to get away with it, but if directly questioned, most will confess the crime.

Economy

The turian economy is vastly larger than that of the Alliance, but cannot match the size and power of that of the asari. For many years, development was hampered by cultural disinterest in economics. When the turians accepted the volus as a client race, business development improved.

The military is supported by a well-developed infrastructure. Manufacturers such as Armax Arsenal and the Haliat Armory produce advanced, reliable equipment. Volus manufacturers have been known to produce cheap knock-offs of turian equipment.

Religion

Turians believe that groups and areas have “spirits” that transcend the individual. For example, a military unit would be considered to have a literal spirit that embodies the honor and cour-

age it has displayed. A city's spirit reflects the accomplishments and industry of its residents. An ancient tree's spirit reflects the beauty and tranquility of the area it grows within.

These spirits are neither good nor evil, nor are they appealed to for intercession. Turians do not believe spirits can affect the world, but spirits can inspire the living. Prayers and rituals allow an individual to converse with a spirit for guidance or inspiration. For example, a turian who finds his loyalty tested may appeal to the spirit of his unit, hoping to reconnect with the pride and honor of the group. A turian who wishes to create a work of art may attempt to connect with the spirit of a beautiful location.

Turians enjoy absolute freedom of religion and can practice whatever appeals to them so long as it does not impede anyone's ability to perform their duties. There are many practitioners of the asari siarist philosophy. Since opening dialog with the human Systems Alliance, some turians have embraced Confucianism and Zen Buddhism.

In the past, turians believed that titans strode across Palaven, reaching for the heavens. They worshiped these deities and communicated with them at a structure called Temple Palaven. The temple was tended to by a religious order called the Valluvian Priests, who wear special purple robes which obscure their forms. In order for turians to join this order, they had to be considered worthy enough through some action. When the turians spread out from Palaven and discovered other life among the stars, however, they sealed Temple Palaven because they no longer needed legends to prod them upward. With the temple abandoned, eventually the Valluvian Priests fell into legend.

GOVERNMENT

The turian government, known as the Turian Hierarchy, is a hierarchical meritocracy. While it has great potential for misuse, this is tempered by the civic duty and personal responsibility turians learn during their childhood.

Turians have 27 citizenship tiers, beginning with civilians (client races and children). The initial period of military service is the second tier. Formal citizenship is conferred at the third tier, after boot camp. For client races, citizenship is granted after the individual musters out. Higher-ranked citizens are expected to lead and protect subordinates. Lower-ranking citizens are expected to obey and support superiors. Promotion to another tier of citizenship is based on the personal assessment of one's superiors and co-rankers. At the top are the Primarchs, who each rule a colonization cluster. The Primarchs vote on matters of national importance. They otherwise maintain a hands-off policy, trusting the citizens on each level below them to do their jobs competently.

Throughout their lives, turians ascend to the higher tiers and are occasionally demoted to lower ones. The stigma associated with demotion lies not on the individual, but on those who promoted him when he wasn't ready for additional responsibility. This curbs the tendency to promote individuals into positions beyond their capabilities. Settling into a role and rank is not considered stagnation. Turians value knowing one's own limitations more than being ambitious.

Turians enjoy broad freedoms. So long as one completes his duties, and does not prevent others from completing theirs, nothing is forbidden. For example, there are no laws against recreational drug use, but if someone is unable to complete his duties due to drug use, his superiors step in. Judicial proceedings are "interventions." Peers express their concern, and try to convince the offender to change. If rehabilitation fails, turians have no qualms about sentencing dangerous individuals to life at hard labor for the state.

The turian imperial anthem is called "Die for the Cause."

MILITARY

Although they lack the brutality of the krogan, the refined biotic skill of the asari, and the adaptability of the humans, the turian military has formidable discipline. Officers and NCOs

are skilled with years of field experience. Enlisted personnel are thoroughly trained and stay calm under fire. Turian units don't break. Even if their entire line collapses, they fall back in order, setting ambushes as they go. A popular saying holds: "You will only see a turian's back once he's dead."

Boot camp begins on the 15th birthday. Soldiers receive a year of training before being assigned to a field unit; officers train for even longer. Most serve until the age of 30, at which they become part of the Reserves. Even if they suffer injuries preventing front-line service, most do support work behind the lines.

Biotics are uncommon. While admired for their exacting skills, biotics' motives are not always fully trusted by the common soldier. The turians prefer to assign their biotics to specialist teams called Cabals.

Command and control is decentralized and flexible. Individual squads can call for artillery and air support. They make extensive use of combat drones for light duties and VI-controlled fighters, and practice combined arms: infantry operates with armor, supported by overhead gunships. Strategically, they are methodical and patient, and dislike risky operations.

Tradition is important. Each legion has a full-time staff of historians who chronicle its battle honors in detail. The oldest have records dating back to the turian Iron Age. If a legion is destroyed in battle, it is reconstituted rather than being replaced.

The turians recruit auxiliary units from conquered or absorbed minor races, like the volus. Auxiliaries are generally light infantry or armored cavalry units that screen and support the main battle formations. At the conclusion of their service in the Auxiliaries, recruits are granted turian citizenship.

Turian wars are often marked by citizen resistance. Most turian families keep small arms in their homes and take basic training courses that include instruction on how to create simple anti-vehicle explosive devices. To suppress citizen militias, the Turian Hierarchy makes use of execution squads known as hastatim. First, "safe camps" are established in cities to incentivize surrender. Next, hastatim soldiers are deployed door-to-door; anyone who refuses to be transported to a safe camp or demonstrates hostile intent will be shot. Hastatim burial units then retrieve and cremate the bodies. This approach is necessary because without the safe camps, no turian would ever surrender, and without the hastatim, it would take years for a population to be pacified.

The mainstay of the turian infantry is the Phaeston assault rifle, a light, accurate, and versatile weapon that nonetheless packs more punch than other rifles of its size. Other turian weapons include the Krysae anti-materiel sniper rifle, and the ML-77 Missile Launcher, manufactured by Armax Arsenal, one of the turian military's main suppliers. Vehicles the turians employ include the A-61 Mantis Gunship, a versatile multi-role aircraft, the C77 Tyrus, a durable 13-ton infantry fighting vehicle, an APC variant of the M-080, the Jiris Infantry Fighting Vehicle, a hovercraft capable of traversing most terrains and engaging enemies at 20 kilometers with its missiles.

The turian navy is divided into at least 32 fleets, and is allotted more dreadnoughts by the Treaty of Farixen than any other race; the turians possessed 37 dreadnoughts in 2183 CE and 39 as of 2185 CE, and in 2186 CE the Turian Hierarchy and the Vol Protectorate were jointly gifted the dreadnought *Kwunu* by the Elkoss Combine. The turians are also known to possess at least two fighter carriers. The navy serves as a galactic peacekeeping force, and is also the primary military arm of the Council, contributing the single largest portion of the Citadel Fleet.

Notable units of the turian military include the 26th Armiger Legion, 79th Flotilla, Sixth Fleet, 43rd Marine Division, Seventh Fleet, and Blackwatch.





CHAPTER 4

SKILLS



Skills are the way your character interacts with and changes the game world. Any time there's a question of whether or not your character can successfully do what you want her to, a skill roll is called for (page 158, **Rules of Play** chapter). In general, if success or failure as some meaningful contribution to the game, a skill check will be called for.

The list of skills will hopefully cover any situation you find yourself in. Every skill describes the circumstances where you can use it, how it works, and suggestions for its use. In general, skills can be used in the following manners:

1. Overcome Obstacles
2. Assessment
3. Declaration
4. Place Maneuver
5. Attack
6. Defend
7. Block
8. Special

Not every skill can be used in each of these ways. Every skill description specifies how the skill can be used to achieve each one or more of these goals. If one of these options isn't mentioned in a skill description, the skill can't be used to achieve that goal without intervention by the GM.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

This type of task should be familiar with most players: it's when you try to succeed at a particular task that has the option for failure. If you want to use your Avenger assault rifle to put down a charging husk, you'll be rolling your Guns skill. If a character wants to strong-arm their way into Purgatory by showing their Spectre badge, she'll use her Intimidation skill. If a character wants to try to leap across an expanding chasm to catch the Blue Suns merc who's getting away, she'll make an Athletics check. The skill descriptions dictate what types of obstacles you can try to overcome with the skill. Some skills allow a character to create or repair items, and these uses count as obstacles to overcome—the main description of the skill covers these situations.

ASSESSMENT

Some skills let you assess a situation in advance of taking action, as part of putting together a plan or simply observing a target long enough to learn something that'll give a critical advantage. This approach is usually used with skills that have an element of perception—including Investigation, Empathy, and even Security. With assessment, the skill isn't used to place a temporary aspect so much as discover an existing one. You can tag this aspect once for free as described on page 165.

All assessment efforts require the use of a significant chunk of time, usually indicated in the skill description. This lets you use skills that normally aren't particularly useful in more time pressured environments (like a fight), thanks to the time invested in advance.

Mass Effect Skill List

Academics	Mental
Alertness	Mental
Artillery	Physical
Athletics	Physical
Biotics	Mental
Contacts	Social
Deceit	Social
Empathy	Social
Endurance	Physical
Engineering	Mental
Fight	Physical
Guns	Physical
Intimidation	Social
Investigation	Mental
Leadership	Social
Medicine	Mental
Pilot	Physical
Rapport	Social
Resolve	Social
Resources	Social
Security	Physical
Stealth	Physical
Survival	Mental
Systems	Mental

Importantly, only one assessment can be made with a skill. Once one skill is used to make an assessment about a target, it can't be reused. If you want to make a second assessment about the same target, you need to use a different skill.

Any aspects brought into play through assessment don't have to go away after they're used, if circumstances make it reasonable that they hang around or if the GM finds them useful or interesting. Any subsequent uses of such aspects, however, will cost (or grant!) a fate point, as usual. This does mean that occasionally assessments will backfire, leading to a compel. Since aspects are involved, such things are easily double-edged!

DECLARATION

Assessments only allow the discovery of what already exists. By contrast, some skills allow a declaration—in other words, using a skill successfully allows a player to introduce entirely new facts into play and then use those facts to his advantage. The new facts take the form of a temporary aspect. The GM is encouraged to use creativity as her primary guideline when judging the use of skills that allow declaration—creative and entertaining facts should be more likely to succeed than boring facts, since a success results in a temporary aspect. For example, your character, surrounded by geth on Noveria could make an Academics declaration—the difficulty determined by the GM—to surmise that geth have decreased vision in snow. In fact, creating the aspect **SNOW BLIND**. Like an assessment, this aspect can now be tagged once for free. The aspect continues to stay (until it doesn't make sense for it to remain) and can be tagged by other characters by spending a fate point. Making a declaration doesn't take any time; it either happens or it doesn't.

A skill may be used only once per scene to make a declaration, so put some thought into it!

Advice on how to determine declaration difficulties can be found on page 225.

PLACE MANEUVER

A maneuver is taking matters into your own hands and creating an aspect. A maneuver is an attempt to change the situation to your liking—such as affecting the environment or getting an advantage. A maneuver can never be used to cause stress. Then it's an attack.

Typically you use maneuvers to setup aspects for yourself or others to use. You're making things easier for the next exchange.

For more on maneuvers, see page 178, *Rules of Play* chapter.

ATTACK

Most skills can be used to attack an opponent in some manner and inflict stress on them. More details on this are found in the *Rules of Play* chapter, page 181. When a skill can be used to attack an opponent, this is noted in its description. Remember, stress doesn't necessarily have to be physical; you can socially "attack" another character during a debate, for example. Also, a character can never use the same skill more than once in an exchange. That means you can't use a skill to both attack *and* defend in the same exchange.

DEFEND

Opposed skill checks—one skill used against another—involve a defense of some kind. Certain skills are used to defend against specific attacks as discussed in their descriptions. If you are creative enough, you can sometimes suggest a better skill to defend with, although using Endurance to defend against Guns isn't a particularly good idea in *Mass Effect*. Details on defending against attacks are found in the *Rules of Play* chapter, page 177. A character can never use the same skill more than once in an exchange. That means a skill can't be used to both attack *and* defend in the same exchange.

BLOCK

Sometimes you're just trying to prevent someone from taking a specific action, moving, or making things harder for them. For example, blocking a doorway so no one can get past you, laying down covering fire so that no one will take up chase, or being caught in the gravity well of a singularity. All of these block you in some fashion. To do something and overcome the block you simply have to achieve more shifts than the strength of the block placed on you.

For more on blocks, see page 179, *Rules of Play* chapter.

SPECIAL

Some skills have other special uses that fall outside the ordinary. These are usually just automatic advantages conferred by the skill and rarely require a roll. Any such special uses will be noted in the skill description.

Academics

Academics measures a character's education, recall, and knowledge. Any knowledge that isn't specific to another skill falls under Academics, with some overlap to be expected. Characters with high Academics include information brokers, professors, scientists, and consulars.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

The main use of Academics is to answer a question. Questions covered by Academics include those of art, history, literature, sociology, or any of the sciences. You can ask the GM, "What do I know about this subject?" or "What does this mean?" Often, there'll be no need to roll, especially if the subject is within your character's specialty, but if the GM feels the information is something that should be hard to obtain—such as a clue—then she may call for a roll against a difficulty she sets. If your character succeeds, he receives the information. If he fails, he doesn't, but he may still attempt to research the topic (see below)—or, perhaps more entertainingly, may stumble onto a false lead that gets him deeper into trouble.

Researching a topic is frequently a time-consuming and arduous task—exactly the sort of thing worth skimming over with a few quick dice rolls. It's treated as an extension of the knowledge your character has—some questions he can answer off the top of his head; others he can answer because he knows what data sources to search.

As such, research is something that can happen when a character fails an Academics check. Provided the researcher is willing to spend time researching—and that the answer can be found—the only question is how long it'll take and how good an information source he has access to.

Academic research requires a data source. The quality of the source of information determines the hardest possible question that can be answered within it—so a question of Good (+3) difficulty requires a Good (+3) data source or better. If a character is attempting to answer a question using a data source that's not equal to answering it, the GM should be up-front about its shortcomings.

Most ships, space stations, and private individuals have a Mediocre (+0), Average (+1), or Fair (+2) data bank. Small corporations or governments often have Good (+3) data sources while larger institutions may have Great (+4) ones. Superb (+5) and better data sources are few and far between. The C-Sec data records in the Citadel has a Legendary (+8) collection of data on criminals. Some data banks are specialized and are considered one step higher in their area of specialty—for example, most quarian shipboard data banks specialize in astrogration, so a typical quarian ship has an Average (+1) data source, which is treated as Fair (+2) for questions of navigation. Characters may own data of their own in the form of an aspect.

Academics can be used to perform scientific research as well, provided there's time and equipment. A scientist looking to solve a problem should figure out what question he's trying to answer, like "What killed this man?" or "What is this object composed of?" The GM calls for a roll to see if the character can answer the question. This requires a lab of some sort, and it's possible that some questions can't be answered without the right equipment. In the end, this functions the same as performing research (see above).

For the core species in *Mass Effect*, the listed aspects should be considered common knowledge and available to a player after an Average (+1) Academics roll. If a new species is encountered, an Academics roll can reveal the aspects normally shared by that species. The rarity of the species determines the difficulty of such a roll; a good baseline starts at a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a species that isn't quite as common as the core species, and moves up the ladder from there for progressively more obscure species.

ASSESSMENT

Research, as described above, is an excellent avenue for assessing a person, item, or location, provided your character has enough time and access to a data source with the proper information. You could look up blueprints, public records, legal history, or all manner of useful facts regarding your target. As always, these facts must be within the field of Academics and the GM has a right to veto them. The GM sets the difficulty for you to roll against. If successful, your character discovers some useful aspect; if not, the data is incorrect or outdated and your character is mistaken. Like most Academics rolls, the GM can decide not to share the difficulty, so your character may not know if he succeeded. If the academic is wrong, there's no penalty, but there may be complications—at her option, the GM can place a temporary **MISTAKEN** aspect on the academic, compelling it to represent the fall-out (and netting the mistaken academic a fate point).

DECLARATION

You can use your character's knowledge to declare facts, filling in minor details the GM hasn't mentioned. These facts must be within the field of Academics, and the GM has the right to veto them. You make a declaration and roll Academics against a difficulty the GM sets. If successful, the fact is true; if not, your character is mistaken. Consequences of a mistaken declaration are the same as failed assessment, above.

ATTACK

Academics isn't an attack skill. It can rarely be used to cause stress to an opponent, unless the conflict is knowledge related, like a verbal barb or some other contest of knowledge. Academics could conceivably be used to attack in a legal trial by presenting facts contradicting the opposing counsel's theory, for example. In this case, your character is using Academics to marshal his knowledge to overwhelm or dismay his opponent.

DEFEND

Academics can only be used as a defense if another character is using the Academics skill to attack. Your character could, in such a situation, use his own knowledge to present facts that refute his opponent and negate the attempted attack.

SPECIAL

Your character may speak a number of additional languages based on his Academics score. Each step of Academics above Mediocre (+0) gives your character knowledge of one additional language—one at Average (+1), two at Fair (+2), and so on. You don't need to choose the languages when your character is created; instead, you can simply choose languages in the course of play, as is convenient.

Alertness

Alertness is a measure of your character's regular, passive level of awareness. Specifically, it's the perception skill to notice things the character isn't looking for. Characters with high Alertness include bodyguards, outdoorsmen, and criminals of a sneaky variety.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Players rarely ask to roll Alertness—if they're actively looking for something, Investigation is usually more appropriate. Alertness is more appropriate for things that players and characters don't expect or aren't looking for, such as a surprise or a hidden clue. In short, it's reactive perception. As such, it's a skill that, most often, the GM calls for players to roll on the fly.

DEFEND

Alertness can be used to defend against ambushes or attacks using the Stealth skill. When you're ambushed (see Stealth, page 92), you may make one final Alertness check against the Stealth of your attacker to see if you're surprised. If you fail this check, your defense skill is considered to be Mediocre (+0) for the first exchange.

SPECIAL

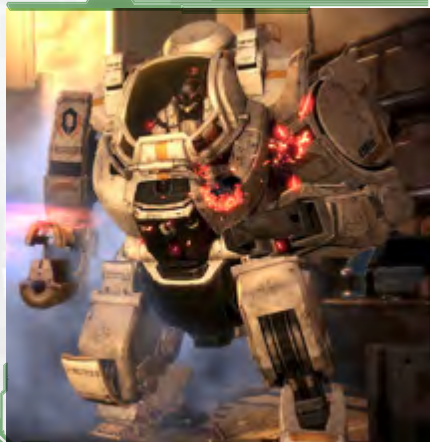
The initiative order in active, physical conflicts is determined by Alertness. The character with the highest Alertness acts first, followed by those with the next lowest Alertness, etc. Ties in initiative are resolved in favor of characters with a higher Resolve. Any remaining ties are in favor of the player closest to the GM's right.

Artillery

Artillery is the skill of using heavy weapons; these range from small portable types like mortars and grenade launchers all the way up to the massive cannon batteries equipped on military vessels. Any weapon larger than small arms is fired using the Artillery skill rather than the Guns skill. Characters with a high Artillery skill include ship gunners, soldiers, and bombardiers.

ASSESSMENT

The Artillery skill has limited use in assessment. You could use it to examine a battleground in advance of a conflict and determine the best places to put artillery pieces or to assess where an enemy might place their own. You might also assess the weak points in any defenses to determine the best place to strike them with an artillery shot. Characters with the Artillery skill can also identify weapons by the gunports on a ship or identify what sort of heavy weapons caused burn scars or holes. After a fight in space, artillery could be useful to determine how many vessels were involved in the conflict.



DECLARATION

As with assessment, Artillery can only be used in very specific circumstances to make a declaration. Artillerists can keep their weapons in good firing order and know about storage and care of munitions. The skill can be used to make declarations about where munitions might be stored in a new environment, the condition of an enemy's weapons, the suitability of a particular piece of ordnance in a given environment, or other facts specific to heavy weapons.

PLACE MANEUVER

In the heat of combat, Artillery can be used to place maneuvers on an opponent. In this case, the gunner is firing or aiming for effect, rather than trying to attack an opponent. Covering an opponent or getting him in your sights are appropriate maneuvers. Artillery can also be used in ship combat to force an opponent off course or to force him to make defensive maneuvers.

ATTACK

This is the main use of the Artillery skill. These weapons are designed to cause stress to large groups of people or big pieces of equipment. The Artillery skill is primarily used in ship-to-ship combat, and these guns are among the few things that can damage the opposing ship.

Many artillery pieces aren't really designed to fire at personnel. Ship's guns especially are designed to blast through ship armor, not fire at tiny individuals on the ground. Ship targeting systems won't even register a single person as a target, making firing these weapons at people relatively difficult.

BLOCK

An expert artillerist can use the Artillery skill to set up a block by laying down suppressive fire—concentrating heavy fire in a single area and forcing an opponent to avoid it or take cover. This can be used to bombard a particular area and prevent people from moving through; in the context of a dogfight, you could prevent an opponent from moving in a direction you choose to block.

Athletics

This is a measure of the character's general physical capability; the exception is raw power, which is a function of Endurance. Athletics covers running, jumping, climbing, and other broadly physical activities you might find in a track and field event. Characters with high Athletics include athletes, soldiers, and outdoorsmen.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Athletics is often the “when in doubt” physical skill, and it gets a lot of use. Athletics is used for things like sprinting, jumping, or climbing. Generally, the GM sets a fixed difficulty to be met or exceeded. Often, there's a set amount of time, also set by the GM, that's required to run a distance or climb over an obstacle. A chase on foot or a race between two characters also uses the Athletics skill. Extra shifts can be used to reduce the time required. If a character is competing against another, the skill results are directly compared to determine who completes the task more quickly. If a task is more about who can last the longest as opposed to the fastest, Endurance may be more appropriate.

DECLARATION

Athletics can only be used to make declarations in very specific situations. You might be able to make declarations about conditions likely to affect an attempt to use the skill—a cliff face is made of a particularly fragile material, not immediately obvious to the untrained; the landing spot of a jump is uneven; or an enemy minion didn't stretch out before a run, risking a cramp, etc.

PLACE MANEUVER

If you wish to move to place a maneuver on an opponent in a conflict, Athletics is an appropriate skill to use. Your character can move behind an opponent, move behind cover, or climb over an obstacle. You must describe how his actions give your character an advantage, and the GM sets the difficulty for the roll. Athletics-based maneuvers are usually quite fragile, often negated by some simple movement or action on the part of the enemy. You'll often use

Athletics to place a maneuver to overcome a difficult border that's in your way as described on page 180.

DEFEND

Athletics is used as a defensive skill against attacks in physical combat; it works very well in conjunction with taking a full defense action (yielding a +2 to the roll; see page 178). Athletics can be used as a dodge to counter attacks by Artillery, Fight, or Guns. It's important to note that taking a full defense action means that you can't use Athletics for other things, like movement between zones in combat.

BLOCK

By maneuvering your character between an opponent and a place that opponent wishes to go, you can use Athletics to set up a block. This is strictly putting your character's body as an obstacle between an opponent and something he wishes to reach, and it can be countered in a lot of different ways. An Athletics block doesn't include grappling or otherwise physically restraining another character—that would fall under Fight.

Biotics

The term biotics refers to the ability for some lifeforms to create mass effect fields using element zero nodules embedded in body tissues. These powers are accessed and augmented by using biotic amplifiers, or bio-amps. Biotic individuals can knock enemies over from a distance, lift them into the air, generate gravitational vortices to tear obstacles or enemies apart, or create protective barriers.

To possess the Biotic skill a character must spend 1 refresh to be a biotic and have it as part of their High Concept. No character may spend points in the Biotic skill—or use the Biotic skill—without first paying the cost to be a biotic. An asari ignores this restriction as all asari are biotic at birth.

Biotic powers are covered in *Powers*, page 118.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

At the most basic level a biotic can use their power to move and manipulate small inanimate objects. This doesn't include fine manipulations such as picking a lock or writing nor does it include lifting another being. The character can manipulate small hand held objects remotely. The difficulty is determined by the size and weight of the object, with a small object being Average (+1), shifting upwards or downwards from that point. This has a range of 2 and the shifts generated with a Biotics check determines the number of exchanges the character can manipulate the object.

ASSESSMENT

A character with a telepathic or empathic ability may use Biotics for an assessment. This can help a biotic position herself in anticipation of another's action by reading their mind or understanding a critical weakness by feeling the target's emotions.

DECLARATION

Telepathy is a frequent use of a Biotics declaration to learn of an opponent's intent seconds before he acts. These flashes of insight allow the biotic to learn something about the situation that may otherwise go unnoticed by those without biotic abilities.

PLACE MANEUVER

Some Biotic Powers, such as Barrier, use the place maneuver to impose an aspect on the biotic. This aspect may be tagged for free by the biotic once for effect, as discussed on page 120.



ATTACK

The most common usage of Biotics is to cause stress during combat. A number of biotic powers are fueled by the attack action and are covered under their respective entries. When attacking with a Biotics check, Biotics may not later be used to defend during that exchange.

DEFEND

If you choose not to actively use your Biotic abilities in an exchange to attack, you can use Biotics instead of Resolve to defend yourself. The Biotics skill can also be used to defend against social attacks such as Rapport, Trading, or Intimidation if you have telepathic or emotion detection powers. In this case you're detecting the opponent's true intents and can react accordingly.

BLOCK

A biotic with the proper power, such as Stasis, can enforce a block upon another character, freezing them in place until overcome.

SPECIAL

By enhancing their punches with power, a biotic can slam a target with great force. This allows them to use their Biotics skill to make an unarmed attack if they have not defended using their Biotics skill. Doing so does not allow the use of Biotics to defend for the remainder of the exchange.

Contacts

Contacts is the ability to find things out from people or to find the people you're looking for. Your character may know a guy who knows a guy, or maybe he just knows the right questions to ask. Whatever his methods, he knows how to find things out by asking around. Characters with high Contacts include reporters, private eyes, fences, and spies.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

A character with a high Contacts skill knows a wide variety of people and has at least a minor connection with virtually any organization. There are Contact stunts which give a character deep ties to a specific field like crime or business, and those allow a deeper level of contact within that field (page 102, *Stunts*).

Contacts doesn't work in a vacuum. The character needs to be able to get out and talk to people for it to be useful; when that isn't possible, neither is Contacts. Contacts is also limited by familiarity—if your character finds himself in an entirely unfamiliar environment such as

a planet he's never visited before, he may encounter difficulties increased by as much as +4. Thankfully, Contacts also covers the skill for building new social networks, so if your character stays in an area for any amount of time, he can diminish the difficulty by one for each week he spends there.

Contacts also keeps the character apprised of the general state of things—it acts as a sort of social Alertness, keeping the character abreast of things that might be coming his way. It's far from foolproof and, like Alertness, the GM is usually the one to call for a roll—a player can't go out looking for a tip off, though he can tell the GM he's going out talking to his contacts just to check on what's up, which is a good hint that he'd like a tip.

ASSESSMENT

Contacts may be used for assessment by canvassing locals and gathering information about a situation, place, or person. Your character must go out and talk to people, trying to find the answer to a question like, "Who's trying to kill me?" You describe where your character is going to talk to folks to glean this information.

One important warning about authenticity—being the most informed guy and knowing all the latest gossip aren't necessarily the same thing. Contacts finds out what people know, and people always have their own biases. Information is only as good as the sources it comes from. Contacts rarely tests the veracity of the information provided—unless you discover that contradictory answers are coming from different sources. If you want to determine the truthfulness of the information you're finding, that's a more in-depth conversation that may involve Empathy, Rapport, Deceit, and more.

DECLARATION

Characters can use Contacts for declarations as well as assessment. By going through your network and gathering information, you can use Contacts to create a new aspect that applies to the target, based on the rumors and inside information you're able to unearth through your contacts.

Contacts is also useful for planting rumors, not just for ferreting them out. Make a declaration that represents the rumor you want to plant. It's worth noting that your roll is also the target for someone else's Contacts roll to find out who's been spreading rumors, so be careful!

SPECIAL

Contacts is also used in acquiring assets through various connections, leveraging your web to find what you need. For more details see page 198, *Buying Things*.



Deceit

Deceit is the ability to lie, simple as that. Whether through word or deed, it's the ability to convey falsehoods convincingly. Characters with high Deceit include grifters, spies, and politicians.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

For simple deceptions, a contest between Deceit and an appropriate skill (usually Empathy, Alertness, or Investigation) is all that's necessary. Sometimes, Deceit is the undercurrent rather than the forefront of an action; as such, the skill may be used secondarily to modify, restrict, or complement another skill's use.

Deceit also covers disguises, using the disguised character's Deceit skill against any attempts to penetrate the disguise. Such disguises are dependent on what props are available and won't hold up to intense scrutiny (specifically, an Investigation roll) without the use of stunts, but they're fine for casual inspection (Alertness rolls).

PLACE MANEUVER

In a conflict, Deceit can be used to give your opponent a false impression, setting him up for a later attack. In social conflict, this can be the weaving of a web of lies or false impressions. Deceit can also be used in physical conflict by making a feint or executing a fake-out. Deceit maneuvers are only good until something occurs to reveal the deception; in the case of feints or other quick deceptions, they last only until the deceiver's next action. However, a well-placed lie that's difficult to refute can create an aspect that lingers for a long while.

ATTACK

For deeper deceptions—like convincing someone of a lie or selling someone Omega—a social conflict is appropriate, complete with Deceit attacks and stress being dealt. Stress caused by Deceit is almost always some sort of social anguish or emotional manipulation.

DEFEND

You may opt to use Deceit instead of Rapport to defend against someone using Empathy to get a read on your character. If you fail your defense roll, then the Empathy reader proceeds as usual—in attempting to hide something, you've blundered and revealed a truth. If you succeed, however, you may provide a false aspect to the reader, sending her off with an utterly fabricated notion of your character (page 170, *Rules of Play* chapter). When she tries to take advantage of the aspect that she falsely thinks is there, it can end up being a waste of a fate point or worse!

BLOCK

A particularly clever lie can be used to block an opponent by giving the impression that an option is closed off when it in fact remains open. This is a difficult feat to pull off, but a character truly skilled in Deceit can often make an opponent abandon a course of action under false pretenses.

Empathy

This is the ability to understand what other people are thinking and feeling. This can be handy if your character is trying to spot a liar or you want to tell someone what he wants to hear. Characters with a high Empathy include gamblers, reporters, and socialites.

ASSESSMENT

Empathy can be used to gauge emotion and subtle tells. If information can be gleaned from the body language or verbal stress of another character, you can perform an Empathy roll

to attempt to detect it. This can lead to discovering deception or detecting nervousness or repressed emotion. This counts as assessment—the emotional state of a character can be revealed by the GM if your Empathy roll is high enough.

The most powerful use of Empathy is to figure out what makes another character tick. Given at least a half hour of intense, personal interaction, you may make an Empathy roll against the target's Rapport roll. If you gain one or more shifts on the roll, you discover one of the target's aspects that you didn't already know. It might not reveal the aspect in precise detail, but it should paint a good general picture; for instance, you might not learn the name of the character's brother, but you will learn that the character has a brother. This process may be repeated, taking longer each time; ultimately you can learn a number of aspects equal to your Empathy skill's value (minimum one)—so, a Fair (+2) skill would allow two aspects revealed through at least two different rolls.

DEFEND

Empathy is used as a defense against Deceit. An Empathy roll determines the difficulty the opponent using Deceit must overcome.

SPECIAL

Empathy is the basis for initiative in a social conflict. The character with the highest Empathy acts first, followed by those with the next lowest Empathy, etc. Ties in initiative are resolved in favor of characters with a higher Resolve. Any remaining ties are in favor of the player closest to the GM's right.

Endurance

Endurance is the ability to keep performing physical activity despite fatigue or injury. It's a measure of the body's resistance to shock and effort. Endurance also measures how well a character shrugs off poisons and disease. Characters with a high Endurance include explorers, athletes, and krogan.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Endurance is a passive skill. Players very rarely ask to roll Endurance; instead, the GM calls for rolls when appropriate. Endurance particularly comes into play in long-term actions as a secondary, restricting skill, where the character's ability to keep performing at peak is limited by how able he's to overcome fatigue and pain; this is why top athletes have their Endurance skill on par with—or better than!—their Athletics skill. Someone without a solid Endurance skill may be a good sprinter, but he'll find himself winded and falling behind in a marathon.

Sometimes, a direct Endurance test arises. This only applies in long-term conflicts, such as tests of a character's ability to keep going after a long effort. It applies most often in travel, when a character is attempting to push on after his body wishes to rest, or in attempts to endure harsh environments. An Endurance roll could be used to resist cold conditions or to determine how long a character can hold his breath.

PLACE MANEUVER

It's difficult to use Endurance to place a maneuver on an opponent, but a character with a high Endurance can sometimes play defensively in a physical conflict and attempt to draw it out. By making the conflict last longer and require more vigorous effort, it's possible to place a maneuver such as **TIRE**D on an opponent. This should be allowed only judiciously, since not all conflicts lend themselves to the tactic.

SPECIAL

Endurance also determines a character's stress capacity (the length of a character's stress track), since stress in part represents physical wounds and fatigue. By default, players have 3 boxes for their stress track. Better than Mediocre (+0) Endurance increases the number of boxes as shown here. Resolve also increases stress capacity. Any additional stress boxes from Resolve and Endurance are added together to determine a character's stress capacity.

Bonus Stress Capacity

Endurance	Bonus Stress
Average-Fair	+1
Good-Great	+2
Superb-Fantastic	+3

Engineering

Engineering is the understanding of how machinery and complex technology works, both for purposes of building it and taking it apart. While it's complemented by an understanding of Academics, Engineering can just as easily be the result of getting your hands dirty and having a natural feel for how things work. Characters with a high Engineering include ship engineers, mechanics, and, frequently, pilots.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Engineers are essential aboard ship because a skilled engineer can modify and repair vital parts of the ship. Engineering covers all mechanical and electrical engineering, including the power plant and life support. Engineering covers all hardware. Repairs and modifications to software require the Systems skill. Engineering tasks require the right tools, the necessary parts, and enough time.

ASSESSMENT

Engineers can use their knowledge of physics and material to make detailed assessments of objects. Engineers can often assess value, spot materials that can be used to jury rig temporary repairs or machinery, or spot flaws in buildings, ships, or smaller items. An engineer who can gain access to plans or design documents can also determine any anomalies or secret weaknesses in an object or building's design. This is especially useful for finding overlooked access points or structural flaws.

DECLARATION

As with assessment, Engineering declarations typically involve pointing out details about physical items or buildings. Typical Engineering declarations cover structural weaknesses that are about give way, warning indicators, or other such declarations about problems with an item.

PLACE MANEUVER

Engineering is also the skill for unmaking things. Given time and tools, an engineer can topple virtually any building or structure. In those circumstances, Engineering works like a very peculiar combat skill, possibly resulting in maneuvers or weirdly indirect attacks, like setting up a bridge to collapse when someone walks across it. Again, the right tools are required, as is enough time to work on a given item in order to break it. Materials are less important, unless the engineer is using explosives.

Fight

Fight is a combination of Fists and Weapons rolled into one all-encompassing skill. Unless you're shooting something with Guns, you're probably using Fight.

ASSESSMENT

Using Fight you can assess another character's fighting style and/or technique to determine where she was trained and possibly any weaknesses to exploit.

PLACE MANEUVER

In combat you can use Fight to place a maneuver on an opponent to setup future attacks. Feints, positioning, big windups, and causing an opponent to be off balance or overextended are possibilities when using Fight. Your character must be at Range: 0 (melee engaged) as your opponent to place a maneuver using Fight.

ATTACK

Flat up, you use your fighting ability to damage an opponent. Striking an opponent, stabbing, throwing, punching, holding, or trying to pin are all examples of using Fight. As with maneuvers you must be at Range: 0 (melee engaged) with your opponent unless using a weapon that specifically states otherwise.

DEFEND

Use your Fight skill to defend yourself in combat by sidestepping blows, knocking them aside, or using a parry. The GM may assess a penalty for trying to defend against an armed attack unarmed. Also, you must be at Range: 0 (melee engaged) with your opponent to attempt to defend with Fight.

Guns

Often, characters just need to shoot things. Thankfully, there's a skill for that. Guns users are well-versed in a variety of small arms and ammunitions. Guns can also be used to cover non-gun weapons that shoot at a distance, such as bows and gravity guns. Characters with high Guns include soldiers, assassins, and Spectres.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Any sort of sharpshooting your character performs outside of combat is resolved with a simple skill roll. When your character is firing his weapon at an inanimate object—to cut a rope,



knock something off the top of a wall, or some other similar feat of marksmanship—a general Guns roll is all that's required. Particularly tricky shots have a higher difficulty, of course.

ASSESSMENT

You can use this skill as a limited sort of knowledge skill covering the identification and care of firearms. If you want to identify a particular make or model of weapon based on observation or from the spent ammunition packs or burn marks left by weapon fire, Guns is used for assessment. This application of the Guns skill should be very narrow and should only be allowed judiciously. Guns is really for in-the-moment firing of weapons and little else.

PLACE MANEUVER

The most common maneuver of the Guns skill is aiming. An aspect called **IN MY SIGHTS** is a very useful setup for a subsequent Guns roll. Skilled gunmen can also perform more difficult feats, such as shooting things out of an enemy's hands and the like.

ATTACK

The Guns skill is primarily used to deliver stress to an opponent. With a gun, you can shoot at an enemy up to two zones away—three if it's a rifle or other long-distance firearm. Unfortunately, without a gun in hand, or at least close at hand, the skill isn't much use.

The Guns skill doesn't allow you to defend yourself as well as attack; it trades the defense component for the ability to act over greater range. A character who's both a good shot and good at getting out of the way needs to also invest in either Athletics or Fight (or both!).

BLOCK

Guns can be used to block movement or force other characters to remain under cover. Heavy fire on an area or just squeezing off a shot every time someone pokes out his head can make a very effective block.

Intimidation

There are more graceful social skills for convincing people to do what you want, but those skills tend not to have the pure efficiency of communicating the idea that failing to comply may well result in some manner of harm. Nothing personal. Characters with high Intimidation include mob enforcers, bouncers, and “bad” cops.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Once things get to the point of a face off, your opponent has a lot of other options besides standing there and being intimidated—such as disengaging or pulling out a weapon. However, one of the real strengths of Intimidation is that first flash of contact, when people instinctively get out of the way of someone intimidating. Intimidation can establish a powerful, menacing first impression. If your character is actively doing something intimidating, you can roll a quick contest of Intimidation against the opponent's Resolve. If successful, the target is taken aback for a moment, generally long enough to brush past him. This can't be done in a fight or against any target who's already prepared to fight, but in those “first contact” situations, Intimidation is gold for control.



PLACE MANEUVER

Intimidation can easily be thrown in as an action during the heat of conflict. Within a conflict, Intimidation can make an opponent flinch, hesitate, or become shaken. Sudden shouts, terrifying glares, or even just a cool demeanor can be used to place a maneuver on an opponent.

ATTACK

Using Intimidation is a blatant social attack, which someone can defend against with his Resolve. This is the skill for interrogation (as opposed to interviewing) as well as scaring the bejeezus out of someone. Even without a basis for fear, Intimidation can occasionally be used to provoke a strong burst of negative emotion—such as provoking someone into a fight, or at least to anger. Regardless, it's never pretty.

If there's a reason for your target to believe that you're capable of harming him when he can't do anything about it—such as if the target's unarmed and you're wielding a weapon—it's worth a +1 bonus, +2 if the target's completely helpless. Conversely, if the target is the armed one, his defense roll is likely at +1, possibly at +2 or more if the target's very secure in his position—such as being behind something solid or having lots of backup. If these circumstances suddenly change, it's certainly call for another Intimidation roll! The lesson here is simple—Intimidation works best from a position of power. Achieve that position first, then apply the skill.

BLOCK

Intimidation can also be used to stop another character dead in his tracks. When you use Intimidation to block, you're just making yourself look so scary that another character doesn't have the will to even try to confront you or force his way past. This is the bread and butter of a bodyguard or bouncer. Just stand there and look intimidating and the threats never even materialize.

Investigation

Investigation is the ability to look for things and, hopefully, find them. You use this skill when you're actively looking for something, such as searching a crime scene or trying to spot a hidden enemy. Characters with a high Investigation include consulting detectives, bounty hunters, and planetary security officers.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Investigation is the skill most commonly called for when you want to look for something like clues. It's also useful for eavesdropping or any other activity where you're trying to observe something over a period of time. The more obscure or trivial the clue, the higher the difficulty. A character trained in Investigation also knows all the latest tricks in evidence gathering—infrared trace analysis, genetic marker flagging, etc.

ASSESSMENT

When looking for deep patterns and hidden flaws, Investigation may be used as an assessment action. This makes Investigation the inverse of Alertness; it's mindful, deliberate perception, in contrast to Alertness's passive mode of operation. This also means that an equivalent Investigation effort is nearly always going to yield better, more in-depth information than an Alertness effort would; the downside is that Investigation is far more time consuming.

DECLARATION

In a clutch, a skilled investigator often notices things that others overlook—ripped clothing, a hidden panel, or a dusting of powder—that offer valuable clues. A truly great investigator can

deduce a lot of information from seemingly trivial details that a more casual observer would overlook.

Leadership

Leadership is a multi-faceted skill. A good leader knows how to direct and inspire people, but he also understands how to run an organization. As such, the Leadership skill covers acts of both types. Characters with a high Leadership include military officers, ship captains, politicians, bureaucrats, and lawyers.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

A good leader has knowledge of organizations and the rules that govern them, including knowledge of laws, bribery, and other means of dealing with red tape; this is why Leadership is a key skill for lawyers. Leadership serves as an all-purpose knowledge skill for knowing how to act in a given organization, including important things like how much to bribe.

Command is another key component of Leadership, and the skill can be used to direct troops, workers, or any other group activity. Any time your character is in a position to give orders to a group of allies (page 191), you can apply your Leadership as a modifier on the allies' skill roll. In a conflict, offering this assistance is your action for the exchange.

ASSESSMENT

With Leadership, you can research to find legal loopholes. When facing a bureaucratic challenge or obstacle, you can analyze the organization causing the difficulty, look for exceptions and weak points, and use red tape to your advantage. You can discover bribable officials or which key official must be contacted in order to actually get something accomplished when lower level individuals are stonewalling.

DECLARATION

In more tense situations, you can use a Leadership roll to analyze the hierarchy of a group. You can observe how the group interacts and determine which individuals are in charge or are key middlemen. This is often helpful when you need to know just where to apply an attack or a bribe.

SPECIAL

Any organization a player character is in charge of uses his Leadership as its default value for any question of how organized it is. This establishes the difficulty for things like bribery or theft, and also gives a general sense of how quickly and efficiently the organization acts. Leadership can be used to acquire assets by leveraging your ability to command resources, influence red tape, or inspire others to be helpful. For more details see page 198, *Buying Things*.

Medicine

Medicine indicates training in the use of medical technology; knowledge of injury, disease, and anatomy; and general health training. Characters with Medicine can apply high-tech treatments, stop bleeding, and sometimes even revive the dead. Characters with high Medicine are doctors, surgeons, medics, nurses, and medical researchers. Using Medi-gel to recover stress (see page 184) doesn't require the use of the Medicine skill.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

A great deal of what characters deal with in the course of an adventure is damage inflicted in combat. Immediately after—or even during—combat, a character with the Medicine skill can patch up other characters. See page 184, *Rules of Play* chapter, for information on adjudicating healing.

More detailed and complex medical procedures are dealt with by surgery. This requires a full medical setup, with a sterile environment and lots of high-tech equipment. Longer term healing—like removing consequences or narrative surgical procedures—needs a stable environment and a skilled practitioner.

A character skilled in Medicine can also improvise cures in a situation where the necessary drugs and equipment are unavailable. Medicine also allows for the creation of medical supplies, given enough materials and a lab to prevent contamination.

ASSESSMENT

Physical damage isn't the only area covered by Medicine. Characters skilled in Medicine can deal with disease, as well as poison. A Medicine roll can be used to identify illnesses or toxins, as well as pharmaceuticals, either by observing the symptoms or effects in a living creature or through directly examining the material in question.

DECLARATION

Medicine can also be used to glean important information in the heat of the moment. Noticing that someone is afflicted by a particular illness, impaired by an old injury, or under the influence of drugs or toxins can lead to interesting and fruitful declarations.

Pilot

This skill measures a character's ability to control and drive any sort of vehicle, from a ground bike to an interstellar freighter. Pilots are familiar with the controls of most standard vehicles and can guide the vehicle in stressful situations and straight courses alike. Characters with a high Pilot include chauffeurs, starship pilots, and bounty hunters.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

In most cases, the Pilot skill is rolled when attempting to guide a vehicle in a time-sensitive or stressful situation. Performing a general move in such a situation, or a dangerous or risky move in normal circumstances, requires a Pilot roll against a difficulty set by the GM.

Piloting can also be used to attempt to shorten the time required for a journey. If the pilot can plot a new course and fly it, he can attempt to make a Pilot roll to reduce the time on the time scale required for the trip.

When engaged in a chase, a character's Pilot skill is used to close the distance between him and the vehicle he's chasing (or increase the distance if he's the one being chased!). It's also used to bring quick resolution to the issues brought up by terrain and other obstacles. The shifts generated by the winner in an opposed Piloting roll is able to either shorten or widen the gap by a like amount.

ASSESSMENT

Pilots can use their knowledge of vehicles to assess the capabilities of their own vessel or to compare and contrast the abilities of two different vehicles in a specific situation. For example, a pilot might look at an opponent's ship and assess its abilities relative to his own and determine who has the advantage in a race requiring tight maneuvering. A pilot can also guess travel time based on his Pilot skill with a great deal of accuracy.

DECLARATION

When using Pilot for declaration, you might identify design flaws in a particular model of vehicle, or discover hidden tricks or abilities that a ship or ground vehicle might possess. A pilot can also identify any special enhancements that have been made to a vessel.

PLACE MANEUVER

In a dogfight, a pilot can use his maneuvering ability to place a temporary aspect on another ship. Most often, this is used to get an enemy in optimal firing range for a gunner or to ensure that a friendly ship or some obstacle is between the pilot's own ship and an enemy vessel. A good dogfighter knows lots of tricks to give his own ship any edge he can manage.

DEFEND

When in ship-to-ship combat, Pilot is used primarily to defend. Corkscrew rolls, sharp turns, dips, and banking are all used to make your ship harder to hit. This does have an effect on a gunner's ability to fire back at an opponent, but other than relying on ship shields and hull armor, Pilot is the best defense.

Rapport

The flipside of Intimidation, this is the ability to talk with people in a friendly fashion, make a good impression, and perhaps convince them to see your side of things. Any time you want to communicate without an implicit threat—such as during an interview—this is the skill to use. Characters with high Rapport include grifters, reporters, and “good” cops.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Any time a character is involved in casual conversation and a skill roll is required, Rapport is generally the appropriate skill. Rapport is far more subtle than most social skills, and targets of Rapport generally don't realize that a character is digging for information or has an ulterior motive. Rapport is used to conceal these motives and project a friendly and likable demeanor. A character with Rapport is charming and witty. Any attempt to charm another character and change his attitude toward the character uses Rapport.

The first time your character meets someone, the GM may call for a quick Rapport roll to determine the impression your character makes.

PLACE MANEUVER

Rapport can be used to weave a rhetorical web. When engaged in a social conflict with another character, you can use Rapport to set traps farther along in the conversation. Seemingly innocuous comments can later force another character to concede a point or reveal more information than intended.



ATTACK

Rapport can be used as a direct attack in a social conflict. This is definitely the velvet glove, as an opponent can be forced off balance or embarrassed without even realizing your malicious intent. When engaging the enemy in witty banter to enrage him—or even in apparently casual conversation—you can use Rapport to get the verbal better of your opponent.

DEFEND

Rapport controls the face your character shows to the world, and that includes what you choose not to show. As such, when a character tries to use Empathy to get a read on your character, it's opposed by Rapport. If you wish to simply reveal nothing, you can use Rapport and take the equivalent of a defensive action, gaining a +2 on your roll. This is over and above the default of a Rapport defense because it's openly obvious—your character is wiping all emotions off of his face. It also requires that you're consciously aware that someone's trying to get a read on you. If your character's trying not to look like he's actively warding off the read, or he isn't really aware he's being read, then he isn't taking a full defensive action and doesn't get the +2.

In the reverse, characters skilled in Rapport are able to control which side of their personality is shown to others—they seem to open up while actually guarding their deepest secrets. Since true things are still revealed about the character, this isn't an inherently deceptive action. When your character opens up, he defends against an Empathy read with Rapport, as usual. If your opponent succeeds and generates at least one shift, he finds something out, as usual. If your opponent fails, he still discovers an aspect—but you get to choose which one. This can effectively be used to stonewall someone without the obvious poker face. On top of it all, you can always choose to reveal something that the other character already knows about.

SPECIAL

Rapport in addition can be used to acquire assets by leveraging your ability to influence others to be helpful, parlay for gifts, or even call (or create) favors. For more details see page 198, *Buying Things*.

Resolve

Resolve is a measure of a character's self-mastery, as expressed through things like courage and willpower. It's an indicator of coolness under fire and also represents the drive not to quit. It plays a key part in efforts to resist torture or psychic attack. Characters with high Resolve include insurgents, leaders, and spies.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Like Endurance, Resolve is a passive skill. Players very rarely ask to roll Resolve; instead, the GM calls for rolls when appropriate. Resolve comes into play whenever a character is attempting to overcome some mental obstacle. Extreme pain, illness, or crippling mental blows can impair a character, but he can roll Resolve to overcome these hardships. Any time your character reaches a point where a lesser person would just give up, you can ask for a Resolve test to have your character overcome the situation and keep going.

DEFEND

Resolve is almost always rolled in response to something, rather than on its own. Its primary role is as defense against most kinds of social manipulation or distraction. Resolve also shines in situations that have spun very much out of control. A character with a high Resolve has a distinct advantage in continuing to keep his head about him and respond calmly. Similarly, when all seems lost, a character with a strong Resolve is often capable of soldiering on.

Resolve is the mental or social parallel to physical Endurance and can often be used to resist Biotic attacks.

SPECIAL

Resolve also determines a character's stress capacity (the length of a character's stress track), since stress in part represents the character's resilience in the face of mental, emotional, and social stress. By default, players have 3 boxes for their stress track. A better than Mediocre (+0) Resolve increases the number of boxes as shown here. Endurance also increases stress capacity and combines with Resolve to increase a character's stress track.

Bonus Stress Capacity	
Resolve	Bonus Stress
Average-Fair	+1
Good-Great	+2
Superb-Fantastic	+3

Resources

Resources is your ability to leverage and liquidate capital to buy and sell things. It represents a raw ability to outright buy things and is a measure of financial resources. The character can identify potentially beneficial deals and maximize them to his benefit. Resources is also used to represent the ability for a character to acquire assets during gameplay, by purchasing, moving capital, or calling in financial favors. For more details see page 198, *Buying Things*.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Resources is typically pitted against another character's Resources skill. A Resources roll is always a negotiation and it's implied that the character is trading something he has for something another character possesses. There's always a give-and-take in a Resources roll. If a character is skilled in Resources, though, he can often get a great deal for very little in return.

A bribe is just another kind of transaction. The character is leveraging their ability to provide Resources in order to curry favor. You give something and receive a favor in return.

ASSESSMENT

Make an assessment with Resources to determine the value or business opportunity that exists in a specific situation. Resources can also be used as a perception skill with a specific goal of finding some situation or individual that's open to lucrative trade or bribery. Not all uses of Resources are strictly legal; Resources can be used to identify where contraband is available—whether it's banned substances, weapons, or other items that may be useful to a group of intrepid agents. If you find yourself in possession of contraband, Resources can help you find a fence to unload the items (although Contacts or Security may be better alternatives).

DECLARATION

Use Resources to make a declaration about valuable items for trade or to discover other characters that may be on the lookout for an opportunity to make deals. You can also make a declaration about an item that's under- or overvalued.

Security

The ability to bypass and overcome security systems, be it alarms, AI, or more traditional types of deterrents such as traps. This also includes knowledge of those systems and the ability to access them, such as hacking a computer security system. Characters with high Security skills include spies, thieves, and even some security officers.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Security is really used for a single thing: to disable alarms and locks. Anytime you wish to override a lock on a door or compartment, you use Security to make the attempt. Security gives your character the skill to override electronic locks and other security devices, as well as lock and bars of more physical nature. Security is also used for safecracking. The difficulty of any Security attempt is determined by the rating of the device you're trying to get past. An ordinary safe is likely to have an Average (+1) or Fair (+2) lock, while a vault in a Citadel bank will have a Superb (+5) or better security system.

ASSESSMENT

Security can be used as a very specialized perception skill, specifically to assess the weaknesses and strengths of a potential target. Here, you're trying to determine the existence of unobvious or hidden aspects, using assessment. Casing a target with Security is limited to security facts, including potential escape routes.

DECLARATION

Security can also be used to make a declaration during the course of a burglary. Again, this utility is limited to security facts. you can identify the brand of ID pad used at a facility and declare the manufacturer's particular security weakness, for example.

SPECIAL

In addition Security can be used to acquire assets by leveraging your ability to steal or obtain them from less than reputable means. For more details see page 198, *Buying Things*.

Stealth

This is the ability to remain unseen and unheard. Directly opposed by Alertness or Investigation, this ability covers everything from skulking in the shadows to hiding under the bed. Characters with a high Stealth include burglars, assassins, and scurrying collectors.

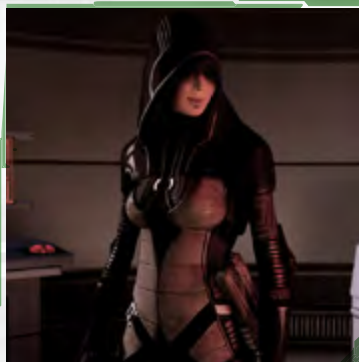
OVERCOME OBSTACLES

When your character is hiding, he's remaining perfectly still and—hopefully—out of sight. Lighting, obstacles and other environmental factors can affect your roll, and the result of your Stealth roll is the basis for any contest with a searcher's Alertness or Investigation. Skulking is the art of moving while trying to remain unnoticed; it's somewhat more difficult for obvious reasons.

Stealth is also used to set up ambushes. When an attack is made from ambush, the target gets one last Alertness check to see if he notices something at the last moment. On a success, the target(s) can defend normally. If that Alertness roll fails, the attack is made with the target's first defense roll at Mediocre (+0).

PLACE MANEUVER

If a character can get out sight, she can hide herself and gain the advantage of Stealth in a future action. This isn't as effective as striking from ambush, as the opponent is already alerted and therefore somewhat ready for a stealthy attack. It's possible to place a maneuver on the opponent and strike from hiding, gaining the normal advantage a temporary aspect confers. One could also place a Stealth maneuver to help their less sneaky friends cross the corridor with a well-timed distraction.



Survival

This is the skill of outdoorsmen. It covers hunting, trapping, tracking, building fires, and lots of other wilderness skills that spacefarers rarely have a use for, unless they happen to crash-land on a hostile planet. Characters with a high Survival include explorers, hunters, and scouts.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Survival also covers the breadth of interaction with animals, from training them to communicating with them, albeit in a limited fashion. This includes handling beasts of burden or carriage animals, as well as common pets. Survival serves as a stand-in for all social skills when dealing with animals. Not to say animals are great conversationalists, but when you're trying to soothe or stare down an animal, Survival is the skill to roll.

The Survival skill covers the basics of riding animals and should operate much as Pilot does when it comes to chases.

Survival can be used to construct blinds and devise other ways to help remain hidden outdoors. On a Mediocre (+0) roll, a character can build a blind or otherwise create a place to hide, which lets Survival modify Stealth rolls. Such a construction takes a few hours to build and lasts a day, plus one extra day per shift.

If characters need to scrounge up something from the wilderness—sticks, bones, sharp rocks, vines that can serve as rope and so on—they can roll Survival to find these things.

ASSESSMENT

When attempting any action in a wild area, you can use Survival to make an assessment of the terrain, weather, and natural resources available. This can be exceptionally useful in advance of any complicated action in a wilderness area. You can make a basic assessment using data available about a wild site, but the most effective use of the skill is to actually scout the area beforehand.

DECLARATION

Survival can be used during an action to declare that there are hazards or valuable resources. A Survival expert can identify blinds set up by other characters, spot hazardous terrain, or identify useful or dangerous animals and plants as he moves through the wilderness.

PLACE MANEUVER

When a conflict breaks out in a natural area, a character with the Survival skill is at a distinct advantage. He may use Survival to place maneuvers using the plants, animals, or terrain in the area. Getting an opponent to step in a tangling vine or disturb the nest of stinging insects can be quite effective in combat.

Systems

Systems gives a character the ability to use the high-tech computer systems that are ubiquitous in the galaxy. These are used to gather or block information, as well as to operate the sensors aboard ships; used this way, Systems serves as a perception skill. Characters with high Systems are technicians, engineers, and hackers. Systems is also the skill used to fuel tech powers (see page 136, **Powers**).

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Any general use of a data system or complex computer console requires a basic Systems roll. Operating a communications console is one of the main ways a character makes use of the Systems skill. Most of the time, use of these systems is routine.

Communication normally doesn't require a Systems check unless there's some kind of difficulty or interference. Communication over extremely long ranges can also be problematic. In these situations, a Systems check can be required to enable successful communications. Systems can also be used to intercept and eavesdrop on communications traffic. If the communication is encrypted, the communications operator has to spend time decrypting it, probably requiring another roll.

Systems can also be used to program robots or change a robot's programming.

You'll need to roll Systems when attempting to hack into protected data files or overcome security programs. Almost all data systems have some sort of basic password or encryption, so unauthorized use always requires a Systems roll. The greater the security, the higher the difficulty. When using an electronic interface to override locks or other physical barriers, use the Security skill rather than Systems.

ASSESSMENT

Systems can be used to assess any area that can be scanned by sensors, whether in a fixed location or from shipboard systems. Ships possess both short and long range sensors. Short range sensors detect fine detail better than long range, and both can be used in either passive or active mode. In passive mode, only the most obvious details can be gleaned, but the sensors don't call attention to their operation. Sensors in active mode can automatically be detected by another sensor operator.

When using Systems as a sensor operator, Systems operates just like a perception skill. Sensors can be used to detect life forms, chemical compositions, atmospheric conditions, or any other information that the GM thinks can logically be gleaned from a sensor sweep.

DECLARATION

Systems can be used to detect sudden changes during the action, and this is when declaration comes into play. For example, Systems can be used to detect when a weapon or defensive system comes on line, whether a communication has been sent, or if enemies are advancing outside of physical sight lines. Systems can be quite useful in ship-to-ship battles, since combat in space generally takes place over distances great enough that regular visual perception is useless.

PLACE MANEUVER

Some tech powers require the placement of a maneuver to yield their effects. In most cases this is a Mediocre (+0) roll but may be modified by the GM and the situation. The use of this power also comes with a free aspect that may be tagged by the tech once for effect. When in a conflict where Systems is in play—such as ship-to-ship combat—Systems can be used to jam communications, disable enemy targeting systems, or fool sensors. These maneuvers are often quite difficult, but they're very useful if they can be brought into play.

ATTACK

Many tech powers rely on a contested roll to generate stress damage. When attacking with a tech power using the Systems skill during an exchange, that skill may not be used to defend until the next exchange.

A skilled operator can actually attack other Systems in an effort to disable them. A Systems attack can't deal stress to a regular opponent, but vehicles or robots are vulnerable to direct Systems attacks. This is an on-the-fly malware assault, where the Systems operator is creating malicious programs and sending them against an opponent during a conflict. Generally, the Systems user needs to somehow gain access to his enemy's data systems for this to work, either actually aboard the ship he's attacking or through some sort of remote access. Most



systems used in combat are closed for precisely this reason. There's a big difference between a robot and a geth; the latter can't be hacked.

DEFEND

A tech defends against another tech's attempts to attack them better than anyone else by using their Systems skill. If you have not actively used your tech abilities in an exchange to attack, you can use Systems instead of Resolve to defend yourself.

When another Systems user is attempting an attack or maneuver, you can use Systems to create encryption to defend against hacking. Systems can be used to throw up an active defense and try to block incursions in real time. This is often most useful in combat when another Systems user is trying to place maneuvers on you.

BLOCK

Some powers have the tech imposing restrictions upon other targets, blocking their actions. In this case the Systems skill sets the difficulty for the target to overcome the block placed on them. To protect a system, a Systems user can set up defenses that act as a block against any future incursions. This is typically the obstacle a hacker is trying to overcome, unless the other Systems user is working in real time to stop the hacker's incursion.

SPECIAL

In addition to the normal usage of the Systems skill this skill is also used to fuel tech abilities. A sufficiently trained tech can create AI structures to assist them, hack a network to overload a power coupling, or even mask their own signature. Using a tech ability requires an omni-tool, found on page 213.

CHAPTER 5

STUNTS





Stunts provide guaranteed situational benefits, special abilities, or minor powers under particular circumstances. They're one of the most powerful uses for refresh, allowing your character to use skills and break the rules in interesting ways.

A stunt may grant a character the ability to use a skill under unusual circumstances, such as using it in a broader array of situations, substituting it for another skill, or using it in a complementary fashion to another skill. A stunt might allow a character to gain an effect roughly equal to two shifts when using a skill in a specific way, or otherwise grant other small effects. Put more simply, stunts allow the usual rules about skills to be broken—or at least bent.

Some notes about stunts:

- Some stunts require the use of a fate point in order to activate.
- In general, you want to take stunts tied to skills you have at Average (+1) or higher.
- You can purchase stunts when creating a character for one refresh per stunt (page 21, *Making a Character* chapter).
- Characters can gain additional stunts as the game progresses (page 193, *Running the Game* chapter).

The stunts in this chapter are presented skill by skill. This isn't a comprehensive list of stunts. In fact, we encourage GMs—and players with GM supervision—to create their own stunts to fit their game. If you're building a character quickly, take a look at the stunts listed here—it may be easiest to simply take all the stunts within a skill group, as they're all thematically similar and can quickly establish what your character's niche is.

As covered on page 21, *Making a Character*, you receive a free number of **stunts** and **skill stunts**. The latter must be spent on skill stunts. The more powerful free stunt allotment can be spent on skill stunts as well or, more likely, making your own abilities or used in **Chapter 6: Powers** for even greater effects, such as being a biotic.

Creating Stunts

It's often best to build your own stunts for your character, although you can also pick from the list of pre-created stunts split up by skill. Creating stunts is relatively easy. Each stunt gives a character some type of advantage or additional use for a skill. The guidelines here help you build your own stunt. Pick one of these suggestions and pair it with a skill to create your own stunt.

While species stunts may be good inspiration to create a stunt effect, note that species stunts are intentionally just a tad more powerful than your normal stunt. There's being tough with **Feel the Burn** and then there's **Krogan Toughness**. The latter you can't create intentionally; it's unique to being a krogan.

GIVE A +2 TO A SPECIFIC APPLICATION OF A NON-ATTACK OR DEFENSE EFFECT.

The specific application can be a maneuver (page 178, *Rules of Play* chapter), because a maneuver isn't an attack since it doesn't inflict stress. The bonus may be reduced to +1 for a broader application or increased to +3 or even +4 for very, very narrowly defined situations.

Stellar Cartographer: Gain a +1 to Academics rolls whenever researching star positions or attempting to recall information about nearby systems. specify a deeper sub-field of knowledge (Terminus Systems), and you gain an additional +1 when the research is relevant to the sub-field.

GIVE A +1 TO AN ATTACK, IMPROVING ITS ACCURACY UNDER A SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCE.

Target-rich Environment: Gain a +1 to attacks with Guns when you're personally outnumbered in a firefight.

GIVE A +2 TO AN ATTACK'S RESULT UNDER PARTICULAR CONDITIONS, APPLIED ONLY IF THE ATTACK WAS SUCCESSFUL .

The Slow Knife Kills: You know a technique to exploit a universal weakness of personal shields. When using Fight to attack an opponent wearing a shield, your weapon gains Damage: +2.

GIVE ONE OR TWO EXPENDABLE 2-SHIFT EFFECTS OR A PERSISTENT 1-SHIFT EFFECT.

An expendable 2-shift effect could be an additional mild consequence, for example. A persistent 1-shift could be Armor: 1 against certain types of things.

Never Give Up: You just don't know when to quit. You may take one additional mild consequence (page 182, *Rules of Play* chapter).

REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TIME NECESSARY TO COMPLETE A PARTICULAR TASK BY TWO SHIFTS .

Capable Researcher: You have an ability to find obscure connections between data. Any scholarly research you do is completed two time increments (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter) faster than usual.

REDUCE THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY A SKILL UNDER A PARTICULAR SUBSET OF CIRCUMSTANCES BY TWO.

Lock Spoofing Maestro: Poor tools are no trouble when picking locks. Any increase to difficulty due to poor tools (such as having only a screwdriver and an expired id card) is reduced by up to two.

COMBINE ANY TWO OF THE 2-SHIFT EFFECTS FROM ABOVE AT HALF VALUE.

Scene of the Crime: You have a practiced eye when combing over a crime scene. In such a circumstance, you gain +1 to your Investigation roll and arrive at your findings one step faster than usual on the time table (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter).

GET A MORE POWERFUL EFFECT, BUT ONLY WHEN YOU SPEND A FATE POINT.

Usually only allowed once per scene because their strength is so high. Remember, these can stack with other character aspects.

Killer Blow: Add Damage: +3 to a Fight attack on a successful hit, once per scene, for a fate point. This stacks with any other damage-increasing stunts for Fight.

Sample Skill Stunts

Here are some pre-made stunts for each of the skills available in the game. Use them as-is or as template suggestions to tweak for your own use.

ACADEMICS

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

Your research has taken you all over the galaxy and there aren't many places you know nothing about. Gain a +2 on any Academics roll to know about the local culture of any planet in the galaxy.

CAPABLE RESEARCHER

You have an ability to find obscure connections between data. Any scholarly research you do is completed two time increments (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter) faster than usual.

EXTENSIVE EDUCATION

Your extensive studies allow you to recall obscure facts about a specific topic. Gain a +2 to Academics rolls when attempting to recall a fact in your field of expertise.

LINGUIST

You have a natural affinity for languages. You speak five additional languages beyond your starting tongue and the common language of the galaxy. You don't need to specify which languages you speak at character creation—you can add a language to one of your slots as needed during play. You can take this stunt multiple times for additional languages.

SCIENTIFIC EXPERT

You're one of the true experts in your field of study and you recognize connections a lesser expert would miss. If you spend a fate point, you can use this ability to attempt a declaration on an Academics roll relating to your field. You declare an aspect as usual on a successful roll, but for each additional two shifts you may declare another aspect. You can only do this once per scene for a particular topic.

STELLAR CARTOGRAPHER

Gain a +1 to Academics rolls when researching star positions or attempting to recall information about nearby systems. Specify a deeper sub-field of knowledge (Terminus Systems worlds), and you gain an additional +1 when the research is relevant to the sub-field.

ALERTNESS

DANGER SENSE

You have a quick and easy awareness of ambushes and other nasty surprises. When you're ambushed (page 92, *Skills* chapter), you're able to take a full defensive action, gaining a +2 on your defense roll, regardless of whether or not you're surprised.

DANGER IS MY MIDDLE NAME

You're never surprised. You may spend a fate point to take a full, regular action even when ambushed.

ON TOP OF IT

You may spend a fate point to go first in an exchange, regardless of your initiative. If multiple people with this stunt decide to use it, they go in turn of their normal initiative; after that, those without the stunt get a chance to act.

ONE STEP AHEAD

You're an expert at anticipating your opponent's plan in a physical fight. You gain a +1 to your attempts to overcome a block or border placed against you in a melee or firefight by an opponent.

READY FOR ANYTHING

Your quick reflexes mean you're always ready for a fight. Gain a +2 to your Alertness for the purposes of determining initiative order.

SHARP EYES

You're always laying a keen eye on your environment. You gain a +2 on Alertness checks to notice important clues or situations that others have overlooked.

ARTILLERY

COVERING FIRE

You know how to place fire for the best screening effect. Gain a +2 bonus when performing blocks with Artillery.

DEVASTATING BARRAGE

You can lay down a massive barrage of fire in a short time frame. If you hit your opponent, you gain +1 to damage on the Artillery attack.

GUNNER'S EYE

You're an expert at calculating arcs and parabola. Gain a +2 on your Artillery roll with any artillery piece that uses indirect fire.

NUKE THE SITE FROM ORBIT

You're a methodical and relentless bomber. When bombarding targets on a planet's surface, gain +2 to damage.

PRECISION TARGETING

You're an expert at precise targeting. Gain a +2 bonus when attempting to hit targets man-sized or smaller.

TARGET THEIR SYSTEMS

You know how to inflict purposeful and specific damage to an enemy ship to take out a particular subsystem. If you spend a fate point when you hit your opponent's ship, you can choose to cause an immediate consequence of your choice to the enemy ship rather than have the ship check off a stress box. You may only do this once per dogfight.

ATHLETICS

ACROBAT

You're able to perform any number of impressive acrobatic feats. Gain a +2 to Athletics rolls for complex maneuvers while simultaneously balancing or hanging from something.

SAFE FALL

You know how to slow yourself and reduce damage when falling. Gain a +2 to Athletics rolls to defend against falls.

MARATHON TRAINING

You know how to conserve your energy when undergoing lengthy athletic activity. You may use Athletics instead of Endurance when making tests against fatigue; in most other cases, you may complement any Endurance rolls with your Athletics.

FAST RUNNER

You're incredibly fast on your feet. When sprinting (page 180, *Rules of Play* chapter), you may move one additional zone with no increased difficulty.

EXPERT CLIMBER

You're an excellent climber. You receive a +2 bonus to any climb.

MIGHTY LEAP

Your leaping ability is prodigious. You may reduce any height related borders (page 180, *Rules of Play* chapter) by up to three.

UNBOUND

If you're physically restrained in some fashion—such as by chains or a mob of people—you gain +2 to your Athletics in your efforts to break out of those bonds.

BIOTICS

BIOTIC SHIELD

When you have ample opportunity, you may use your Biotics to defend against an Artillery or Guns attack. This can only be used for attacks that are two or more zones away.



FLASH FORWARD

You often receive brief visions of the near future, almost unbidden. When you spend a fate point, you can describe something that's about to happen. No roll is necessary. The GM must make sure that what you described occurs in the scene. As with all premonitions, things may not turn out exactly as you expect. You can't describe an enemy or another player character being taken out, but you can describe new threats or hazards suddenly appearing.

FORTRESS OF THE MIND

You're particularly good at defending your mind from psychic attack. Gain the equivalent of Armor: 1 when someone attempts to use psychic powers to harm you.

JUST NOT THERE

You can create excellent distractions in a person's mind. You can conceal objects, including people, from someone's gaze just using your psychic powers, keeping the person from noticing something that's right in front of him. Gain a +2 on your Biotics roll when attempting this.

POWERFUL EMPATH

You're a specialist in calling up a particular emotion in your target. Choose an emotion—rage, fear, love, etc. When you're attempting to increase this emotion in your target you gain a +2 to your Biotic roll.

TELEPATHIC LINK

You can establish a strong mental connection with someone, enabling you to send and receive mental images. This allows for instantaneous communication over long distances. You can't communicate words, but you can show what you see or send mental images of situations or objects to the other person. This is two way, and the other person can do the same even if he doesn't have this stunt or even if he has no psychic powers of his own. The link works over thousands of miles. If the two people are on the same planet, or even in orbit around a planet, it works fine. This link isn't powerful enough for interplanetary communication within a system, much less across space between two star systems.

CONTACTS**EAR TO THE GROUND**

You're well-known and well-liked among the spaceport community. People watch for trouble and give you the tip-off early. Gain a +2 on Contacts rolls to hear in advance about some threat to you or your companions.

GREASE THE WHEELS

You know just when to apply a bit of a bribe to the situation. You gain a temporary Resources aspect to bribe an opponent for one attempt that reduces the difficulty of your Contacts roll by three (page 198, *Buying Things*).

I KNOW A GUY

You're so well-connected and well-traveled that you can find someone you know on almost any planet. Gain a +2 to make a contact in a place where you haven't already established a connection.

INSIDER

You're able to navigate the intricacies of corporate and government bureaucracies easily—not because you understand them, but because you know people within the bureaucracy who can provide you shortcuts. You may roll Contacts instead of Leadership to deal with any sort of bureaucratic entanglement.

TALK THE TALK

You know how to ingratiate yourself with people. Use your Contacts instead of Rapport when making a first impression on someone.

WELL-KNOWN

You're well-known in a specific community—Criminal, Business, Politics, Espionage, and Spacers are the most common. You gain a +2 on any Contacts rolls made within the chosen community. This stunt may be taken multiple times, each time for a different field.

DECEIT

CLEVER DISGUISE

You're an expert at creating disguises. Gain a +2 when using your Deceit skill to disguise yourself, even if you're attempting to pass as another species.

CON MAN

You're a bona fide confidence man, which lets you size people up, easy. You may use your Deceit instead of Empathy to get a read on someone. You may only discover aspects that are character weaknesses—never strengths or other advantages.

THE FIX IS IN

You're an inveterate cheater. You may use your Deceit skill in a game of chance, but doing so means that you're cheating to win. If you fail, you're caught, and the game's loss is treated like a high stakes game, even if it wasn't (take a negative resource aspect). Gamblers don't take kindly to cheaters, either, so you're likely in for a mess of trouble.

THE HONEST LIE

The best lies are the ones that contain a healthy dose of truth. Whenever you incorporate a hefty portion of the truth into a lie, you gain a +2 on your Deceit roll. The truth must be relevant, not unimportant, and significant, not trivial—it must be on par with (or bigger than) the lie, or at least in the ballpark.

MASTERFUL FEINT

You're a tricky fighter; you like to convince an opponent he has you on the run when you are, in fact, still in control of the situation. You gain a +2 to your Deceit when making a maneuver in a conflict to place an aspect like **OVEREXTENDED** on your opponent. This aspect is particularly fragile—it must be used before your opponent's next action or it goes away.

TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

As an accomplished liar yourself, it's particularly hard for someone to pull one over on you. You may use your Deceit skill instead of your Empathy skill when trying to figure out if someone is lying. This isn't the same thing as getting a read on someone, as with the **Con Man** stunt, above; instead, it's a quick check: Is this guy lying? Is it a big lie or a small one? Is he mixing in the truth or is it all fabrication?

EMPATHY

COLD READ

You can size people up in a glance. Normally, using Empathy to get a read on someone requires at least a few minutes of conversation, if not more. You only need a few moments.

HEART'S SECRET

You have an instinct for going right to the heart of a person and finding out what matters most to him. Whenever you make a successful Empathy read on someone, the GM must select one of the aspects that's of utmost importance to the character—normally, the GM has a freer rein in her selection.

HIT THEM WHERE IT HURTS

Your skill at reading people makes you adept at provoking a strong emotional response if you're trying to get them angry, depressed, or something similar. Normally, the Intimidation

skill is used for such efforts; however, if you've succeeded at any Empathy roll against the target previously, you may use Empathy to wage such psychological warfare instead.

PREEMPTIVE GRACE

You're so attuned to social situations that you can act quickly and decisively to shape the situation to your liking. With this stunt, you gain a +2 to Empathy for the purposes of initiative in a social conflict. If you're tied for initiative with someone without this stunt, this stunt breaks the tie. If two or more people have this stunt, resolve their initiative order first, then those without the stunt.

THE SKEPTIC'S EAR

The world is full of lies and liars, and you're always looking out for them. You can tell when someone uses Deceit on you and may take full defensive actions (getting a +2) with your Empathy if appropriate—normally, the use of deception isn't easy to spot in advance, so justifying full defensive actions is difficult. Successfully determining that something is trying to deceive you isn't the same as revealing the truth, however, no matter how well you do.

TRACK THE SOUL

Your understanding of people you've met is sufficiently strong that it gives you an easy sense of how to find them. You can anticipate their moves based on your knowledge of their personality. In any situation where you're tracking down or otherwise trying to find someone you've met before, you may roll Empathy instead of Investigation.

ENDURANCE

BOUNCE BACK

You heal quickly. Reduce the required healing time by two steps on the time chart (page 184, *Rules of Play* chapter) when determining your recovery time from physical injuries.

FEEL THE BURN

You can push through incredible pain. You can take one extra mild physical consequence, allowing you a total of four consequences in a physical conflict.

HERCULEAN STRENGTH

You're incredibly strong, capable of lifting great weights. All weight-based difficulties that don't involve combat are reduced by two steps.

LAST LEG

No matter what comes at you, you keep standing. Use this stunt when you'd be taken out by or otherwise suffer a consequence from a physical hit. If you spend a fate point to remain standing or otherwise defer a consequence or concession for one more exchange or until you're hit again, whatever comes first. You may keep spending fate points this way until you run out. Once the extra time you've bought is up, all your deferred effects come to bear at once.

NOW YOU'VE MADE ME MAD

Once per scene, you may turn a wound you've taken into pure motivation. After you take physical stress, in the next exchange you can spend a fate point and add the value of the wound to an action against the person who inflicted the stress (the original value, not the box it was recorded in if it rolled to a different box).

THICK SKINNED

You just don't feel pain and can take more punishment than a lesser being. You get one additional stress box.

TIRELESS

You can survive on considerably less rest than the average person. Normally, someone who hasn't gotten a regular night's sleep takes a consequence indicating his lack of rest. You may

roll Endurance against a difficulty of Mediocre (+0) to stay up without sleep. The difficulty increases one step per night without sleep. Once you fail a roll, you begin to suffer consequences normally and can't make a roll again until you've made up the lost sleep.

UNSTOPPABLE

Once in motion, you're very difficult to stop due to your sheer muscular force. All blocks to your movement, including borders that can be smashed through, are considered to be two lower.

ENGINEERING

DEMOLITIONS

You're an expert with explosives.

When you can take the time to properly set up charges—placing the bombs at the exact weak points of the targeted structure—the resulting explosion's force rating is increased by three. This benefit doesn't apply without preparation, a specific target structure, and a chance to study the target. Thus, it doesn't apply in situations such as setting charges hastily or lobbing explosive devices at asari commandos.



GREASE MONKEY

If it's a vehicle of any sort, you understand it, intuitively and completely. When making an Engineering roll involving a vehicle—repairing, building, upgrading, etc.—you gain a +1 on your roll; additionally, the time to get the work done is reduced by one step on the time table (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter).

JURY-RIGGER

You can make the best of makeshift materials. When you lack the proper tools or materials, you can still affect repairs or build temporary machinery or systems. Difficulties assessed because of lack of parts or tools are reduced by two, but your jury-rigged solution will only last through one task or scene.

MISTER FIX-IT

You have a talent for getting things repaired under time-critical circumstances. The time it takes for you to fix something is reduced by two steps. If the situation is already operating on the fastest possible amount of time, the difficulty of the repair effort is reduced by one. These bonuses stack with **Grease Monkey**.

REROUTE THE SYSTEMS

You're an expert at damage control. When your ship's been damaged and suffered a consequence, you may make an Engineering roll against a target of Mediocre (+0) for a mild consequence, Fair (+2) for a moderate, or Great (+4) for a severe consequence. If successful, you may deny the free tag against the consequence. The consequence must be compelled at the cost a fate point.

THUMP OF RESTORATION

Sometimes all it takes to get something going again is a good swift thump. You must spend a fate point to activate this ability and roll Engineering against a target of Mediocre (+0). Then you hit the device that isn't working, and it starts working immediately, regardless of the difficulty rating to repair it under time pressure. It'll continue to work for a number of exchanges equal to the shifts gained on the Engineering roll. Once the time is up, the device stops working again, and any efforts to repair it are at a one step higher difficulty (since, after all, you hit the thing). If you wish to thump again, you may do so at the cost of another fate point, but the difficulty for the Engineering roll increases by one for each subsequent thump.

FIGHT

ANYTHING GOES

You suffer no complications for an awkward or improvised weapon—virtually anything can be a lethal weapon in your hands, as long as you can comfortably and casually lift it. The key here is that the weapon must be improvised—a chair, a priceless urn, a beer bottle. There's also a catch—most improvised weaponry doesn't survive more than a few uses. However, you should never need to spend a fate point in order to declare that an improvised weapon is close at hand, unless your surroundings have been deliberately prepared against this, such as a prison cell.



ARMY OF ONE

You're a one-man army; the odds don't matter to you. When you're attacked, you may spend a fate point and, for the rest of the conflict, ignore the bonus your opponents have to their attacks due to their advantage of numbers, typically an assist bonus or minions attached to an opponent. You must defend with Fight to gain this advantage.

BRAWLER

You're at home in any big old burly brawl, especially with multiple opponents and ideally in a bar. When you're personally outnumbered in a fight, your defense rolls with Fight are at +1. When fighting two or more opponents, you deal one additional stress on a successful hit.

CLOSE AT HAND

You can bring your weapon to hand faster than the eye can track. You never take a supplemental action penalty when drawing your weapon if you have it nearby or on your person. If someone is actively blocking such an action (page 179, *Rules of Play*), treat that block as if its value is two steps lower.

CRIPPLING BLOW

When you injure an opponent with Fight, you may spend a fate point to force the target to take a consequence rather than check off a stress box. This can only be done once per opponent in a given fight scene. The target may choose to concede rather than take the consequence.

DEMORALIZING STANCE

As a trained fighter, you can adopt a stance that makes it unequivocally clear how capable you are of handing someone his ass. Whenever displaying your fighting stance or techniques, you may roll Fight instead of Intimidation.

FLAWLESS PARRY

You're skilled at defending yourself when holding a weapon. When you take a full defense action using Fight, gain a +3 bonus rather than the usual +2.

HAMMERLOCK

When you perform a block (page 179, *Rules of Play* chapter) by personally grabbing hold of someone, you do so at +1. Any time that person tries to break through the block and fails, you may inflict a single point of stress.

RIPOSTE

You can reverse an enemy's attack on you into a dangerous reply. When you're physically attacked by an opponent within the same zone as you, and you successfully defend yourself

using Fight well enough to gain spin (page 174, **Rules of Play** chapter), you may use that spin to inflict a single point of physical stress on your attacker, immediately, as a free action.

STRIKE TO THE HEART

You can deliver a deadly accurate blow that few opponents can resist. Once per scene on a successful hit, spend a fate point to add Damage: +3 to your attack. This stacks with any other damage-increasing stunts for Weapons.

GUNS

LONG SHOT

For whatever reason, you're able to take shots at a greater distance than you should be. You can use pistols an additional zone away; rifles and other such weaponry also reach an additional two zones.

QUICK DRAW

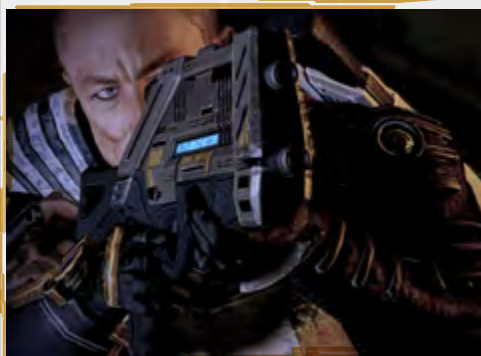
You can bring your gun to hand so fast it's as if by magic. You take no penalty for drawing a gun as a supplemental action; if someone is actively blocking such an action, treat that block as if its value is two steps lower.

RAIN OF LEAD

You're skilled at laying down a scathing hail of suppressive fire. When using Guns to perform a block, you can ignore up to two points of penalties imposed by the GM due to the complexity of the block.

SHOT ON THE RUN

You're light on your feet with a gun in your hand, able to keep the gunplay going while evading attempts to harm you. You may use Guns as a defense skill against physical attacks; normally, Guns can't be used defensively. Remember, if you use your Guns skill to defend you can't attack with it during that same exchange.



STAY ON TARGET

You're a deliberate shooter. Taking slow and careful aim can be done as a maneuver, placing a temporary aspect on your target—such as **IN MY SIGHTS**. When performing an aiming maneuver against a target, you may automatically do so (no roll required) if you've brought along a targeting scope or similar aiming device—this is in addition to whatever bonuses the scope itself provides.

TWO FISTED SHOOTER

In combat, you fight with a gun in each hand. Normally, shooting with two guns just looks cool without providing a bonus. With this stunt, when you fire two weapons you have a decisive advantage. When you use two guns and hit a target for at least one stress, you gain +1 to damage on the attack.

INTIMIDATION

AURA OF MENACE

You are the terror of all those who oppose you. Others are often at a loss to describe what exactly about you is so unsettling; regardless, it has the effect of rooting them to the spot and believing the threats you make. Once per scene per target, you may spend a fate point to intimidate your target as a free action, no matter what the circumstances; this happens immediately if you're between actions, or immediately after the current action underway. This free action is in addition to any other action you might take during the exchange.

INFURIATE

You have a real talent for making people very angry. When deliberately trying to get someone angry at you, you receive a +2 bonus. If this results in an attack or other action against you by your target, you may use Intimidation to complement the skill you use on the first exchange, no matter the circumstance—after all, you made it happen, so you were ready for it.

THE PROMISE OF PAIN

You make a promise—really, a threat—to a target, and make an attack using Intimidation. If you successfully hit for one or more stress, you may spend a fate point to immediately force a mild psychological consequence instead. The consequence must represent an appropriate response to the threat—such as **FOLDING UP IN FEAR** or **A BROKEN SPIRIT**. The target may choose to concede rather than take the consequence.

SCARY

You're just someone people don't want to cross, and that's clear even to other intimidating folks. Normally, Intimidation attempts are resisted by Resolve; you can counter Intimidation attempts with your own Intimidation.

SUBTLE MENACE

You exude menace far in excess of your capability to act. Even bound and behind prison bars, you're so ripe with the promise of the awful things you could do that you're still scary. You may use Intimidation no matter what the power imbalance in the situation is, and your target's bonuses for acting from a superior position are reduced by 2 (to a minimum of +0).

UNAPPROACHABLE

Opponents have trouble trying to manipulate you when they're constantly reminded of how scary you are. You may use Intimidation in lieu of Resolve to defend against Rapport, Deceit, and Empathy.

INVESTIGATION**FOCUSED SENSES**

You can concentrate on one of your senses to the exclusion of all others. The sense must be specified when you take this stunt. With a few moments of concentration, you enter a focused state. For as long as you use nothing but Investigation, all Investigation actions you take using the specified sense gain a +3.

IMPOSSIBLE DETAIL

When you're paying attention, your senses operate at a profound level of focus; you pick up on details that others just won't notice. Reduce difficulties due to a physical detail being too small or subtle by two.

LOCATION AWARENESS

You have a strong visual memory; when you revisit a place where you've used Investigation before, you may make an immediate Investigation check to determine what's changed since you were last there, as if it were an unusually detailed Alertness check.

PIN THE TAIL

You're tough to shake once you're on someone's trail. Gain a +2 to your Investigation rolls when trying to keep track of a target using surveillance. When shadowing someone using Stealth, you may use your Investigation skill as a complement.

QUICK EYE

You can investigate a location quite quickly while still being very thorough. All Investigation efforts you make happen one to two time increments faster than normal; you can either make one or two additional rolls in the same amount of time, or simply conclude your investigation faster than you would otherwise.

SCENE OF THE CRIME

You have a practiced eye when combing over a crime scene. In such a circumstance, you gain +1 to your Investigation roll and arrive at your findings one step faster than usual on the time table (page 174, **Rules of Play** chapter).

LEADERSHIP

ALLIES

You have allies that assist you! You start with two allies of Average (+1) quality (page 191, **Rules of Play** chapter). These allies come with three upgrades that you may use to improve them. See page 191, **Allies**, for more details on how allies are built and used in play.

Barring some special circumstances, allies return between adventures, although they may not be the same allies. If your asari commando team dies in a fireball explosion at the end of the adventure, your next group of asari commandos is (presumably) an entirely different team.

You can take this stunt multiple times to increase the starting number of allies you receive by +1 and also giving you another set of three upgrades to spend on your allies.

Allies never have fate points to spend; they use your own.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

When you give an order, people hop to it. If you spend a fate point and command another character to perform a certain action, he gains a +3 on his roll if he complies. The command must be a specific use of one of the character's skills, such as "Fly behind the asteroid to lose them." You may do this once per scene.

COMPANION

You have a companion—a close confederate or lieutenant who is willing and able to accompany you on your adventures. Give your companion a name and write a brief sentence describing his personality and his relationship to you. Your companion has three advances for you to spend as you wish (page 192, **Rules of Play** chapter). This stunt may be taken multiple times, defining a different companion each time.

CUT THE RED TAPE

You're familiar with how bureaucracy works—or rather, doesn't work. When dealing with complex paperwork or organizational hierarchy, you can speed things up by two time increments just by knowing who to talk to and what's truly important and what isn't.

GREASE THE WHEELS

You know just how much to use for a bribe and when to do it. When using Leadership to determine the amount to offer for a bribe, gain a +2 to your roll.

LEGAL EAGLE

You're very well acquainted with the law and are skilled at exploiting loopholes in it. You gain a +2 when using Leadership to deal with legal matters.

MEDICINE

THE BEST OF CARE

With a proper facility, you can greatly assist another character's healing process. If you get the other character to rest and can tend to him regularly, you reduce the amount of time it takes to recover from a consequence by two steps on the time chart (page 174, **Rules of Play** chapter). The character must rest and be immobile for the duration of the time required. If the patient doesn't rest during care, the effects of this stunt don't apply.

BOOSTER

You can use modern drugs to get someone going in combat. Until the encounter is over, the character can spend fate points to avoid being taken out, as described in the **Last Leg** stunt (page 104). Once the encounter ends, however, the character takes the mild consequence **EXHAUSTED** in addition to any other consequences taken during the conflict.

FIELD MEDIC

You have a talent for delivering medical care in the field. Normally, someone providing first aid can remove a stress mark for every two shifts gained on the roll (page 184, **Rules of Play** chapter). With this stunt, every shift past the first one improves the level of stress that may be removed—so three shifts removes a checkmark up to the three-stress mark, rather than the two-stress mark. If you roll well enough to remove a stress mark that's higher than the subject's physical stress capacity (e.g., six or more shifts for a character who has Mediocre (+0) Endurance), you can remove a mild physical consequence.

MIRACLE WORKER

You aren't just a doctor; you're a miracle worker. You can bring back those that others think are beyond hope. If you treat someone who's been taken out, you can revive him if you spend a fate point. All his injuries remain, but he's no longer taken out. This ability can even be used to revive people who are apparently dead, so long as most of their vital parts are relatively intact.

NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS

You're an expert at getting the injured back in action. If you spend a fate point, you can move a physical consequence one step down on a character's sheet. A Medicine check is not required, but you can change a moderate consequence to a mild one, or even make a severe consequence only moderate. You can only do this once per character per session.

PATCH 'EM UP

You can get the injured back on their feet in no time. If you spend a fate point, you can erase a mild consequence from a character's sheet in the middle of the action with a quick Medicine roll through the quick use of medi-gel on a wound.

PILOT DAREDEVIL

You can squeeze a vehicle through places where it has no business fitting. Normally, you'd have to spend a fate point to declare that the vehicle has enough clearance space to fit through. You never need to spend a fate point—if it could fit, it does. What's more, if you do spend a fate point, you can fit the vehicle into places it absolutely should not be able to go. This stunt also helps when landing vehicles in improbably tight quarters.

DEFENSIVE FLYING

You're good at keeping your vehicle in one piece. When attempting a Pilot maneuver in a chase (page 229, **Running The Game** chapter), you may treat the difficulty as if it were one lower. The difficulty of the maneuver itself isn't affected, however, for any vehicles that might be chasing you.

HARD TARGET

You're hard to keep in the gun sights. You gain a +2 to defensive uses of Piloting in dogfights.

ONE HAND ON THE STICK

You're good at handling distractions. Piloting while performing another action—such as firing the ship's weapons—normally results in a -1 penalty. You don't suffer that penalty, regardless of whether you're rolling Pilot (piloting is your primary action and the supplemental action is something minor) or rolling some other skill (some other action is primary, but keeping the vehicle steady isn't all that challenging, so piloting is a supplemental action). Furthermore, if

your Pilot skill would restrict or modify a primary skill, your Pilot skill has no negative effect, even if it's lower than the primary skill you're using.

STICK TO THEIR SIX

Once you're tailing someone, you're practically impossible to shake. When chasing another vehicle, gain a +1 against any maneuvers your target attempts.

WALK AWAY FROM IT

You have a great instinct for crash-landing vehicles and can walk away from even the most catastrophic-seeming landings. When you pilot a vehicle into its crash landing, you and your passengers survive. The crash is described, without any reference to harm to you or your passengers, and you all stagger out after the landing with all of your physical stress cleared and a single mild consequence to reflect the dangers survived. Every survivor must spend half of their remaining fate points, rounded up. They must have at least one to do this. If a character has no fate points, she's taken out.

RAPPORT

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

You're good at drawing people out, getting them to talk about themselves. If you're engaged in a long conversation with someone, you can use your Rapport instead of Empathy to get a read on her (page 81, **Skills** chapter) as you get her to hint at or flat out reveal secrets about herself and her past.

CENTER OF ATTENTION

You're used to focusing people's attention on you and keeping it. Any time you use your Rapport to attract attention and distract someone you gain a +2 bonus to your roll.

FIVE MINUTE FRIENDS

You're a naturally friendly person and seem to find friends quickly even if you've never visited a place before. If you spend a fate point, you can make a steadfast friend in a place you've never been, given a chance for five minutes of conversation. With this stunt, nearly impossible opportunities to make friends become merely improbable, improbable opportunities probable, and probable opportunities outright certain.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

You're adept at catching the eye of the opposite sex and keeping it once you've got it. Any seduction attempts you make with Rapport receive a +2 bonus provided the target is someone who could be receptive to it (this isn't always a simple case of gender and preference).

SMOOTH OVER

You're adept at stepping into a bad situation and dialing it down to something more reasonable. As long as you aren't the direct reason someone's upset, your attempts to calm him down using your Rapport receive a +2 bonus.

STARFARER

Your mastery of etiquette leaves you comfortable, even glib, in any situation. You never suffer any penalties or increased difficulty from unfamiliarity with your setting, making it easy to maneuver through local customs you haven't encountered before and to cover up any gaffes with a laugh and a sparkle in your eye.

RESOLVE

INNER STRENGTH

When someone's trying to get inside your head—whether through biotic means or through extensive torture—you receive a +2 to your Resolve defense even without resorting to a full defense action. You may go for a full defense, but it only nets you a +3 in total.

IRON WILL

You can push through pain and injury and just keep on going. You get one additional stress box.

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

You always seem to be in a safe spot, without moving in any obvious way. When you're engaged in physical combat, you may use Resolve as your combat skill when defending, moving, or taking cover as long as you merely saunter—no sprints allowed. To the outside world, it appears that you're simply staying put, unfazed as gunfire and other attacks miss you by scant inches.

SMOOTH RECOVERY

Most people with Resolve can keep things together under stress, but for you it's second nature; you can regain your footing in the face of even the direst of outcomes outside of physical conflict. You may take an additional mild consequence.

STILL STANDING

You simply don't know when to quit. If you spend a fate point, you may take one additional moderate consequence of any type.

UNFLAPPABLE

You simply aren't prone to fear. While Intimidation efforts against you might provoke other emotions, they rarely scare you; gain a +2 to your Resolve when defending against a purely fear-based Intimidation action.

RESOURCES**COOL CUSTOMER**

You're cool and controlled while in negotiations. You use Resources rather than Resolve to defend against Intimidation when attempting to make a deal. Outside of negotiations, this stunt can't be used.

EAR FOR BULL

You can tell when someone's trying to fool you. Instead of Empathy, you can use Resources to detect a falsehood. This isn't the same as getting a read on someone; it's just a quick check to determine if someone is lying.

LONG TERM INVESTMENT

You've had your money for a while now, and you've had a chance to make several strategic investments that you can cash in when pressed for money. Once per session, you may sell one of these investments to get a +2 to any one Resources roll, as if you'd spent a fate point to invoke a Resources aspect.

MERCHANT PRINCE

You know how to ferret out a good deal and you know how to get the goods you need in order to make a trade. When attempting to find trade goods to sell, or when searching for a buyer once you have the material, you gain +2 to your Resources roll.

READY CASH

Roll the fate dice. If you achieve at least two **+** results then you have a temporary resource aspect (see page 198, **Buying Things**) to use. This may only be attempted once per session and the aspect must be used in the same session it was achieved.



SMELL FEAR

You can sniff out weaknesses in your negotiating opponent. You may use Resources to get a read on someone (page 81, **Skills** chapter) over the course of negotiating with her. The aspect revealed must be directly relevant to the negotiation at hand.

SECURITY**CAT BURGLAR**

You're an expert second-story man. Use Security instead of Athletics to make difficult climbs or acrobatic feats in order to break in to some place.

CRIMINAL MIND

You have an acute understanding of what it takes to burglarize a place and can investigate such crimes from the perspective of the criminal instead of the cop. You may use your Security skill instead of Investigation when investigating a crime committed by someone using the Security skill.

HIDDEN WEAKNESS

You have a talent for spotting flaws in a location's security protocols. Gain a +2 when using Security to pass a security checkpoint without arousing suspicion.

MENTAL BLUEPRINT

You're highly skilled at visualizing the whole of a target based on just a part of it. When casing a location and spending a scene doing so, you gain a +2 on your Security roll.

TRIPWIRE SENSIBILITIES

You've run into enough traps that you've developed an instinct for avoiding them. You may roll Security instead of Alertness or Investigation to uncover or otherwise avoid stumbling onto a trap.

STEALTH**BUMP AND GRAB**

You're exceptionally skilled at taking advantage of distractions in order to make a quick grab. You may spend a fate point to make a simple Stealth attempt to do something—pick a pocket, palm an object—as a free action.

IN PLAIN SIGHT

You suffer no environment-based difficulty increases when using Stealth. Even when you're out in the open and wouldn't normally be able to justify using Stealth, you may. Also, once you're hidden, even people actively searching for you don't get a +2 to their Alertness or Investigation rolls. This ability only functions as long as you don't move or do anything other than hide. The moment you do something else, you break cover and are immediately visible.

LIGHTFOOT

It's difficult to track you when you take care to walk lightly. Traps and devices that depend on pressure or some other weight-based trigger are two steps easier for you to circumvent; any attempts to trace the physical evidence of your steps—such as with Investigation or Survival—face a difficulty two higher than you rolled.

LIGHT TOUCH

As a pickpocket, you're a particularly light touch. The target of your pickpocket attempt doesn't get the normal +2 bonus to detect your work.

LIKE THE WIND

When you move while using Stealth, the bonus to notice you (page 180) is cut in half. This means that out of conflict, observers are at +1 for a slow creep, +2 for walking pace, +3 for jogging, and +4 for a full-out run; in a conflict, observers are only at +1 per zone moved.

QUICK EXIT

A momentary distraction is all you need to vanish from the scene. Provided you aren't in the midst of a conflict, you may roll a quick contest between your Stealth and the highest Alertness in the room. If you succeed, the next time someone turns to look at or talk to you, you're not there.

SHADOWED STRIKE

You strike from out of the darkness, leaving your foes bewildered and in pain. When hidden, you can launch an attack while remaining hidden, using your Stealth for any defense rolls for the duration of that exchange. Once you strike, you must find another hiding place before you can strike using this stunt again.

SUCKER PUNCH

If you're initiating an attack on someone who isn't expecting it, you may use your Stealth skill as your attack skill on the first exchange, provided you can directly interact with your target and narrate a reasonable distraction.

SURVIVAL**ANIMAL COMPANION**

You've cultivated a close companion from the animal kingdom. Design this companion with the companion rules (page 192, **Rules of Play** chapter) with a few changes and limitations. Animal companions have four advances. Your companion operates only with a "physical" scope and must spend at least two of its advances on Skilled or Quality. Any Skilled advances must be taken from a short list: Athletics, Endurance, Fight, Stealth, and Survival. You may take only one skill outside of that list, within reason, based on the animal type. If the animal is an appropriate size, it may be ridden as a mount, at +1 to Survival.

DUE NORTH

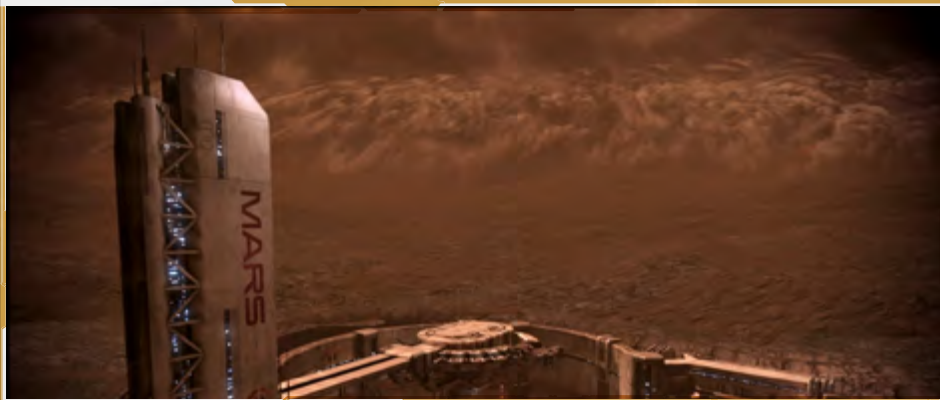
Your natural talent for navigation is such that you rarely get lost. You have an unerring sense of direction—even underground or on a space station—without any devices to guide you. You get a +2 to Survival when trying to find your way out of a place and you face no familiarity penalties to your efforts to navigate.

EXPERIENCED SURVIVOR

You've lived rough on a wide variety of alien worlds. Any penalties assessed for being unfamiliar with the local environment are reduced by two.

ONE WITH THE WILDERNESS

You move silently and almost imperceptibly through wild areas. You can conceal your movements and hide easily in a natural environment. When attempting to hide or sneak in the wild, you may substitute your Survival skill for Stealth.



SCAVENGER

You always seem to be able to come up with whatever you need in a natural environment. Whether searching for firewood, material for a fishhook, or any other item you wish to scrounge from the local environment, you gain a +2 to your Survival roll to find just the thing you need.

TRACKER

You're skilled at tracking and can infer a great deal of information from a trail. When studying tracks, you may roll Survival. For each shift from this roll, you can get one piece of information about the person or creature being tracked—weight, how they were moving, and so on. Normally, Survival can't be used to track something, leaving such attempts at a Mediocre (+0) default.

SYSTEMS

BLACK HAT

You're a top-tier hacker, capable of devastating assaults. When direct assaulting a system and attempting to deliver stress, your malware gains +2 to damage on a successful assault.

DECRYPTING

You're an expert at hacking encrypted signals and listening in on protected conversations. When attempting to crack an encrypted communiqué, you gain a +2 on your Systems roll.

DEEP SCAN

You're a maestro on the sensor console. If you spend a fate point, you can make a quick active scan without risking detection, just as if you'd used the passive scanners. The GM gives you results as if you'd performed a full active scan, but your activity is no more detectable than the typical passive sensors.

MASTER JAMMER

You know how to disrupt enemy sensors and jam weapon lock-on attempts. When an enemy attempts lock-on, you gain a +2 on your Systems roll to break the lock.

ROBOTICIST

You're very familiar with robotic programming systems. You can reprogram a robot or VI's skill tree very quickly. When adjusting a VI's skill tree, you can complete the reprogramming two time steps faster on the time scale than normal (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter).

SECURITY EXPERT

You have an instinctive feel for system security, both how to put it in place and how to overcome it. When setting up security on your own systems and files, your Systems block gains a +1 against attempts to hack it. In addition, when attempting to crack someone else's security you can usually figure out a way more quickly than the average user. You can move the time required for each attempt two steps down the time scale (page 174, *Rules of Play* chapter).





CHAPTER 6

POWERS



Powers are those abilities that differentiate themselves even further from stunts in that not only are they powerful, they drive many of the elements that make *Mass Effect* unique. They are comprised of three areas: biotic mastery, tech mastery, and combat mastery. Intentionally, because of their utility and strength, both the biotic and tech mastery require a refresh point just to access; individual powers are bought at a cost of an additional point of refresh each. Some species—such as the asari and quarians—have these costs already built into their species templates.

Powers have a strong mechanical component inherently, but they should also have a strong role-playing component and play into your character's aspects. Your high concept or background—at least—should make reference to any mastery your character has. Other aspects may also be related to the power masteries or you could achieve new aspects through play. Consider, what was it like for your character to discover they were a biotic? Was it a traumatic experience? Was the character looked down upon or thrust into the limelight because of their unique ability? Having a mastery power may not make you unique per se, but it does make them notable from a role-playing perspective.

Biotic Mastery

All asari are naturally biotic from birth, though not all choose to develop their abilities. Biotics of other species are individuals who were exposed to dust-form element zero, or "eezo," in utero and subsequently developed eezo nodules throughout their bodies. These nodules can generate mass effect fields when energized by electrical impulses from the nervous system. Eezo exposure is by no means guaranteed to result in biotic ability. On the contrary, most fetuses that are exposed are not affected at all. Others will develop brain tumors or other horrific physical complications. In humans, only about one in ten eezo-exposed infants will develop biotic talents strong and stable enough to merit training, and these abilities are not always permanent. In extremely rare cases, humans who were exposed in utero but did not manifest biotic talents as children can develop them during young adulthood through additional exposure.

Once a person has been identified as having biotic ability, they may be outfitted with a surgically implanted amplifier, usually installed around the time of puberty, in order to make their talents strong enough to be useful. Some races have experimented with biotic drugs to stimulate power instead, such as Red Sand. They must then develop conscious control over their nervous system, which is a long, slow, difficult ordeal, sans for the asari, who possess a degree of natural control. Biofeedback therapy is commonly used to aid in this process. Once trained, a biotic can generate and control dark energy to move objects, generate protective barriers, or restrain enemies. Biotic abilities are activated using a technique called "physical mnemonics," in which the biotic uses a physical gesture to cause neurons to fire in a certain sequence, sending an electrical charge through their eezo nodules and creating the desired effect. A biotic may enhance certain aspects of his or her biotic abilities by installing implant upgrades called bio-amps (page 210).

To be a biotic and have access to the Biotic skill costs 1 refresh. Biotic powers are considered stunts—albeit very powerful ones—and are purchased at a cost of 1 refresh each. An asari foregoes this initial buy-in cost as all asari are biotic at birth and is covered in the cost of their species package.

BIOTIC EXPLOSIONS

Certain biotic and tech powers, when used in conjunction, can explode for devastating effects. Typically this requires a target to be affected by a persistent power of effect (Pull, Reave, Singularity, etc) and are struck with another—but different—attack to trigger a biotic explosion. This detonation power need not necessarily be biotic in nature; the source power determines the type of explosion, the detonation power is merely the catalyst.

This explosion immediately ends all persistent effects on the target from the initial biotic power as well as the new one but does Damage: 4 to all characters in the same zone (Area 1) as the target. If a target is aware of the explosion and able to react, they may defend with a free Biotics or Athletics check versus the damage value, subject to the rules for using a skill to attack or defend during an exchange. Targets unaware of a biotic explosion automatically have a defense of Mediocre (+0). Success indicates that the character is able to leap clear or duck under cover. Failure indicates that the character takes stress equal to the damage value of the explosive.

Some powers, such as Singularity, can potentially explode on their own at the end of their duration. Other powers, such as Barrier and Nova, can have secondary effects or varying damage values.

Biotic explosions do two times their normal damage against biotic barriers and kinetic shields.

Biotic Explosions	
Biotic Source Powers	Detonation Powers
Barrier	Charge
Dark Channel	Flare
Lash	Lash (except armored targets)
Pull	Nova
Reave	Reave
Shockwave (with LIFTING SHOCKWAVE aspect)	Shockwave
Singularity	Singularity (with EXPLOSIVE SINGULARITY aspect)
Stasis	Slam
Warp	Throw
Slam (only detonated by Warp)	Warp

BIOTIC POWERS

Every biotic may use their powers for some small effects (see the Biotic skill, page 78) but those that have truly mastered the mass effect fields that their bodies are capable of generating can manifest a number of unique abilities.

Each biotic power has a number of elements that are used to adjudicate their effects:

Type: Whether the power is manifested by the Biotic skill via a maneuver, attack, or block and the default difficulty (if any).

Range: The distance at which the power may be used. Powers with a range of zero effect engaged (melee) opponents or the biotic herself. For some powers this is fixed, for others it is dependent on the number of shifts received.

Duration: How long the power's effect will persist in exchanges. For some powers this is fixed, for others it is dependent upon the number of shifts received. Round up when called for.

Recharge: The number of exchanges before the power may be used again. A recharge of zero means the power can be used every exchange freely. Note that several powers and items can increase or decrease a character's recharge value for their powers. The most common is bulk but also includes bio-amps and omni-tools (pages 199, 205, 210, and 213).

Aspects: The various aspects attached to a power that may be invoked by characters or compelled by the GM. A maneuver places an aspect (invokes it) upon the biotic at no charge as selected by the player. Other aspects may be invoked at the time of creation at a cost of 1 fate point each. The GM may compel any power's aspect, as they all potentially exist at the time of creation as part of the power. The player may elect to refuse the compel at the cost of 1 fate point. All power aspects are freely visible (known) to all participants. Invoking a power's aspect at the time of creation costs 1 fate point; aspects may not be added retroactively. Should a fate point be spent to add an aspect but the roll to generate the power fails, the fate point is lost.

Example: Don's character, Vala, is placing a Singularity into the adjacent zone which will require a Biotics roll to determine its strength. Doing so is a Fair (+2) maneuver, meaning she will need to beat the target difficulty with her roll. She rolls a , , , and ; her Biotics skill with bonuses is +4. All told, her roll is a 5, beating the required Fair (+2) difficulty by three shifts. Success and she generated spin (page 174)! Vala also elects to spend a fate point to make her singularity contain the **VARIABLE GRAVITY WELL** aspect, allowing it to affect all targets in the zone. Her number of shifts (3) determines the level of block placed on those affected that they will need to overcome. It also determines that the singularity has a duration of 3 exchanges. Because using Singularity is a maneuver, there is no defense roll for the victims per se; they will have to overcome the block. The maneuver also automatically places an aspect on any affected target in the zone without shields of **FLOATING HELPLESSLY**. This aspect may be used by Vala or her fellow characters until the target breaks the Good (+3) block, the singularity is detonated as part of a biotic explosion (page 118), or after 3 exchanges, the duration of the singularity.

When Vala was placing the singularity the GM could have compelled one of its aspects, such as **OVERWHELMING SINGULARITY**, causing it to affect all targets in the zone, including her companions! To reject the compel Don must spend one of his fate points. If he accepts the compel, the singularity gains this additional aspect, the compel effects, and he receives a fate point from the GM, making it become an **OVERWHELMING, VARIABLE GRAVITY WELL** singularity!



BARRIER

Barrier reinforces the biotic with a powerful field. The field can be detonated to damage nearby targets. It reduces all forms of damage taken as shields do. Tech Armor is completely incompatible with biotic barriers and the two cannot be combined. When added to kinetic shields the barrier pool is drained first with the shields following suit. When the term "barrier" is used within *Mass Effect RPG* it effectively includes kinetic shields as well.

Type: Maneuver; Mediocre (+0) difficulty

Range: 0 (self) or see text

Duration: Scene

Recharge: 3 (see text)

Barrier provides a pool of points to a character's kinetic shield pool equal to 1 point per every three shifts of the Biotic skill roll, rounded up. Barriers act in concert with a character's shields and are a Mediocre (+0) difficulty roll to activate in normal situations. The barrier follows all normal rules for recharging as shields and will remain active until the character detonates or drops it. A barrier recharges simultaneously with shields; only one supplementary action is required.

When activated, the barrier inherently causes all biotic powers to be more difficult to use. All biotic powers have their recharge increased by 1 while the barrier is in place. The barrier power's recharge is unaffected, however.

When the barrier is created (a maneuver) the character may apply one aspect below at no cost.

A character may use the Nova power—if purchased—to self-detonate their barrier (page 127) to damage targets in the same zone as the character. Otherwise, the barrier can only be detonated as part of a biotic explosion by specific powers as indicated on page 118.

CHAOTIC BARRIER

Invoke: The barrier is unusually strong and its strength is +1. The barrier's detonation damage increases by +1 as well if using Nova. This aspect may be invoked multiple times at a cost of a fate point each.

Compel: The barrier is unusually fragile and requires a supplementary action to recharge every round or else the effect ends.

DOMINATE BARRIER

Invoke: The barrier increases the effectiveness of the biotic's other powers. While in effect, receive a +1 bonus to Biotics.

Compel: The barrier is completely unstable and imposes a -1 penalty to the user's Biotics rolls.

FLEXIBLE BARRIER

Invoke: The barrier is larger than normal and surrounds the biotic and all allies within that zone (Range: 1). All allies in the zone benefit from the barrier's shield rating. The barrier may be recharged as per normal but cannot move; characters can freely move in or out of the barrier. Opponents who are in the same zone as the barrier ignore it when dealing damage, however.

Compel: The barrier's mass effect field has been compacted and as such is less effective. Reduce the strength of the barrier by -1. This reduction also reduces detonation damage by a like amount.

VARIANCE BARRIER

Invoke: The barrier's mass effect field is in harmony with the biotic and does not apply its normal recharge penalty when using biotic powers.

Compel: The barrier's mass effect field creates unusually disruptive interference and further increases the recharge penalty by +1 while in effect.

CHARGE

The biotic uses their powers to augment speed and strength, charging across the battlefield towards a target. This culminates in a powerful collision that sends unprotected enemies flying backward, inflicting massive damage. The collision negates the mass of an enemy, allowing for even the largest of enemies to be sent flying backwards.

This power also compensates for impeding obstacles by allowing the biotic to 'phase' through solid objects en route to their target. It can also be used on enemies who have been levitated by other biotic powers, and can multiply physics damage to send them off into the distance.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 2

Recharge: 3

This attack does Weapon 2 damage, modified by the number of shifts achieved versus the target's Athletics, Biotics, or Endurance. If the amount of stress inflicted exceeds the target's Endurance then the target receives the aspect **KNOCKED PRONE** and falls to the ground (a supplemental action to clear on their turn). During the attack the biotic can move freely through any intervening objects and ends their attack—if successful—adjacent to the target (melee engaged). Charge does +2 damage versus barriers and kinetic shields.

In addition, the target is potentially knocked back by the force of the charge. To knock a target back one zone requires the maneuver to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance. If a target is suspended by another power such as Pull or Singularity then their weight factor is 0. Knocking back a target in this manner causes no additional damage unless there are intervening objects in the way that prevent movement. The target takes stress damage equal to the number of zones it is knocked through until it is forced to stop by the intervening object(s).

BLISTERING CHARGE

Invoke: For purposes of determining knockback—and only knockback—increase the total shifts received by two.

Compel: The charge still hits with devastating effect but the kinetic energy is dispelled upon contact; the charge lacks a knockback ability.

ENERGETIC CHARGE

Invoke: When charging, recover half of the character's barrier pool, rounded up. This cannot recover a character's barrier pool beyond its starting value, regardless of how many times charge is used.

Compel: The charge overloads the character's barrier pool, reducing it to zero. If the character does not have a barrier pool then their shields are reduced to zero (if any).

OVERWHELMING CHARGE

Invoke: Increase the base damage of the charge to Weapon: 4.

Compel: The charge still hits with devastating effect but its kinetic energy is highly focused; the charge does no direct damage, only knockback.

TOWERING CHARGE

Invoke: The effect of the charge is broader than normal, affecting one additional target in the same zone as the original target.

Compel: The charge lacks a phase effect; only targets in direct line-of-sight may be targeted.

DARK CHANNEL

Dark Channel plagues an opponent with a persistent, damaging biotic field. This is a highly rare biotic power only known and practiced by a select few, such as Ardat-Yakshi.

Type: Attack

Duration: Scene

Range: 2

Recharge: 3

Dark Channel shares many similarities with Reave but is considered a more insidious version of that power, lacking any restorative effects; its destructive power jumps from victim to victim until no one is left alive. Make a Weapon: 1 attack against a target within Range: 2, with damage equal to the number of shifts achieved. On each subsequent exchange the target automatically takes 1 point of stress damage—armor, shields, and barriers provide no protection to this attack. Should the target be disabled at any time, the dark channel jumps to the next closest target within 2 zones; make a new attack roll as normal as a free action. The dark channel will again automatically inflict 1 point of stress damage per exchange from that point forward until the target is defeated.

Only one dark channel may be in effect at a time; using the power again instantly ends the previous application. Unless enhanced, dark channel will only affect two targets during its duration.

ENCUMBERING CHANNEL

Invoke: The dark channel places a border 2 effect on the target (page 180).

Compel: The overwhelming darkness of the power weighs on the biotic, creating a border 2 for the biotic to move into another zone (page 180).

INSIDIOUS CHANNEL

Invoke: Increase dark channel's initial damage by +1 per fate point spent.

Compel: Dark channel only does its initial damage; on subsequent exchange it jumps to another target for its initial attack and then dissipates.

PIERCING CHANNEL

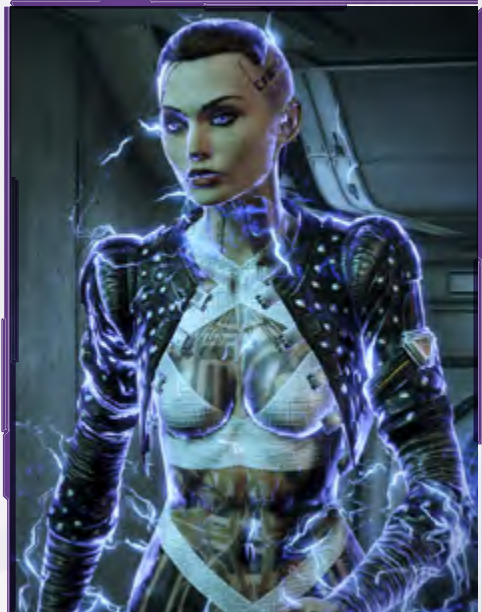
Invoke: During the initial attack against a target, increase dark channel's damage by +1 against barrier/shields and armor.

Compel: The channel appears to work normally but the initial attack does zero damage (still roll to see if the target was hit). On subsequent rounds the dark channel drains as normal.

UNFETTERED CHANNEL

Invoke: The dark channel's field expands, attacking two targets within the same zone. However, if defeated, neither dark channel moves to a new target, the field simply dissipates.

Compel: Dark channel turns against its creator after the first attack, becoming the next target. A dark channel with this aspect cannot be prematurely dissipated, although it can be detonated.



DOMINATE

Mentally disrupt the synaptic responses in an organic opponent, causing them to be unable to differentiate between friend or foe. Use of this power is typically frowned upon by most law-abiding biotics, although some—such as Ardat-Yakshi—have little compunction against using it. Targets grow more resistant against Dominate's effects the more they are targeted by it.

Type: Block; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: 1 exchange per 3 shifts, rounded up

Range: 2

Recharge: 4

The number of shifts is the level of block placed against the target to break free from dominate's control. While affected, the target fights for the biotic's side as best as it can; communication is only necessary to provide direct commands. Targets affected can attempt to break the block with Biotics or Resolve every round as a free action or until the effect ends, whichever is first. Attempts to further dominate a target after the effect has ended impose an additional +1 difficulty to do so, to a maximum of three attempts. Then the target is immune for the scene.

The target is fully aware of their actions while being dominated. The biotic may only dominate one target at a time; a second usage of dominate immediately ends the first. Specific commands that may run counter to the dominated target's concept or aspects can generate its own aspect, **WAVERING CONTROL**, at the GM's discretion that can be tagged to overcome the domination.

FURIOUS DOMINATE

Invoke: The dominated target receives a boost in power as well as a measure of protection while under the biotic's control: increase all damage dealt by +2 and reduce incoming damage by half. These benefits end when the target is freed from dominate.

Compel: The negative feedback from the domination link causes 1 point of stress to the biotic for every exchange dominate is in use.

INSIDIOUS DOMINATE

Invoke: Until the block is removed or the duration ends, the target takes 1 point of stress damage per exchange, unaffected by barriers, shields, or armor.

Compel: The control of the dominate is such that it takes much of the biotic's attention to hold. Increase the recharge of all powers while dominate is active by +1.

LINGERING DOMINATE

Invoke: For each point of fate spent, increase the dominate's duration by one exchange.

Compel: The biotic's level of control is not particularly strong; once a target defeats the dominate or its duration ends, that target may not be dominated again for the remainder of the scene.

VULNERABLE DOMINATE

Invoke: The dominated target is especially vulnerable, letting its guard down. Increase all damage done via an attack to the target by 1.

Compel: The target is in part protected by the domination, gaining a +1 to its defenses while under the effects of dominate.

FLARE

Focus and expend all biotic energy to unleash a huge flare that throws enemies within its range, causing massive damage.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 2

Recharge: Use once per scene

The biotic takes in all of their energy and focuses it in one large, overwhelming burst, causing Damage: 4 to all enemies within a zone unless successfully defended by Athletics or Biotics. In addition, targets that are hit are **KNOCKED PRONE**.

Unlike other biotic powers, flare can only detonate biotic powers—not tech powers—to cause biotic explosions (page 118). Flare is equally effective against shielded and armored targets.

BLINDING FLARE

Invoke: The explosion of the flare is exceptionally large, causing an Area 2 explosion. Because of its size, the flare affects all targets in its area of effect.

Compel: Blinded by its intensity, the biotic's flare targets only one individual, not all the enemies in the zone.

FURIOUS FLARE

Invoke: The biotic's flare is particularly strong. Increase the flare to a Damage: 6 attack.

Compel: Bio-feedback from the flare causes equal stress damage to the biotic as to the primary target.

RELENTLESS FLARE

Invoke: A surplus of energy allows the biotic to potentially use the flare power again in this scene. Treat this power as having Recharge: 3 until used again.

Compel: Use of this power is so draining that after its use, the biotic no longer can use it for the remainder of the adventure.

SEARING FLARE

Invoke: The intensity of the flare is particularly strong, doing Damage: 6 when used to set off a biotic explosion.

Compel: The flare does its full damage against unshielded targets, but shielded targets are unaffected by the blast.



LASH

Latch this power onto enemies and pull them towards you, inflicting damage upon them and removing their cover.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 3

Recharge: 2

Make a Biotic skill roll against a target's Athletics or Biotics up to three zones away. Success potentially pulls the target closer and does Damage: 2. Targets with functioning kinetic shields or barriers only suffer the damage from the attack but are immune to the pull until their shields are down. If the shields are brought down by the damage of the Lash then move the target normally (see below). Alternately, if the target is carrying a physical shield or defensive cover, an aspect, **OUT OF COVER**, is placed upon the target instead of moving them.

To lash something one zone requires the maneuver to generate a number of shifts equal to the weight factor of the target because it is so effective at moving targets. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance. If a target is suspended by another power such as Pull or Singularity then their weight factor is 0.

FORCEFUL LASH

Invoke: Increase the pull power of the lash by one additional zone. The force of the lash attack is increased to Damage: 3.

Compel: Feedback from the lash's mass effect field causes a counter neutron effect. Increase the number of shifts to required to pull a target by 1 per zone. The lash's damage is reduced to Damage: 0.

PIERCING LASH

Invoke: The lash is particularly good versus shields and barriers and affects those targets normally by pulling them.

Compel: The mass effect field of the lash is bolstered by siphoning by any shields/barriers the biotic has, draining their power. Lower any shields/barriers the biotic has to zero, if applicable.

ROBUST LASH

Invoke: When used to detonate another power increase the explosive damage +1.

Compel: The mass effect field of the lash is highly concentrated, preventing its use to cause a detonation.



NOVA

While expending the remainder of your biotic barrier, Nova inflicts a high amount of damage to surrounding enemies, pushing them back and sending them soaring into the air. There is no cooldown—it can be used if the biotic has barrier remaining. Nova is a very specific power: it **only** works in conjunction with biotic barriers, **not** kinetic shields. (This breaks the normal distinction that barriers and kinetic shields are treated the same within the game.)

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 1

Recharge: na

If a character wishes they may detonate their barrier as a Damage: 4 attack rolling their Biotic skill against all targets in same area (Range: 1) as them. The biotic must have an active *barrier* up. The target defends with Athletics or Biotics. This detonation completely depletes the character's barrier pool (including their kinetic shield pool). Their kinetic shields will recharge as normal but the character will not benefit from the barrier unless created again. Nova never has a recharge value.

Because nova is an expanding explosion within a zone, any other source powers that happen to be in the same zone will detonate as well. Nova is unable to distinguish between detonating other powers and avoiding doing so.

EXPANDING NOVA

Invoke: For each fate point spent, expand the Area of the nova by one. Targets who have an opportunity to react can attempt to roll or dodge the blast, as per the rules on page 188.

Compel: The nova is tightly contained and affects targets in the same zone (melee engaged) only.

OVERWHELMING NOVA

Invoke: The nova's base damage is equal to the biotic's barrier rating. For example, if, when detonated, the biotic has a barrier rating of 6 then the nova becomes Damage: 6.

Compel: The biotic's barrier is unstable and as a result the nova is as well. Reduce all damage by half.

PIERCING NOVA

Invoke: The nova is particularly good versus shields and barriers, doing double damage to them. Versus armor the nova gains Penetration equal to its damage value.

Compel: The explosive force of the nova is less damaging and instead stunning; determine damage as normal but inflict no stress. Treat damage as a block of equal value.

UNCONTROLLABLE NOVA

Invoke: The explosion of the nova is as such that it also throws targets into adjacent zones. To throw something one zone requires the attack to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance.

Compel: The nova fails to detonate with any measurable effect, however the biotic's barrier and kinetic shield pool are still reduced to zero.

PULL

The biotic generates a mass-lowering field, which levitates enemies into the air. While aloft, enemies will slowly drift towards the biotic, allowing any allies to finish them off effortlessly.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: 2 exchanges

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Functionally, Pull is very similar to Throw (page 134) in effect. Instead of applying a lateral effect, pull lifts a single target in helplessly into the air. Make a roll, placing a block on the target equal to the amount of the maneuver. If a target has no shields or armor, apply the free aspect, **FLOATING HELPLESSLY**, that may be tagged freely by first character to target. However, pull has no effect on armored targets or those with shields beyond placing a block.

Targets under the effect of pull effectively have a weight factor of 0 for purposes of being thrown via Lash or Throw (or some other power/effect).

CRUSHING PULL

Invoke: The pull's mass effect field also crushes its target, doing damage. Inflict Damage: 2 stress to the target, regardless of the maneuver roll made (as long as it was successful).

Compel: Targets may be held in place by the pull's block but do not receive the **FLOATING HELPLESSLY** aspect.

EXPANSIVE PULL

Invoke: Increase the radius of the pull to a full zone and effect up to two enemy targets within that range.

Compel: As above, but the pull randomly selects its targets, potentially including allies.

LINGERING PULL

Invoke: Increase the duration of the pull by an additional exchange and increase any biotic combo explosions by +2 damage.

Compel: The pull's mass effect field is so weak that it cannot be used as a valid target for a biotic combo explosion.



REAVE

This power employs mass effect fields to biotically attack the target's nervous or synthetic systems. It disrupts their resistances and provides the biotic with increased protection when used against organics. Reave has unique utility in that it can be both a source and detonation power for a biotic explosion, although never both.

Type: Attack

Duration: 1 or see text

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Make an attack on an opponent up to Range: 3 away as a Damage: 2 effect, defending with Biotics or Resolve. For the biotic, they gain an extra measure of protection, reducing all incoming damage by 1 until the next exchange. This damage reduction is applied first, prior to any shields or armor. If its duration is extended, on subsequent exchanges reave automatically inflicts an additional point of stress at the beginning of the attacker's next action as long as the original attack was successful. Armor, shields, and barriers have no effect on this subsequent stress loss. Also, the biotic keeps their damage reduction ability through to the end of the duration of Reave.

Inorganic targets are affected by reave's damage attack but do not provide the damage reduction ability to the biotic.

ABLATIVE REAVE

Invoke: The mass effect field generated by the reave is stronger than most; reduce all incoming damage to the biotic by 2.

Compel: The reave protective field is transitory and provides protection to the biotic against only the next attack or until its duration expires.

BIOMNEMONIC REAVE

Invoke: The power of the reave is unusually strong and attacks as a Damage: 4 effect.

Compel: Use of the reave is particularly damaging to the biotic's nervous system: consume a stress box upon use of the power.

PIERCING REAVE

Invoke: The reave is particularly strong as armor, barriers, and shields are at -1 effectiveness against the initial attack.

Compel: The target's protection is unassailable and the reave does no damage (no attack roll is necessary). However, the biotic still receives the damage reduction benefit for the exchange.

VOLATILE NEURO REAVE

Invoke: The power of the reave is so great that it lasts a number of exchanges equal to the shifts of the attack.

Compel: The target is able to shrug off the attack, taking only the initial damage but causing the reave field to dissipate, not providing the biotic with the damage reduction benefits.

WANDERING REAVE

Invoke: The reave power can affect all opponents in a zone. Make an attack as normal for each target in the zone.

Compel: The biotic loses control of the reave power and all targets in a zone—friendly and enemies—are affected.

SHOCKWAVE

Send a series of shockwaves outwards that stagger and damage enemies with a series of explosive-like biotic waves, ignoring obstacles.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant (see text)

Range: 2 max; starts at biotic

Recharge: 3

Make an attack against *all* targets up to Range: 2 away within each zone (the effect can attack multiple targets lined up in multiple, adjacent zones) starting from the biotic's position. Defend with Athletics or Biotics. Against shielded targets, shockwave is a Damage: 2 attack that can also throw a target backwards. To throw something one zone requires the maneuver to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance. If a target is suspended by another power such as Pull or Singularity then their weight factor is 0. For each zone a target is thrown back by the shockwave, increase the damage inflicted by +1.

When shockwave is used against a target under the effect of cryo blast (page 139), treat each positive  result rolled as inflicting a consequence, reduced by the number of negative  rolls. It is still possible for shockwave to work as normal without causing any additional consequences for being under the effects of cryo blast.

EXPLOSIVE SHOCKWAVE

Invoke: When used to detonate biotic powers, increase the detonation damage by +2.

Compel: The shockwave cannot be used to detonate biotic explosions.

FORCING SHOCKWAVE

Invoke: The range of the shockwave is increased by one zone per fate point spent. All targets in this additional zone are affected. All affected zones must be in a linear (straight) fashion from the starting point (the biotic).

Compel: The range of the shockwave is shorter than usual and only extends for one zone.

LIFTING SHOCKWAVE

Invoke: If the targets have no shields then they receive the aspect **FLOATING HELPLESSLY** which may be tagged. This immediately lowers their weight factor to 0 for purposes of being pushed backwards by the shockwave. The effect lasts for one exchange.

Compel: The mass effect field of the shockwave is solely focused on the ground; targets cannot be lifted into the air or moved.

RUMBLING SHOCKWAVE

Invoke: The shockwave's base damage is increased to a Damage: 3 attack.

Compel: The shockwave does no damage; treat its Damage: 3 attack as a block.



SLAM

The power unceremoniously lifts a target and slams them into the ground, inflicting damage. Slam can be used to detonate other biotic powers.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 3

Recharge: 1

Attack a single target and lift them into the air, then immediately throw them down into the ground for Damage: 4 effect. To lift something requires the attack to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. If a target is suspended by another power such as Pull or Singularity then their weight factor is 0. As long as the attack yields enough shifts to lift the target 1 zone, the damage is inflicted. Targets defend with Athletics or Biotics.

EXPLOSIVE SLAM

Invoke: When used to detonate another biotic power, the slam does so by increasing the damage by +2.

Compel: Your slam's mass effect field is too small to cause a biotic explosion. It otherwise acts as normal.

MASSIVE SLAM

Invoke: Increase the damage of the slam by +1 per fate point spent.

Compel: The slam causes no damage; treat any damage as a block against the target that lasts for the next exchange only.

STUNNING SLAM

Invoke: In addition to its normal damage, the aspect **STUNNED** is applied to the target for a duration of one exchange.

Compel: The slam causes no damage; treat any damage as a block against the target that lasts for the next exchange only.

WIDE SLAM

Invoke: Select a second target within the same zone as the first and affect it separately with its own attack roll.

Compel: Because the force is spread across a larger area the weight factor required to slam the target is increased by one.



SINGULARITY

Singularity launches a dark energy sphere to create an intense mass effect field. The field creates a warp in the space around it, creating a gravity well akin to a black hole. Enemies are drawn into the singularity and held briefly helpless in orbit while protected enemies are held in place. Any enemy wandering into the gravity well of a singularity after it has been created will also be pulled into its orbit.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: 1 exchange per 2 shifts

Range: 1

Recharge: 2

A singularity can affect a single target or targets within the zone of where the singularity is placed (melee engaged). Enemies entering the same zone of the singularity are subject to its effects. The effects of a singularity vary if the target has shields/barriers or not. If the target has no shields or barriers and the maneuver is successful then place an aspect, **FLOATING HELPLESSLY**, upon the target. The target also immediately receives a block equal to the shifts generated by the singularity.

Targets that have shields are unaffected by the pull of the singularity but still receive the block. If, during the duration of the singularity, the target has their shields removed then they receive the **FLOATING HELPLESSLY** aspect.

Singularity is typically defended by Athletics or Biotics when a target enters its gravity well or attacks (see below). Because of the nature of a singularity, once created it cannot be dispelled by the biotic; the singularity persists through to the end of its duration. Only one singularity per biotic may be created at a time; creating a second immediately ends the duration of the first.

EXPLOSIVE SINGULARITY

Invoke: While a singularity may be detonated via other biotic powers, this singularity will automatically detonate at the end of its duration as per the biotic detonation rules (page 118) without intervention from the biotic. Allies are unaffected as they are shielded by a mass effect field.

Compel: This unstable singularity will detonate at the end of its duration as per the biotic detonation rules (page 118) unless the biotic ends the effect earlier. The detonation will affect all targets—not just enemies—including the biotic.

LINGERING SINGULARITY

Invoke: The singularity is stronger than most, lasting an additional exchange per fate point spent.

Compel: The crushing density of the singularity ensures that it will last for 1 exchange only, regardless of the number of shifts achieved.

OVERWHELMING SINGULARITY

Invoke: The strength of the singularity's mass effect field is such that crushing damage is applied to all targets caught in its gravity well. Starting on the next exchange any targets caught in the singularity field take 1 stress. Armor, shields, and barriers have no effect on this subsequent stress loss. Damage ends if the target is able to escape the gravity well.

Compel: A biotic can normally attune a singularity to affect specific targets (enemies) only; this singularity makes no distinction and affects all targets within range, including the biotic.

VARIABLE GRAVITY WELL SINGULARITY

Invoke: The singularity has a particularly large gravity well and affects all enemies within a zone (range 1).

Compel: The singularity is highly compacted and can affect only a single target at a time.

STASIS

Stasis stops an enemy in its tracks with a powerful mass effect field. Stasis causes an enemy to be temporarily locked in a mass effect field, freezing the target in place and making them unable to attack.

Type: Block; Fair (+2) difficulty
Duration: 1 exchange per shift

Range: 3
Recharge: 3

Stasis blocks all actions of a target up to Range: 3 away. This effect will last for a number of exchanges equal to any shifts generated in the initial contest. While in stasis the target's defense is treated as Mediocre (+0) and they can be attacked, however for every point of damage taken by the target treat as a bonus to overcome the block on their turn. If the biotic uses stasis again then the initial stasis immediately ends. Attempts to further place a target under stasis after the duration has ended—or the target has broken the block—impose an additional +1 difficulty to do so, to a maximum of three times. Then they are immune for the scene.

Armored opponents are completely unaffected by stasis.

BASTION STASIS

Invoke: The biotic can manipulate the mass effect stasis field and inflict damage on the target without breaking the field. Their damage does not provide a bonus to escape the block.

Compel: The target is immune to damage from the first attack against it and is then freed from the block.

FLUCTUATING STASIS

Invoke: The stasis field creates a "bubble" effect. This bubble can capture an additional target, subject to all of the normal effects of stasis. Both targets must be within the same zone. Escaping the block on one target does not end the block for the other. This bubble can be placed separate from a target and will affect anyone moving into its range, subject to the normal rules.

Compel: The stasis field gains a life of its own, randomly targeting a character in range, including the biotic. While in stasis, the biotic cannot end the effect voluntarily.

VULNERABLE STASIS

Invoke: The target takes +2 damage while in stasis but this bonus damage does not provide a bonus to escape the block.

Compel: Stasis can only affect the target once; one ended, the target is immune for the remainder of the scene.



THROW

You use mass effect fields to hurl a target away with damaging force. Targets may be knocked prone once they hit an intervening object.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 3

Recharge: 1

Make a Biotics skill roll against a target's Athletics or Biotics up to three zones away. Success places the aspect **KNOCKED PRONE** on the target and does Damage: 2. Targets with functioning kinetic shields or barriers only suffer the damage from the attack but are immune to the aspect until their shields are down. If the shields are brought down by the damage of the throw then apply the aspect normally.

To throw something one zone requires the maneuver to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target. A normal person has a weight factor of 2, a volus has a weight factor of 1, a krogan is 3, etc. Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance. If a target is suspended by another power such as Pull or Singularity then their weight factor is 0.

When throw is used against a target under the effect of cryo blast (page 139), treat each positive  result rolled as inflicting a consequence, reduced by the number of negative  rolls. It is still possible for throw to work as normal without causing any additional consequences for being under the effects of cryo blast.

FORCEFUL THROW

Invoke: Increase the power of the throw by one additional zone. The force of the throw is increased to Damage: 5.

Compel: Feedback from the throw's mass effect field causes a counter neutron effect. Increase the number of shifts to required to throw a target by 1 per zone. The throw's damage is reduced to Damage: 0.

ROBUST THROW

Invoke: When used to detonate another power increase the explosive damage by +1.

Compel: The mass effect field of the throw is very concentrated, preventing using the power to cause a detonation.

SWEEPING THROW

Invoke: Throw affects a second target within range; attack as normal. Both targets must be thrown in the same direction.

Compel: The throw randomly affects a second target in the same zone as the target. Make a second attack. Both targets must be thrown in the same direction.



WARP

Warp works by creating rapidly shifting mass effect fields that shred a target apart, similar in function to the disruptor torpedoes used by starships.

Type: Attack

Duration: 3

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Make an attack using the biotic skill up to three zones away resisted by the target's defenses as normal, Athletics or Biotics. Warp causes a Damage: 3 attack that ignores 1 point of armor if the target is struck. Versus shields warp does half damage but double damage versus barriers. This is a special case where barriers are not treated the same as shields. Consequences created by warp to species with fast healing abilities, such as the krogan or vorchas, cannot be cleared out.

On subsequent exchanges warp automatically inflicts an additional point of stress at the beginning of the attacker's next action if the original attack was successful. Armor, shields, and barriers have no effect on this subsequent stress loss.

CHARGED WARP

Invoke: The mass effect field of your warp is highly charged. Increase its secondary damage by +1.

Compel: The warp's mass effect field is so highly variable that it cannot be targeted for detonation. Its effect ends normally.

ENDURING WARP

Invoke: The warp lasts an additional exchange. This may be increased multiple times via an additional expenditures of a fate point.

Compel: The flame that burns brighter lasts half as long; reduce your warp's duration to 1 exchange.

EXPOSING WARP

Invoke: The warp makes the target more vulnerable to damage, increasing damage taken by +1.

Compel: A collapsing mass effect field makes the warp end after its initial attack.

FICKLE WARP

Invoke: The warp, if detonated, is more powerful than normal. Increase its damage by +1.

Compel: Your warp is unusually condensed and does fewer damage when detonated. Lower detonation damage by -1.

INTIMIDATING WARP

Invoke: Any unarmed targets receive the aspect **PANICKED!** This is a fragile aspect and disappears after one exchange if not tagged.

Compel: The size and intensity of the warp's mass effect field is off-putting, even to you. You receive the aspect, **OVERWHELMED**, which requires a supplementary action to clear. This aspect may be tagged freely by opponents.

Tech Mastery

Tech Mastery refers to talents based around reverse engineering or hacking various technologies, including hardsuit systems, weapons, and synthetic enemies like the geth. Tech talents are deployed with omni-tools.

Omni-tools are handheld devices that combine a computer microframe, sensor analysis pack, and minifabricating fabricator. Versatile and reliable, an omni-tool can be used to analyze and adjust the functionality of most standard equipment, including weapons and armor, from a distance.

The fabrication module can rapidly assemble small three-dimensional objects from common, reusable industrial plastics, ceramics, and light alloys. This allows for field repairs and modifications to most standard items, as well as the reuse of salvaged equipment. Only military omni-tools are equipped to make use of tech talents and powers. When activated, an omni-tool can appear over either of a person's forearms and/or hands, or occasionally over both, as an orange hologram.

Anyone can play games or watch news clips on their omni-tool, but a character with training and access to a military grade omni-tool becomes a true threat in a high-tech environment. **Anyone can use the Systems skill in the traditional manner but to have access to the specialized tech powers requires an investment of 1 refresh.** In addition, each power costs 1 refresh; some powers have additional costs as indicated in their descriptions.

Tech Mastery requires a High Concept that demonstrates the specialized nature of this training. For example: **ECCENTRIC QUARIAN ENGINEER** or **DISGRACED STG INFILTRATOR**.

TECH CRYO EXPLOSIONS

Within the *Mass Effect* Universe there are a number of ways in which one may find themselves slowed or even frozen solid. The most universal application is via an omni-tool, using it to blast a supercharged area of subatomic particles slowed to such an extent that it causes the target's atomic bonds to slow. In some cases this can be so extreme as to even put a target in hibernation. However, for the all the intended good of omni-tools and utilizing this ability more than a few individuals have perverted it for their own nefarious needs. If the body can be slowed down or even frozen at the subatomic structure, what happens when you introduce a massive, radical alteration, such as a sudden impact or reversal of that structure (heat)? Bad things, in most cases.

Cryo/Incineration

As the name implies, this technique requires the use of two abilities, Cryo Blast (page 139) and Incinerate (page 146), both Tech powers. The first, cryo blast, weakens the target while the second application of Incinerate superheats the target to such an extreme level that massive cellular damage can result if protective gear is not worn. In the simplest of terms, any target that is Incinerated while under the effects of cryo blast has its damage doubled during the Incinerate attack. Any armor worn immediately uses its remaining consequences and ceases to function. Should the target survive, they may act as normal. They will be subject to the enduring damage of Incinerate over the exceeding exchanges, although that damage is not doubled.

Shattershot

An even worse version of the above, the Shattershot has a chance of immediately incapacitating its target, although rarely are there enough pieces left to make identification possible. Using this power combo requires a target to be affected by cryo blast (page 139) and then shot by Concussive Shot (Heavy) (page 154). The base shot is a Damage: 4 attack, however for each positive  die result the target receives a consequence. Negative  rolls counteract as

normal, however a net negative result on the roll can still inflict normal damage (though no consequences are taken). In this manner, with a sufficiently powerful roll, a target can be killed instantly.

TECH FIRE EXPLOSIONS

Some tech powers, when used in conjunction with another power, can explode for overwhelming effects. Typically this requires a target to be affected by a persistent power or effect, such as Incinerate, and be struck with another—but different—attack to trigger a tech explosion. This detonation power need not necessarily be tech in nature; the source power determines the type of explosion, the detonation power is merely the catalyst.

This burst immediately ends all persistent effects on the target from the initial power as well as the new one but does Damage: 4 to all characters in the same zone as the target. If a target is aware of the burst and able to react, they may defend with a free Athletics or Systems check versus the damage value, subject to the rules for using a skill to attack or defend during an exchange. Targets unaware of a tech burst automatically have a defense of Mediocre (+0). Success indicates that the character is able to leap clear or duck under cover. Failure indicates that the character takes stress equal to the damage value of the explosion.

Fire explosions do two times normal damage against armor (gain Penetration).

Tech Fire Explosions	
Tech Fire Explosion Source Powers	Detonation Powers
Incinerate	Charge
Incendiary Ammo	Drone (with EXPLOSIVE DRONE aspect)
Inferno Grenade	Concussive Shot
Sentry Turret (with FLAMETHROWER TURRET aspect)	Decoy (with EXPLOSIVE DECOY aspect)
	Energy Drain
	Fragmentation Grenade
	Incinerate
	Nova
	Overload
	Shockwave
	Slam
	Throw
	Warp

TECH BURSTS

Certain biotic and tech powers, when used in conjunction, can explode for devastating effects. Typically this requires a target to be affected by a persistent power of effect (Overload, Sabotage, etc) and be struck with another—but different—attack to trigger a tech burst. This detonation power need not necessarily be tech in nature; the source power determines the type of explosion, the detonation power is merely the catalyst.

This burst immediately ends all persistent effects on the target from the initial power as well as the new one but does Damage: 4 to all characters in the same zone as the target. If a target is aware of the burst and able to react, they may defend with a free Athletics or Systems check versus the damage value, subject to the rules for using a skill to attack or defend during

an exchange. Targets unaware of a tech burst automatically have a defense of Mediocre (+0). Success indicates that the character is able to leap clear or duck under cover. Failure indicates that the character takes stress equal to the damage value of the explosion.

Tech bursts do two times normal damage against kinetic shields and barriers.

Tech Burst Explosions

Tech Burst Source Powers	Detonation Powers
Energy Drain	Biotic Charge
Disruptor Ammo	Drone (with EXPLOSIVE DRONE aspect)
Overload	Concussive Shot
Sabotage	Decoy
	Energy Drain
	Fragmentation Grenade
	Incinerate
	Nova
	Overload
	Shockwave
	Slam
	Throw
	Warp

TECH POWERS

Every tech may use their powers for some small effects (see the Systems skill, page 93) but those that have truly mastered the creative use of technology can generate impressive results.

Each tech power has a number of elements that are used to determine their effects:

Type: Whether the power is manifested by the Systems skill via a maneuver, attack, or block.

Range: The distance at which the power may be used. Powers with a range of zero affect engaged (melee) opponents or the tech himself. For some powers this is fixed, for others it is dependent on the number of shifts received.

Duration: How long the power's effect will persist in exchanges. For some powers this is fixed, for others it is dependent upon the number of shifts received.

Recharge: The number of exchanges before the power may be used again. A recharge of zero means the power can be used every round freely. Note that several powers and items can increase or decrease a character's recharge value for their powers. The most common is Bulk but other sources include bio-amps and omni-tools (pages 199, 205, 210, and 213).

Aspects: The various aspects attached to a power that may be invoked by characters or compelled by the GM. A maneuver places an aspect (invokes it) upon the tech at no charge as selected by the player. Other aspects may be invoked at the time of creation at a cost of 1 fate point each. The GM may compel *any* power's aspect, as they all potentially exist at the time of creation as part of the power. The player may elect to refuse the compel at the cost of 1 fate point. All power aspects are freely visible (known) to all participants. Invoking a power's aspect at the time of creation costs 1 fate point; aspects may not be added retroactively.

Should a fate point be spent to add an aspect but the roll to generate the power fails, the fate point is lost.

Example: Martin's character, Skarri, is using Overload to attack a geth that's bearing down upon him. He makes an attack roll with his Systems skill bonus of +4 and rolls a , , , and , a total of 5. The geth's defense isn't particularly good, scoring Fair (+2), meaning there are three shifts generated. Martin has the opportunity to invoke one of Overload's aspects for a fate point and does so, making it a **CAPACITATIVE OVERLOAD**. That increases the damage of the Overload to 4, greater than the 3 damage Skarri would have otherwise done. Also, as per the power description, the geth's shields are eliminated, making it a tempting target for Skarri's companions.

Had the GM wished he could have compelled one of the Overload aspects, such as **NEURAL OVERLOAD**, which would lower Skarri's shields as well. As tempting as it is to take a fate point and add that aspect, Martin pays a fate point to ensure the **NEURAL OVERLOAD** doesn't happen.

CRYO BLAST

Cryo Blast uses the tech's omni-tool to emit a highly-charged blast of super-cooled subatomic particles that slow down their interaction and, in some cases, freeze targets completely.

Type: Attack

Range: 0

Duration: 1 exchange per three shifts, rounded up

Recharge: 2

Upon a successful attack the target immediately has a border 2 effect placed upon it for purposes of moving (page 180). This border rating lowers all applicable defense rolls for the target, depending on the situation, potentially lowering their defense to Mediocre (+0) due to their inability to move. Cryo blast does no damage unto itself. At the end of the duration the target is immediately freed from the freezing effects and can move as normal. With assistance or via environmental conditions—such as incendiary ammo—an aspect such as On Fire! may provide a bonus to break free of the cryo blast.

Cryo blast is particularly devastating when used in conjunction with Incinerate (page 136, page 146) or Shattershot (page 154). When used in tandem with a biotic, Throw (page 134) and Shockwave (page 130) can be equally devastating.

FRIGID BLAST

Invoke: The blast is so cold, increase the border's effect to **border 3**, adjusting the target's defense penalty accordingly.

Compel: The target is still affected by the **border 2** but does not apply the rating as a defense penalty; defend against attacks as normal.

OBLITERATING CRYO BLAST

Invoke: The target is particularly vulnerable to damage, receiving an additional +1 to damage while under the effects of the cryo blast.

Compel: The cryo blast outfits the target with a measure of exceptional protection, increasing its armor value by +1. The target is still subject to the **border 2** effect, however.

UNSHAKABLE BLAST

Invoke: The effect of the cryo blast lasts one additional exchange per fate point spent.

Compel: The effect of the cryo blast is only effective for one total exchange and then harmlessly dissipates.

WHIRLWIND BLAST

Invoke: The cryo blast fills an area around the target, potentially catching other foes. For every three shifts rolled in the attack (rounded up), an additional target in Range: 0 of the original target is affected at the tech's discretion.

Compel: Strangely, the target is outfitted with warm weather gear, nano weave technology, or has their own omni-tool set to counter any potential cryo blasts. The attack has no effect.

DEFENSE MATRIX

Reinforce armor with protective focault currents and then purge the currents to restore shields.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: Instant

Range: 0 (self)

Recharge: 3

A defense matrix uses reinforced armor with supercharged particles to make it available to be tapped to increase shields for an emergency. As such, you must be wearing armor (Tech Armor does not count). Make a maneuver roll: recover up to half (round up) of your kinetic shield pool immediately. As part of this maneuver, gain a free power aspect from those below. Although you have essentially "used" your armor, the nanoweave particles still give you a fixed armor value of 1. All tech power recharge are increased by +2 while this effect is in use.

Ending this power returns your armor to its normal value.

ENHANCED MATRIX

Invoke: The shield restoration is increased by another +2 points that can exceed your normal maximum shield rating.

Compel: Your shields may be restored, but doing so causes a strain on your systems. You must use a supplemental action to keep this power running.

NIMBLE MATRIX

Invoke: The benefits of the defense matrix do not increase any of your recharge penalties.

Compel: The defense matrix is overwhelming; use of any tech power while under its usage requires a fate point (in addition to any other requirements).

PRODIGY MATRIX

Invoke: The shield restoration is doubly powerful, increasing your shields by another 50% (round up). Gain it now and this amount can exceed your normal maximum shield rating.

Compel: The underweave matrix provides Armor: 0 protection and no consequence.

REINFORCED MATRIX

Invoke: The armor matrix regains a measure of its power, providing Armor: 2.

Compel: Your armor provides no bonus consequence boxes for the duration of the scene until repaired.

SYNERGETIC MATRIX

Invoke: Damage of all tech powers while defense matrix is in use is increased by +1.

Compel: Increase all tech power recharge penalties by +1.



DECOY

Create a hologram of yourself, confusing enemies as a second target that must be dealt with.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: 5

Range: 1

Recharge: 3

The decoy is identical in every way and uses special programming—constantly updated over time—to reflect your every move. The decoy has a shield rating of 4 but no armor. It can take some punishment before being eliminated and its shields do not regenerate.

If both persons—the original and the decoy—are available as targets the aggressor may choose to shoot at both (if possible), none—perhaps using a maneuver to **SEE THE DECOY**—or shoot at one. Compare the successes of the maneuver to generate the decoy versus an Alertness or Systems check by the aggressor. Failure means the target is unable to pierce the veil. Maneuvers to set up aspects, such as **SEE THE DECOY**, can be used to study the decoy more closely for clues and determine the true target. Until the veil is penetrated, all attacks are applied to the decoy.

When created, the decoy comes with a free aspect that is generated immediately (see below). Every round the decoy can be moved as a supplemental action by the tech to “act” or appear to do actions, although the decoy cannot interface with systems, disarm a bomb, or fly a ship as a matter of example. Make an opposed Deceit versus Resolve to “sell” the decoy’s actions as seemingly real if necessary.

EXPLOSIVE DECOY

Invoke: When its shields have depleted—or its duration has expired—the decoy explodes, doing Weapon: 3 damage to all targets in its zone.

Compel: The decoy cannot be used as part of a tech explosion.

HARDY DECOY

Invoke: Increase the decoy’s kinetic shield rating to 6 for a fate point or 8 for a second fate point. As a free aspect when created, one of these selections can be made at no cost if chosen.

Compel: The decoy is easier to see through; apply the aspect **IMPERFECT VEIL** upon it that may be freely tagged when trying to determine which target is the decoy.

INVICTUS DECOY

Invoke: When used to create a tech detonation, the decoy is especially effective, increasing the damage by +1. For any affected targets in the explosion that did not see through the decoy, treat their defense against the detonation as Mediocre (+0).

Compel: The decoy is jammed in some manner and no longer responds to the tech’s controls; supplemental actions to control it are useless.

SHOCKING DECOY

Invoke: The decoy makes an appropriate energy attack (appears normal, like a gun) that does Weapon: 2 damage and within one zone of the decoy. Use the tech’s Systems roll to make the attack, requiring the use of a supplemental action.

Compel: Poor programming makes the decoy require a supplemental action every exchange just to remain activated.

DRONE

Be it a defense drone or an attack drone, this power represents a committed resource that assists the tech in a variety of ways. When selected, this power must first be used to create a drone that will later be summoned and upgraded.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: Scene

Range: 2

Recharge: 2

Unlike most powers, Drone requires you to create a “baseline” version that is fabricated every time the power is used. This base version differentiates between the types of drones and their capabilities. See the instructions on the opposite page for details.

Make a Systems test maneuver to manufacture the drone. As long as you do not fail, the drone is created and the drone acquires a free aspect (see below) of your choosing.

The drone is an item that can be targeted and its statistics were previously determined when you created it. Once its stress has been depleted, the drone is destroyed and you may fabricate a new one.

Drones—if capable—attack targets automatically, only requiring a supplemental action by the tech to select a specific target, else the drone attacks the most reasonable/obvious target. Attacks use the drone’s Systems skill roll, Average (+1)—unless the quality was improved—versus an appropriate defense against with a Weapon: 2, presuming it has weapons! The power’s range (above) is only to place the drone; a tech can operate a drone from multiple zones as long as they are within the scene via their omni-tool (or not at all if the drone is Independent). A drone acts immediately after the tech that created it.

A drone exists through the duration of the scene or until destroyed. Deploying a second drone destroys the first, requiring fabricating on the same material to make the new unit. A drone, if fate points are spent, can be constructed with multiple types of attacks.

AGRESSOR DRONE (DEFENSE)

Invoke: Increase the drone’s attack to Weapon: 3 but can also shoot twice per round at a -1 penalty to each attack.

Compel: On any roll comprised of more  than , the gun jams. A supplemental action is required to clear.

EXPLOSIVE DRONE (COMBAT)

Invoke: The drone can explode on command, doing Weapon: 3 damage to all targets in one zone. However, this is the rare case where a drone can be used to trigger a biotic or tech explosion; when used to do so, use the standard explosion (pages 118 and 137) rules as normal.

Compel: The drone requires a supplemental action every round to keep operational, otherwise it falls to the ground, disabled due to faulty programming.

INCAPACITATING DRONE (DEFENSE)

Invoke: This drone is designed to take prisoners. Make its attack as normal but with a +4 bonus to place a block on the target, encasing it in a sticky, resilient substance.

Compel: This defensive drone is weighed down by multiple improvements, reducing its armor value to 0.

LIGHTNING DRONE (COMBAT & DEFENSE)

Invoke: The drone generates an electrical pulse attack, hitting up to three enemy targets within its same zone. Treat all damage as a block that must be overcome.

Compel: The drone shorts out, attacking up to three targets within its same zone with a block attack, including allies. Use a supplemental action to clear.

Drone Creation

There are two types of drones that are created, Combat Drones and Defense Drones. Each have specialized capabilities that determine how far they may be improved when created.

	Combat Drone	Defense Drone
Base Kinetic Shields	4	6
Armor	1	1
Stress	2	4

Drones, because of their utility, grant a +1 in situations where their programming may be useful. This is based on the fact that the standard, basic, drone is of Average (+1) quality. The type of conflict a drone can lend assistance towards is determined by the following (pick one):

Type	Conflicts
Aggressor	Physical
Aide	Social
Assistant	Mental

You can check these types of conflicts against those listed in the **Skills** chapter, page 72. These basic iterations are of the most rudimentary quality. Drones are improved via advances; the spending of refresh. Each advance can expand a drone's capabilities. A drone comes with one advance to spend.

Quality

Increase the quality of a Drone by one step—from Average (+1) to Fair (+2), to Good (+3), to Great (+4), and so on. This advance must be taken one time per step of increase.

Note that total bonuses provided by drones and their users in skill tests may never exceed the skill cap of the game.

Example: Tali'Zorah vas Normandy has a Systems of Great (+4), a drone with one advance Fair (+2) and a passive Systems bonus of +1. The skill cap of the game is Superb (+5). Her base skill and that of the drone is Fantastic (+6), already above the game's skill cap. Her total bonus is lowered to Superb (+5). However, Tali's passive quarian Systems bonus (**Quarian Tech Training**) doesn't count against the skill cap, giving her an impressive +6 to her Systems roll even before even picking up her Fate dice!

Expanded Scope

Spend an advance to allow your drone to assist with an additional type of conflict, such as physical and social, mental and social, etc. By spending an additional further advance your drone is useful in all three types of conflicts.

Independent

By default a drone has only very limited programming. "Do this," "attack that," "defend me." These can be done as-is with no expenditure. However, by spending an advance the drone can be made totally independent and even given its own personality. This really isn't useful unless the drone is skilled.

Skilled

The drone may possess skills of its own. When your character and drone are together, you can roll the drone's skill rating instead of your character's skill rating. If the drone also has the Independent advance (above), the drone can use these skills even when it's not with your character. With one advance you can buy one skill at the drone's quality rating, two skills at quality rating -1, or three skills at quality rating -2. The Skilled advance can be bought multiple times, but a different skill or set of skills must be chosen each time. Skills purchased are raised retroactively as the quality of the drone is increased.

MAXIMILIAN DRONE

Invoke: This drone contains a number of welding and manipulative tools. Give the drone a +1 to any conflict test when acting to perform a task. In unusual situations—such as using spinning omni-knives to confront aggressors—the drone can be used to attack as a Weapon: 3 but receives a -1 penalty to do so. This does not allow the drone to bypass the skill cap rule (page 22) when assisting in tests.

Compel: These blood-red drones appear very imposing and place an aspect, **CYGNUS**, in the scene that can potentially hinder the players.

PRODIGY DRONE

Invoke: The drone has an exceptionally advanced control mechanism and its quality is increased by one. This does not allow the drone to bypass the skill cap rule (page 22) when assisting in tests.

Compel: The drone's quality is one less than usual; a software bug of some kind plagues the system.

SHOCKING DRONE (COMBAT)

Invoke: The drone fires a series of non-lethal shocks that have Range: 1. Treat all damage as a block that must be overcome to take an action.

Compel: The drone shorts out, attacking all targets in Range: 1 with a block attack, including allies. Use a supplemental action to clear.

REINFORCED DRONE (COMBAT & DEFENSE)

Invoke: The drone's shield capacity is doubled but may not be recharged.

Compel: An unusually high draw on the drone's power grid halves its available kinetic shields when created.

ROCKET DRONE (COMBAT)

Invoke: A rotating rocket launcher magazine is created with the drone. The rockets do Weapon: 4 damage and have Range: 5. The rockets attack all targets in a zone.

Compel: The drone spawns anti-personnel rockets that do Weapon: 2, Range: 5, but affect only a single target. Because they are self-targeting, randomly select any target in range—including allies—when making the attack.



ENERGY DRAIN

Energy drain saps a target's kinetic barrier power to boost your own shields. This effect is damaging to synthetics.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: Instant

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Use the Systems skill to make a maneuver. Every shift generated reduces an opponent's shields or barrier by one which in turn can be used to replenish the tech's shields, up to their normal maximum. An opponent may recover their shields as per normal on their action.

When energy drain is used against unshielded geth and other synthetics with the **ELECTRO-MAGNETIC VULNERABILITY** aspect it acts as a Damage: 2 attack and any synthetic target struck has a block against all actions equal to stress caused by the maneuver for an exchange.

When the energy drain is used (a maneuver) the character may apply one aspect below at no cost. Subsequent uses of energy drain can tag this aspect for free once.

Energy drain causes no damage to organics or armor.

OVERLOADING DRAIN

Invoke: Resolve the maneuver as normal except that the points recovered can increase the tech's shields beyond their maximum capacity for one exchange. At the beginning of the tech's next turn their shields are reduced to their maximum value or current rating, whichever is less.

Compel: The energy drain works as normal except the target's shield automatically refreshes to its maximum value at the start of the target's turn.

POWERFUL DRAIN

Invoke: Your energy drain is particularly harmful to synthetics, treated as a Damage: 4 attack. Any synthetic target struck has a block against all actions equal to stress caused by the maneuver for an exchange.

Compel: Your energy drain works as normal but at the start of the tech's next turn, your shields are dropped.

TEMPEST DRAIN

Invoke: The scope of the energy drain is so large that it drains all targets in the same zone. Resolve the maneuver once and apply the results equally to all targets. Shifts generated are not cumulative for purposes of restoring the tech's shields.

Compel: Resolve your energy drain as normal except it also arcs and affects one additional target in the same zone as you, randomly. This includes allies.



INCINERATE

Ignite a superheated charge of plasma from your omni-tool, covering your target, shredding their armor, and preventing the restoration of stress.

Type: Attack

Duration: 3 exchanges

Range: 2

Recharge: 3

On its surface, incinerate is a very basic power: it sets people on fire. However its uses can be very creative. At first, it affects one target as a Weapon: 3 power. Additional successes can affect for even greater damage. Because of the nature of the superheated plasma, incinerate does +2 damage for purposes of penetrating armor. Beyond the first round, incinerate does another point of stress, ignoring all armor, until the end of its duration. However, incinerate only does half damage versus barrier and shields; you should remove them first.

Consequences created by incinerate to species with fast healing abilities, such as the krogan or vorchas, cannot be cleared out. Incinerate is particularly deadly when used against targets under the effect of cryo blast. Reference the rules on page 136 for more details.

CLEANSING INCINERATE

Invoke: For each point of fate spent, extend the effect of the incinerate by one exchange.

Compel: Beyond its initial damage, the incinerate flutters out and does no additional damage over subsequent exchanges.

HELLFIRE INCINERATE

Invoke: Increase the damage of the incinerate to chilled or **FROZEN** targets with similar aspects to Weapon: 6. Also review the tech cryo explosions rules (page 136).

Compel: Your incinerate only works against chilled or **FROZEN** targets.

INFERNO INCINERATE

Invoke: The incinerate is fury incarnate. Affect all targets in Area 1 with the power, rolling as normal. Targets that are aware may attempt to dodge out of the attack. The inferno makes no distinction between friend or foe.

Compel: The inferno has a particularly short range; you must approach your target directly (Range: 0) and look them in their eyes before setting them upon fire.

VOLCANIC INCINERATE

Invoke: Treat all damage inflicted by the initial incinerate blast as having a Weapon: 5 with an equal Penetration value versus armor.

Compel: The plasma is as such that it has no special benefits or multiplier versus armor. Make a Weapon: 3 attack as normal and apply the per-exchange damage as normal, but not ignoring armor.



OVERLOAD

Overload electronics with this power surge, dropping their shield and potentially stunning your enemy. Effective against shields, barriers, and synthetics. Not as effective against organics.

Type: Attack

Duration: Instant

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Use the Systems skill to make an Weapon: 0 attack versus an opponent's Athletics or Systems skill. If a target is hit then their shields are down and must be recharged normally before being effective again. Organic targets take half damage and any armor worn is twice as effective versus this attack.

When overload is used against unshielded geth and other synthetics with the **ELECTROMAGNETIC VULNERABILITY** aspect it acts as a Damage: 2 attack and any synthetic target struck has a block against all actions equal to stress caused by the attack for an exchange.

NEURAL OVERLOAD

Invoke: The overload is particularly strong against organic enemies, potentially stunning them. Treat any stress damage inflicted as a block against any actions for an exchange.

Compel: The overload is so strong your own shields are affected and are dropped until restored.

WILD OVERLOAD

Invoke: Your overload arcs to one additional target per fate point spent to a maximum of two more. All targets must be within the same zone. Resolve each attack individually.

Compel: Your overload creates a feedback path, attacking you as well. Resolve as normal.

CAPACITATIVE OVERLOAD

Invoke: You build up a devastating attack. Versus organic opponents your overload damage becomes 2. Against inorganic targets increase the damage to 4.

Compel: Your overload is so powerful it recharges a target's shields. Apply damage as normal, ignoring shields, but do not reduce their effectiveness. Instead, refresh the target's shields to full.



SABOTAGE

Sabotage weapons and hack synthetics. Compromised synthetics fight on your side. Affected weapons overheat, cannot be used, and may backfire.

Type: Block; Fair (+2) difficulty

Duration: na

Range: 3

Recharge: 3

Sabotage can be used on a target's weapon or directly upon a synthetic. In the case of a weapon, the Systems skill roll determines the rating of the block that must be overcome to fire the weapon. The target can attempt to overcome the block with a Guns or Systems roll to clear the sabotage.

Synthetics are automatically compromised and fight as an ally for a number of exchanges equal to the shifts on the Systems roll. A synthetic can attempt to overcome the block with a Systems check. At the end of the duration the synthetic regains control. Until control is regained the tech can instruct the synthetic remotely, even to self-destruct.

ABERRANT SABOTAGE

Invoke: Your sabotage is deadly against synthetics; at the end of the power's duration if the synthetic has not broken the block it self-destructs, sustaining a severe complication. Against a target's weapon if, by the end of their turn, they have not cleared the block, the weapon explodes, causing Damage: 4 to the person carrying it. Shields, barriers, and armor may reduce this amount. The weapon is disabled for the remainder of the scene.

Compel: Your own weapon backfires, doing Damage: 2 to you. Shields, barriers, and armor may reduce this amount.

BERSERK SABOTAGE

Invoke: When used on a synthetic to take control, for the duration double its outgoing damage, if any.

Compel: The weak programming of this sabotage attempt reduces the rating of the block by -2.

EMPOWERING SABOTAGE

Invoke: For one exchange double any tech damage done to the target.

Compel: The sabotage takes place as normal but afterwards the target is immune from further sabotage attempts.

MASS SABOTAGE

Invoke: You may affect one additional target in the same zone as the original target, rolling once for both. The targets may be organic or synthetic; they do not have to match.

Compel: Your sabotage inadvertently propagates to the nearest random target in the same zone as you, expanding outward to maximum range until a target is found. Allies are acceptable targets. You may willingly drop the sabotage for both targets at any point.

NEFARIOUS SABOTAGE

Invoke: A sabotaged weapon backfires, doing Damage: 2 to the person carrying it. Shields, barriers, and armor may reduce this amount.

Compel: Your own weapon inadvertently responds to the sabotage and has a block placed upon it equal to the one created against the target. You may either attempt to overcome the block normally or drop the sabotage, releasing your target as well.

SENTRY TURRET

Using your omni-tool you fabricate a pre-designed turret that can be laid down with a variety of options to distract and attack your enemies.

Type: Maneuver; Fair (+2)

Duration: na

Range: 1

Recharge: 2

The basic sentry turret is an auto-fire weapon that is fabricated with an amount of ammunition that allows it to lay down aggressive fire upon enemies, as determined by the tech. The sentry turret is an item that can be targeted and has stress 2, armor 2 and kinetic shields 8. Once its stress has been depleted, the turret is destroyed. Select a free aspect from those listed as part of the maneuver.

The turret fires at targets automatically, only requiring a supplemental action by the tech to select a specific target, else the turret attacks the most reasonable/obvious target. Attacks use the turret's Systems skill roll which is determined by the number of shifts generated when the sentry turret was created. The turret has Range: 3 for firing and does Weapon: 2 damage. The power's range (above) is only to place the turret; a tech can operate a turret from multiple zones as long as they are within the scene via their omni-tool. A sentry turret acts immediately after the tech that created it.

A turret exists through the duration of the scene or until destroyed. Deploying a second turret destroys the first, drawing upon the same fabricated material to make the new unit. A turret can be constructed with multiple types of attacks. These additional weapon units stack, each one requiring a supplemental action to fire by the turret on its turn. The turret sums the total number of supplemental action penalties and applies the penalty to all attacks. The turret still only attacks a single target.

ARMOR-PIERCING TURRET

Invoke: The turret is loaded with ADP rounds designed to penetrate armor. Treat all damage inflicted as having an equal Penetration value.

Compel: The turret's shells have a softer than normal casing. All armor is effectively doubled when shot by the turret.

CRYO-AMMO TURRET

Invoke: The turret is loaded with cryo ammo (page 152). The turret has a chance of freezing enemies without any special defenses for a short time, preventing them from moving. This is a **border** against checks to move from an area equal to the weapon's Damage: 2 and targets pick up the temporary aspect, **FROZEN**. **FROZEN** enemies are more susceptible to damage and can even be shattered for an instant kill via Shattershot (page 136) or receive double damage from fire attacks like Incinerate (page 146). Unless shot again with a gun with cryo ammo, the effect dissipates at the end of the exchange.

Compel: The cryo-fabrication unit is particularly finicky and fires every other round, unless a supplemental action is spent to unjam (remotely) the turret.

FLAMETHROWER TURRET

Invoke: The turret has a Range: 1 flamethrower that does Weapon: 2 damage. It sets targets **ON FIRE!** and does an additional point of damage during the next exchange, even if the target is not shot again, ignoring all armor and shields.

Compel: Overheating of the turret's targeting systems makes it acquire a random target each exchange. The tech can override this selection for an exchange by using a supplemental action.

HEAVY TURRET

Invoke: The turret's targeting systems are upgraded, giving it +1 to its Systems skill.

Compel: The turret's programming is faulty at times; on any given roll treat the greater number of  or  results as doubled after removing ties and blank results.

REINFORCED TURRET

Invoke: The turret's shields are overcharged to a rating of 12.

Compel: The turret's shield grid is undercharged, starting with a rating of only 4.

ROCKET-LOADED TURRET

Invoke: A rotating rocket launcher magazine is created with the turret. The rockets do Weapon: 4 damage and have Range: 5. The rockets attack all targets in a zone.

Compel: The turret's rockets are anti-personnel in nature and do Weapon: 2, Range: 5, but affect only a single target.

SHOCKING TURRET

Invoke: The turret's attack is electricity-based as opposed to using ammunition. Treat all damage as a block of equal value against organics. Against synthetics apply the damage as normal.

Compel: Turret upgrades replace the standard weapon as opposed to supplementing it.

TACTICAL CLOAK

Utilizing the energy from their armor's shields allows a character to bend light around them, making them functionally invisible. This can be a great asset in combat, allowing for ambush and infiltration but at the cost of leaving the character vulnerable once the cloak is dropped.

Type: Maneuver; Mediocre (+0) difficulty

Range: 0 (self)

Duration: 1 exchange per shift or Scene

Recharge: 3

Using this power requires an active shield rating of at least 2. As a maneuver you deplete your shield's charge in order to become effectively invisible, granting you a +4 bonus to Stealth checks—if the GM even rules that you need to make them—and causing enemies to suffer a -2 penalty to any melee attack rolls against you and -4 to any ranged weapon attacks. These bonuses are covered by the aspect, **UNSEEN PREDATOR**, which is a mandatory expenditure of the free aspect gained by the maneuver. This aspect lasts for the rest of the scene out of combat or for a number of rounds equal to the shifts generated by a Systems skill roll. You remain invisible until making an attack. Your kinetic shields offer no protection while a tactical cloak is up and must be recharged after the cloak ends as normal (page 180).

If an attack is made from ambush and the cloaked character is undetected then they need only deal with an opposing roll of Mediocre (+0) for defense. Kinetic shields and armor will provide their normal protection, however.

PROTEAN CLOAK

Invoke: Your tactical cloak is particularly strong: you are able to use one tech power without breaking the cloak.

Compel: The cloak puts an overwhelming strain on your systems, making you unable to use any tech powers while cloaked. You may still, however, attack via melee and range as normal.

IRREGULAR CLOAK

Invoke: The masking capabilities of your cloak are particularly robust, gaining a bonus of +1 towards damage on your first attack from cloak. You may increase this bonus by +1 per additional expenditure of a fate point.

Compel: The power draw of the cloak is such that the cloak must be reapplied every round via a supplemental action or fail. The maximum duration is unaffected.

MASKING CLOAK

Invoke: You are able to use your cloak one more time this scene. Treat as having a Recharge value of 2.

Compel: Drain on generating the cloak is so great that its duration in a scene is reduced by 1.

TECH ARMOR

Tech Armor reinforces armor with a powerful holographic armor. This armor can be detonated to damage nearby targets. It reduces all forms of damage taken as armor does. Tech armor is completely incompatible with biotic barriers and the two cannot be combined.

Type: Maneuver; Mediocre (+0) difficulty

Duration: Scene

Range: 0 (self)

Recharge: 2

Tech armor provides an additional point of armor for every three shifts made on the Systems check, rounding up and stacking with any existing armor they may already be wearing. Damage does not reduce the strength of the armor and it lasts for the duration of the scene or until the tech elects to detonate the armor.

When activated, the tech armor inherently causes all tech powers to be more difficult to use. All tech powers have their recharge increased by 1 while the armor is in place. The tech armor's power recharge is unaffected, however.

Detonating the tech armor is an attack and must be performed as a separate action on the tech's next exchange. Roll Systems versus a target's Athletics or Systems skill. Detonating causes Weapon: 4 damage to all targets in the same zone as the character, modified by shifts.

When the tech armor is created (a maneuver) the character may apply one aspect below at no cost.

MERCURIAL ARMOR

Invoke: The tech armor is unusually strong and its strength is +1. The armor's detonation damage increases by +1 as well. This aspect may be invoked multiple times at a cost of a fate point each.

Compel: The armor is unusually fragile and requires a supplementary action to recharge every round or else it fails.

VAST ARMOR

Invoke: The detonation area is larger than normal and extends to Range: 2.

Compel: The armor's holographic matrix is spread out and fragile, as such it is less effective. Reduce the strength of the armor by -1. This reduction also reduces detonation damage by a like amount.

GILDED ARMOR

Invoke: This brightly glowing armor not only makes the tech look more impressive, but does +2 damage with melee (Fight) attacks.

Compel: Against ranged attacks the tech takes a penalty of -1 to their defense.

FITTED ARMOR

Invoke: The tech armor's holographic field is in sync with the tech and does not apply its normal recharge penalty when using tech powers.

Compel: The armor's field creates unusually disruptive interference and further increases the recharge penalty by +1 while in effect.

OTAKU ARMOR

Invoke: This armor's field provides great synergy, increasing the damage of all your tech attacks by +1.

Compel: The armor is unwieldily, applying a -1 penalty to all attack rolls for the duration.

TURBULENT ARMOR

Invoke: The armor's holographic matrix is more tightly compacted with energy, able to inflict more damage upon detonation. Increase the detonation damage to 6.

Compel: The armor's matrix is unstable and loses a point of strength each time it absorbs damage.

Combat Mastery

Soldiers are pure combat specialists. No one is tougher or more effective at taking down enemies with gunfire. Soldiers have the most thorough weapons training and high-level operatives may be outfitted with ocular synaptic processors that allow them to focus on targets with lethal accuracy.

Combat mastery comprises a series of stunts that soldiers in the *Mass Effect* universe often master to survive the high-intensity battlefields of the future. These powers require the character to select a High Concept that relates to them being an effectively trained soldier. By default, combat mastery powers have no recharge value—they may be used freely every round—but are subject to recharge penalties, such as those from wearing armor. The Combat Training subset does not have this limitation as they are passive abilities that are essentially “always on.”

Adrenaline Rush

For a brief moment it slows down time around the player, giving a small window to line up the perfect shot with the sniper rifle or other weapons. This provides a character with a +2 to Alertness checks for the purposes of determining Initiative.

Adrenaline Rush (Hardened)

Requires Adrenaline Rush

Your endorphins block out pain and trauma in addition to speeding your reaction time. The soldier may take an additional mild consequence.

AMMUNITION UPGRADES

A player may select an ammunition upgrade for a point of refresh just like any other stunts. When an ammo upgrade is selected it can be applied to any and all weapons in a character's kit. Switching between different ammo upgrades takes a supplemental action. For an additional refresh the ammo upgrade can be extended to squadmates' weapons.

Armor Piercing Ammo

This type of ammunition is derived from tungsten. This extremely dense, heavy metal is about 1.7 times heavier than lead, and far more difficult to deform than steel. It is excellent for use in armor-piercing type ammunition. Adds +2 to armor Penetration for a weapon so equipped.

Cryo Ammo

When activated, the user's weapon is empowered and has a chance of freezing enemies without any special defenses for a short time, slowing their movement. This is a **border** against checks to move from an area equal to the weapon's damage and targets pick up the temporary aspect, **FROZEN**. **FROZEN** enemies are more susceptible to damage and can even be shattered for an instant kill via Shattershot (page 136) or take double damage from fire attacks, such as Incinerate (page 146). Unless shot again with a gun with cryo ammo, the effect dissipates at the end of the exchange.

Disruptor Ammo

When activated, the character's weapon is empowered by an electrical field that causes additional damage to shields and barriers giving the weapon Damage: +1 against them. The ammo also deals Damage: +2 to synthetic enemies like the geth who have the **ELECTROMAGNETIC VULNERABILITY** aspect. Against organic targets, any attack roll that has two or more net (+) results places a **STUNNED** aspect on the target for an exchange. Disruptor ammo can also be a source power for tech explosions (page 137).

Incendiary Ammo

When activated, the user's weapon causes fire damage to enemies, doing an additional Damage: +1 as well as burning through armor with +1 Penetration and setting them on fire. This stops health regeneration and places the **PANICKED!** aspect on the target that can be compelled. Synthetic enemies are unaffected by incendiary ammo and are attacked as normal. Incendiary ammo removes the **FROZEN** aspect caused from effects such as cryo ammo. Incendiary ammo can also be a source power for tech explosions (page 137).

Warp Ammo

Warp ammo is effective against biotic barriers, shields, armor, and organic targets. It provides a Damage: +1 against barriers and shields, +1 Penetration against armor, and Damage: +1 against organic unarmored or unshielded targets. Against targets surrounded by a mass effect field of some kind that are weightless—such as via Lift, Singularity, or Shockwave—the firer may tag that target's aspect, such as **FLOATING HELPLESSLY**, for free.

COMBAT TRAINING

Each of these abilities represents intensive training and practice in one or more specialized areas. As such, they are not considered powers for the purpose of imposing recharge penalties. A different combat training speciality may be selected as an additional stunt.

Advanced Armor Training

Ignore an additional +1 bulk from armor. If your Endurance minus total bulk is positive, receive a +1 bonus on Athletics rolls to take cover, move through border ratings from rough terrain, overcome physical blocks, or to dodge an explosion. Also receive this bonus as a positive modifier to your power recharge rating, lowering all power recharge by a like amount, to a minimum of zero. This stunt may be taken multiple times.

Advanced Weapon Training

Ignore 1 point of difficulty for Guns attack rolls due to range or other factors. This has no effect if the base difficulty is Mediocre (+0) or less. Ignore an additional +1 bulk from weapons.

Assassination Training

Gain Damage: +1 on weapon attacks when you invoke one or more aspects to add to the attack roll.

Autofire Spray Training

When using a weapon with autofire and using a split attack, gain +1 to the attack value against each target. This may not exceed the original roll.

Focused Fire Training

When using a weapon with autofire against a single target make a second attack roll at -2.

Fortification Training

Gain +4 to your shields as a supplemental action. Also, increase all melee damage by +1. The will last for a scene but all active powers—including those from Combat Mastery—gain a recharge modifier of +1.

Greater Fortification Training

This power requires you have the Fortification Training power. Whenever you activate your Fortification Training you also reduce all incoming damage by -1.

Weapon Training

Take once per weapon group: assault rifle, pistol, shotgun, sniper rifle, or submachine gun. If you hit with this weapon during an attack you may choose to do your base weapon damage and use your margin of successes as a maneuver against your target's Endurance to create an aspect such as **KNOCKED BACK**, **STUNNED**, or similar that you may freely tag or give to an ally.

Concussive Shot

When activated, the user's weapon fires a single high-powered round that can stun unshielded opponents for a few seconds. Make a Guns maneuver against a target with a +1 to the roll. If successful the target has the **KNOCKED TO THE GROUND** or **STUNNED** aspect placed on it. The effectiveness of concussive shot is greatest against biotic barriers and shields. Reduce any struck by 4 points. It has no effect on armor. Concussive shot causes no damage when used.

Concussive Shot (Heavy)

Requires Concussive Shot

The concussive shot now does Damage: 2 in addition to its other effects. This is increased to Damage: 4 for targets that are under the effects of Cryo Blast or cryo ammo, but only Damage: 1 against targets with kinetic shields still up. Such targets that are **FROZEN** receive a consequence for each positive **+** result rolled; negative **-** rolls counteract this ability. A net negative result can still inflict damage but does not induce any consequences. Heavy concussive shot cannot be combined with concussive blast.

Concussive Shot (Blast)

Requires Concussive Shot

High-energy explosive charges give your shot an impact radius large enough to knock down multiple enemies. This allows the character to target two opponents in the same zone at the same time with concussive shot. Range is determined by your weapon. All other effects are as like those of concussive shot. Concussive blast cannot be combined with heavy concussive shot.

Marksman

Marksman increases a character's accuracy with weapons. For a fate point the character receives a +2 to hit a target with any firearm.

Rage

This ability is only available to krogan and boosts melee damage and durability. Spend a fate point to send the krogan into a frenzy that will last for a scene. The krogan accepts an aspect like **ENRAGED** or **FRENZIED** that can be compelled or invoked normally. This provides the enraged krogan with a Damage: 2 fists attack that does not stack with the grapple damage provided by the krogan's strength. It also provides armor 1 against hand-to-hand stress.

Unity

You're a hardened leader who's accustomed to storming the enemy lines and pulling up your comrades around you that may struggle. Any time a character other than yourself is **taken out** (page 182), you can spend a fate point to cancel the damage and keep your ally on their feet. This power may only be used once per scene. Essentially your character intervenes at the last possible moment, snatching success from the jaws of defeat.



CHAPTER 7 RULES OF PLAY





Previously, in Chapter 2, we discussed the components of the Fate system, the basics, and how to make a character. This chapter goes into all the rules of the game and special situations that may come up.

Aspects

Characters have a set of attributes called aspects. Aspects cover a wide range of elements and should collectively paint a decent picture of who your character is, what he's connected to, and what's important to him. By contrast, skills could be said to paint a similar picture of what your character can do.

Aspects can be:

- Relationships (TAL OWES ME ONE; BEAST SLAYER)
- Beliefs (THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY; I ONLY HUNT PREDATORS)
- Catchphrases (DON'T MESS WITH A KROGAN; YOU START IT, I END IT)
- Descriptions (FAVORED SON OF THE TURIAN MILITARY ACADEMY; A MASSIVE PILE OF CRATES)
- Items (A7 AVENGER RIFLE; RED SAND DETECTOR)
- Any other phrase that helps paint a picture of your character (SEEK THE TRUTH, NO MATTER THE COST)

In terms of game rules, aspects are the main avenue by which you gain or spend fate points, a kind of currency that you can spend for bonuses or that you can earn when aspects cause problems for your character. Your character has six aspects, as you probably already observed from the earlier chapter, *Making A Character*, page 23.

You'll also encounter temporary aspects during play. These could be aspects that apply to the location where you find yourself. They can also be aspects on the scene, such as **FLOATING HELPLESSLY** or **RAGING BLAZE**. You can also have temporary aspects placed upon you through maneuvers (page 73, *Skills*) or consequences (page 182).

Here's a summary of how aspects can be used in the game:

INVOCATION

You can invoke an aspect by *spending a fate point*. When you invoke an aspect, explain how it's helpful to you in your current situation. You may then either re-roll all your dice or add +2 to the roll. You may do this after your initial roll.

DECLARATION

You can invoke an aspect outside of a roll by *spending a fate point* to make a declaration (page 73, *Skills*). This allows you to add a detail to a scene without making a roll.

COMPEL

When your aspects put you at a disadvantage, they can be compelled. If you accept the compel and allow the aspect to complicate your choices, you *receive a fate point*. To refuse a compel, you *spend a fate point* instead.

TAG

On any aspect you create or discover in a scene, you get the first invocation for free—i.e., you don't have to spend a fate point to invoke it.

Using Aspects

To use an aspect, either the player or the GM declares that the aspect is relevant. The next step is to determine if the aspect's relevance works for or against the character who has the aspect. As a general rule of thumb, if it's *for*, the owner spends a fate point. If it's *against*, the owner

gains a fate point unless he pays a fate point to avoid it. This is the guiding principle from which all specific uses of aspects—invoking and compelling—originate.

Invoking Aspects

When one of your aspects applies to the situation you're in, it can give you a bonus. Doing this requires *spending a fate point* and is called **invoking the aspect**. In this context, the aspect makes your character better at whatever it is he's doing, because the aspect can somehow have an influence on the outcome of the situation. Invoking an aspect can be used to either:

**Pick up all the dice you rolled and re-roll them, or
Leave the dice alone and add +2 to the result.**

It's possible to use more than one aspect on a single roll, but you can't use the *same* aspect more than once on the same roll or action; even if you've re-rolled the dice, that's still the same roll. Re-rolls are riskier than just taking the +2 bonus—you can always end up worsening things or not making much improvement—but when a lot of  dice hit the table, a reroll can be a much cheaper way to recover.

The GM is the final arbiter of when an aspect is or is not appropriate. Usually this means you must invoke an aspect that's appropriate to the situation at hand. If you want to invoke an aspect that doesn't immediately seem appropriate, you'll need to describe how the aspect actually does apply to the situation. The GM's priority here isn't to strictly limit the use of aspects; instead, she should encourage their appropriate use by encouraging players to make decisions that keep their aspects interesting.

You aren't limited to invoking aspects on your own sheet. You can invoke aspects on another character, on the scene itself, on the general environment—such as the system or planet where you are—on the room or ship around you.

Example: The ship's grav temporarily fails and a massive pallet of hazardous waste float helplessly across the cargo bay, directly towards Hiroki, the co-pilot. Tal sees Hiroki about to be pasted and leaps out to push him out of the way of a two-ton pallet. Tal uses his Athletics skill but the dice don't cooperate; he gets a . Tal does have an aspect called **CATLIKE REFLEXES**, and it's perfect for this type of physical action. Jaben, Tal's player, spends a fate point, invoking Tal's **CATLIKE REFLEXES**, and re-rolls the dice.

This second roll is better: . But Jaben knows that a +1 isn't going to be enough to get both Tal and Hiroki out of the way of the oncoming pallet. He can't use **CATLIKE REFLEXES** again on the same action, so Jaben spends a second fate point and tells the GM he wants to use his **PROTECT THE TEAM** aspect, since he figures the captain will be angry if Hiroki gets hurt. The GM doesn't think this really applies, so Jaben needs to pick another aspect instead. He chooses **TOUGH IT OUT**, changing tactics slightly so that he's less concerned about his own safety, focusing on getting Hiroki out of the way.

The GM agrees, and Jaben spends that second fate point to invoke **TOUGH IT OUT** for a +2 to the result. His Athletics roll is now a +3, and he's pretty certain he'll be able to knock Hiroki out of the way of the oncoming pallet. Getting himself out of this situation is his next dilemma.

DECLARATION

You can also invoke an aspect to make a **declaration**, using it add something to the story that isn't tied to a die roll or skill use at all. This costs a fate point like any other invocation does. For example, you could invoke **A MADE MAN ON OMEGA** aspect to declare that the gang has some interest on this particular planet.

You can spend a fate point to make a declaration without using an aspect but if you invoke one of your aspects you're allowed to do a bit more. For example, if the GM looks skeptical over whether or not you can spend a fate point to declare that you arrive at the exact right moment, invoking your **SWOOP IN TO THE RESCUE** or **GRAND ENTRANCE** aspect should remove any of the GM's doubts. That said, this isn't a method for you to get away with anything; as always, aspect invocation is only allowed when the GM approves.

Compelling Aspects

An aspect can also allow you to gain more fate points by bringing complications and troubling circumstances into your character's life. When this occurs, it's referred to as **compelling the aspect**. Usually only one aspect is involved in a compel, but in some unusual circumstances more than one can be compelled for a bigger payout.

The GM often initiates compels. When she compels one of your aspects, she's indicating that your character is in a position where the aspect could create a problem or a difficult choice. However, you can also cause the GM to compel another character's aspects with a similar rationale and results. Sometimes, a compel will even happen by "accident" when you just naturally play out your character's aspects and cause bad things to happen.

When you're the target of a compel, you can negotiate the terms a bit, especially if the compel is going against your vision of your character. For the most part, compels make the story much more interesting, so don't turn every compel into an opportunity for an extended argument. Once the terms are set, you have a choice. You can *spend a fate point* and ignore the aspect, or take the consequences and limitations on your choices and *receive a fate point*. When you accept the fate point, the aspect is officially **compelled**.

This, in short, is the fuel mechanic of Fate to ensure that the player's have enough fate points to do interesting things and also *want* points and are willing to put themselves in interesting positions.

There are a few ways an aspect can complicate a character's life via compels—it limits responses available to a character in certain situations, it introduces unintended complications into a scene, or it provides inspiration for a plot development or a scene hook for the character.

Stay Mindful

GMs: Be familiar with your players' aspects and compel them during play This is how you make the story interesting and you shouldn't be shy about leaning hard on your players' compelling aspects They'll thank you for it!

Players: If there's an aspect that could be compelled, remind the GM about it This is how you get fate points!

LIMITATIONS

An aspect may limit actions and choices. If your character is in a situation where he would normally have a number of choices, and limiting those choices to act in accordance with his aspect is going to make more trouble for him, that's grounds to compel the aspect.

It's important to note that an aspect may dictate the *type* of action, but it usually shouldn't dictate the *precise* action, which is always the player's decision. In this way, the compel highlights the difficulty of the choices at hand by placing limits on those choices.

Example: Vala has an aspect that highlights her naiveté, indicating her newness at being a brand new Spectre. A customs officer is giving her a hard time about paperwork, mostly because he thinks he can get away with it. It's possible for Vala to see all this as completely normal; this isn't the type of bureaucratic stuff she normally has to deal with. So the GM compels her **BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING** aspect, saying, "The customs official hands you a datapad, telling you he'll need it filled out in triplicate . . . twice. This is going to slow down your investigation but maybe you don't know any better. . ." and slides forward a fate point to Vala's player, Don.

If Don accepts the fate point, Vala's **BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING** aspect dictates how she'll respond in this situation, limiting her choices. Maybe she'll tell the customs guy that she's not happy or ask her superior officer to take care of it. There are a lot of ways she may respond, but no matter how she reacts, her tendency to be known as a **BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING** dominates her actions.

Then again, she's already in a hurry and knows that a number of folks across the Citadel haven't been giving her much respect in her new position, so maybe she should spend a fate point and tell this official right where to stick his datapad else he'll be sitting in a C-Sec cell for a week. . .

COMPLICATIONS

An aspect may also *complicate* a situation, rather than directly limiting a character's choices. If everything is going along normally and the aspect makes things more difficult or introduces an unexpected twist, that's also grounds for a compel. In some cases, complications may suggest that certain consequences are mandated, such as failing at a particular action without a skill roll—perhaps the character would succeed at a defense roll against a Deceit action, but his **KROGAN MANNERS** aspect is compelled, forcing a failure if he accepts it.

Example: Tal has the aspect **TRUSTS HIS TEAM**. The players are working to find an information broker who is notorious for his double-dealing. Meanwhile, the group's resident underworld informant and “part-time” assassin, Nex, says that “he can find out where the data was sold to.” In general, Tal prefers to do things above-the-board and within the law, however the GM suggests letting Nex handle speaking with the information broker alone with a fate point, stating that **TAL TRUSTS HIS TEAM**. Jaben's player, considering this, as he's running low on fate points, and it's a fair point that Nex may be able to find out where the information is easier, and faster. Plus, Tal trusts him. Why not let him have a go?

Jaben decides he can live with that (although the information broker won't) and takes the fate point. “Nex, see what you can find out.” Unbeknownst to Jaben and the rest of the team, the unceremonious execution of the information broker will likely come back on them at some point in a most unfortunate way.

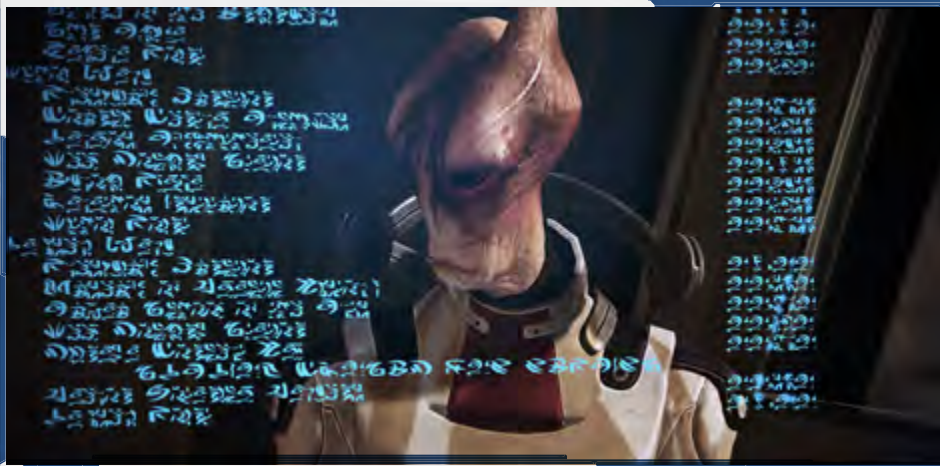
GM-DRIVEN COMPELS

Some compels are used to directly drive the story in one way or another and, as such, are really the province of the GM. The aspects of the player characters offer great ideas for creating adventures and provide the basis for scenes.

This means that sometimes an aspect may add a complication “offscreen,” such as when the GM decides to use a character's personal nemesis as the villain for a session or to give the character an unpleasant responsibility or assignment. She might also use a character's aspect to justify a particular “hook” for a future scene. When this happens, it counts as a compel.

GMs shouldn't rely on a player's particular response to this kind of compel to drive a plot—remember, *the purpose of a compel is to create drama, not force people into things*. Keep in mind that a player can always negotiate the terms of a compel—he might have an even better idea for a dramatic way to start a scene or move the story along.

Sometimes, it may seem as though there's no practical way to buy out of a scene-starter compel. Suppose you have the aspect **MY DEAR BROTHER**, and the GM proposes a compel with, “Hey, so you find your brother beaten to a pulp and left in your airlock, with a note that says ‘Don't plan on taking any long trips’ on him.” It would be difficult to spend a fate point and suggest that it doesn't even happen.



Keep in mind, though, that when you buy out of a compel, you're really buying out of the potential complication that could arise from what's proposed. You're giving yourself the option of a response that's not as dramatic. So you don't have to say, "No, my brother doesn't show up in the airlock." You might say, "Man, I've got a lot going on right now in this story... look, here's a fate point, and let's say I call station security and just get him to the medical bay."

Example: Nex's character has the aspect **NOT ENOUGH GAME ON KAHJE** which is why his drell character is wandering the known systems looking for odd jobs as a gun for hire. Unfortunately he also has a bit of a reputation and when pulling into the Citadel, is flagged by C-Sec as a "security concern" but normally Nex can talk himself out of these issues with a well-placed bribe.

This time, the new head of C-Sec decides he's going to make Nex—and other scum like him—his personal project to keep off the Citadel. As Nex lands he receives a message to prepare to be boarded for a complete inspection and that his papers had better be in order. ...or else. The GM suggests that this is a compel based on Nex's **NOT ENOUGH GAME ON KAHJE**, leaving Nex's player, Martin, curious as to what the C-Sec officer's problem might be. He accepts and the GM gives him a fate point.

There are a couple of ways that Martin can fulfill the terms the compel. He can go ahead and dock at the station, triggering the review and probably causing a massive red tape tangle for the ship, or he can reroute the ship to a different port nearby. That means he has to explain his sudden departure from the Citadel to C-Sec with some excuse. Either way, Nex has a problem on his hands.

SAY YES, ROLL THE DICE, OR COMPEL

The above statement is a fairly basic foundation of Fate: accept a story element to make it more interesting, risk rolling the dice—again making the story more interesting by potentially succeeding or failing—or accept a compel and have the GM negotiate with you on some way that the story is made more interesting.

You may have gathered this already, but just to be clear, there's a chance that a compel could happen any time you might otherwise pick up the dice. Usually, when you as a player want to try to do something, the GM will have you roll dice if she has an interesting idea of what might happen if you fail. If she doesn't, there's really no reason to roll at all.

But, if there's a good opportunity for your action to complicate things, she might "trade in" the dice roll in favor of making up something that's interesting and engaging. This is great stuff to make dramatic moments with, and it's definitely something you can use as well—as long as you're willing to deal with the potential complications, you might be able to succeed at an immediate task in exchange for future problems.

For example, Vala could point at her **THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY** and say, "There's no way I'm going to let the Councillors execute one of my prisoners while crucial evidence is missing. Even a criminal deserves a fair trial. I blast a bi-otic hole in the wall for a jailbreak." The GM will likely say, "OK. This is going to start a big shift in the game's tenor," and accept it as a worthy compel, handing Vala a fate point without the dice ever getting involved. Vala isn't even trying to resist the provocation; instead, she's just rolling with it.

Situations like this can really help inspire players to get involved in the evolving story.

"Accidental" Compels

Sometimes characters simply play to their aspects without thinking to compel them. When that happens, the GM should make a note of it (sometimes with the player reminding her) and, if possible, award the player with a fate point retroactively. If it's too late for that, the GM should make a note to give that player an extra fate point next session.

It's important that the GM keep in mind what sorts of things would normally constitute a compel. Compels happen in order to make certain choices or situations more difficult or more dramatic for the compelled character. Certainly, staying in character and playing in a way that's appropriate to a character's aspects should be praised; but it should be rewarded *only when the player's aspect-consistent play has actively made his character's choices more difficult*.

NEGOTIATING A COMPEL

In play, players and the GM can both initiate compels. When the GM initiates a compel, the process is very simple. The GM remarks that the aspect might be appropriate here and offers you a fate point. Of course, in a perfect world, the GM would always be aware of all aspects and always know when they should be compelled and rewarded. In practice, the GM is keeping track of a lot of stuff and may not realize that you have an aspect that's appropriate to the situation.

When this happens, you should feel free to capture the GM's attention and point to the appropriate aspect, holding up a fate point and raising your eyebrows or giving some other signal to indicate you think it's time for a compel.

When you call attention to one of your character's aspects, it may be as formal as "I think my **GREEN EYES OF JEALOUSY** aspect applies here," or it may be conversational, like, "Boy, that guy talking to my girl is pretty suave, as I watch them with my **GREEN EYES OF JEALOUSY**" (brandishing a fate point). There's no one way to do it and your group can fall into whatever pattern is most comfortable for all of you.

After a player or the GM suggests a compel, the immediate next step is to negotiate over the terms. Usually, the person who suggests the compel has an idea in mind already, but that doesn't mean things are set in stone. Remember: compels are supposed to make things more dramatic and interesting, not force people into boxes. So, you should feel free to suggest alternate details, offer a suitably dramatic counter-proposal if you feel it'd be more in keeping with your character, and so on. Likewise, GMs should feel free to turn up the heat on a player who's proposing a weak compel.

Example: Vala has jumped Citadel space with her prisoner in tow, not having much choice in her selection of transport. She has had to rely on Aria and her thugs from Purgatory to setup accommodations. While Vala is left alone aboard the ship with its captain, who can tell there's something more serious going on here than a simple transport, Vala's player says "The captain eying the prisoner suspects that he's probably worth more dead—or alive—than what he's being paid by me to fly us to Noveria. He's probably not threatened that I'm a **BIOTIC SPECTRE IN TRAINING**."

The GM recognizes one of Vala's aspects and agrees. "Yes, he knows a ripe target when he see's one, however he's not one to easily cross Aria and her nefarious temper." Instead the GM has the captain eye Vala and her prisoner and asks, "Aria called. The price just doubled. Pay up or step outside and walk your way to Noveria," offering the fate point in question.

Don considers. "That's going to cause a lot more problems then Vala was hoping to avoid and that's a complication I don't want right now. How about I counter with a more reasonable offer and move on with things?"

The GM responds, "That's fair, but takes the fate point off the table. Now we'll do a full on skill test between your Intimidation versus his Resolve to see things your way."

The story is made slightly more interesting—what if the captain agrees but calls Aria when they reach Noveria?—but has moved on from the original negotiation of a fate point for a straight compel which was too high of a cost in Don's eyes as a player.

WHAT'S A WEAK COMPEL?

When judging whether or not a compel is "worthy," the primary thing to look for is whether the outcome provides a palpable sense of consequence to the character and/or the story. If the outcome isn't going to create something that'll matter much in the grand scheme of things, then it probably isn't enough to work as a compel. Making a compel more worthy might mean that the GM changes the circumstances of a conflict to be less advantageous to a character; it might mean that the session suddenly takes a stunning new direction plot-wise; or it might mean that the character has an additional problem to deal with that he didn't before. As long as it's an effect you can feel in play, it's probably good enough.

COMPELLING MULTIPLE ASPECTS

Occasionally, a situation comes up in play that seems to be relevant to more than one of your character's aspects. This shouldn't be seen as a problem—rather, it's an opportunity for high drama.

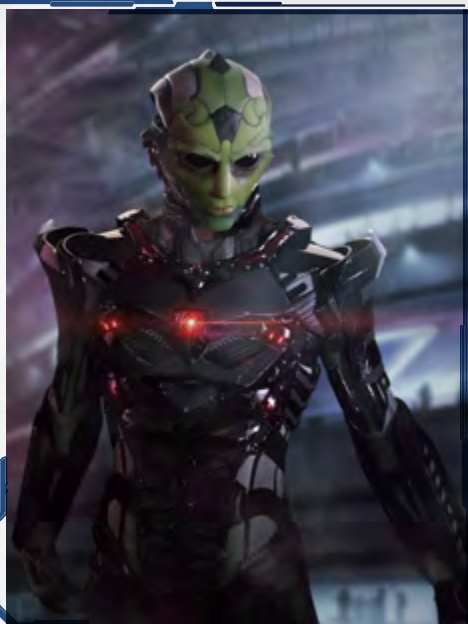
When a situation is complicated enough to involve more than one aspect, then each of the aspects is subject to a compel. You decide how to deal with this—after negotiating, you can take every compel for a large payout, or take only a certain number and then buy out of the rest. This might mean that you ultimately break even on fate point gain, but that's okay—it still shows your character's priorities in a dramatic moment, which is a successful compel.

Keep in mind that there should be a clear complication or limitation offered by each aspect; one complication that references two aspects shouldn't give you two fate points unless it's a really, really big deal.

Example: On Noveria the group runs into a few problems, not the least of which is a counter-STG mission that forces a compel for Nex's aspect, **STG BAG MAN**. But Nex also **ONLY HUNTS PREDATORS** and getting in while getting the hostages out from underneath the STG group is a pretty tempting target.

The GM reviews and sees that both compels could come into play here. "You could go with **STG BAG MAN** and have your former associates out for blood. However knowing that you **ONLY HUNTS PREDATORS** puts the hostages at risk; you want to test your mettle against those STG pukes up close."

Martin thinks about it, "and while it's tempting to put those STG jerks in their place, Nex is trying to reform and having an unnecessary body count of hostages won't ride well with his Spectre companions. At the same time, what they don't know can't hurt them; taking them out and rescuing the hostages will make the mission just that much sweeter." The GM likes the idea and gives Martin two fate points—the STG are about to be in a world of hurt.



Encountering Other Aspects

You can potentially use aspects besides the ones on your character sheet. Your fellow players' characters have aspects, of course, as do many non-player characters; sometimes even the *scene itself* may have aspects, like **DARK** or **CLUTTERED**. Ships and planets also usually have aspects. Entire regions of space have aspects.

To invoke an aspect other than your own, your character needs to directly interact with the object, location, or person that has the aspect you want to invoke, in a way appropriate to the action in progress.

Let's say a scene has the aspect **POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE** since it's on a hostile planet; not only does that mean characters can be described as needing breathing apparatus, but characters can invoke the **POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE** aspect when they do something that exposes an enemy to the planet's air.

Your character also needs to have reasonable access to the aspect in question, meaning your character needs to know that the aspect is there. With scene aspects, this is easy—if

your character is present in the scene, that'll usually do it. There are several ways you can gain access to an aspect that's on another character or scene:

- 🔍 **Discover it via assessment** (page 72, *Skills*)
- 🔍 **Create it with a declaration** (page 73, *Skills*)
- 🔍 **Establish it with a maneuver** (page 73, *Skills*)
- 🔍 **Inflict a consequence** (page 182)

If your character can interact directly with the owner of the aspect in an appropriate manner and can reasonably know about the aspect in question, you may use that aspect in a number of different ways.

INVOKING OTHER ASPECTS

Invoking an aspect that isn't on your character is precisely the same as a regular invocation—just declare how that aspect is relevant, spend a fate point, and take a +2 or a reroll. The only thing to keep in mind is that, if you're invoking an aspect on another player character or on a non-player character to gain an advantage over them, that character will *receive the fate point you spent*, either at the end of the exchange (page 166) or at the end of the scene (outside of conflict).

You can also invoke other aspects for effect, allowing you to use someone else's aspect or a scene aspect to make a declaration. All the guidelines for invoking (page 159) apply here.

Example: Nex's player, Martin, knows that Jaben's character, Tal, has the aspect **TRUSTS HIS TEAM**. It's a pretty defining aspect of Tal's character. Nex is trying to steal some underworld drugs that aren't part of the mission; after all, who would miss them? When confronted by Tal and asked if Nex found anything unusual, Nex shrugs and says "nope, all clear, boss." Secretly, Nex has arranged for a pickup of the contraband, picking up a resource aspect (page 199) further down the line. Because Martin compelled one of Jaben's aspects, Martin pays a fate point and that point goes to Jaben, rolling +2 to convince Tal that nothing is amiss.

Woe be Nex should Tal find out his team has been lying to him.

TAGGING

A **tag** is a special move that you may be able to do when you're invoking aspects other than your own. Whenever you make a roll to gain access to or create an aspect, *you may invoke it one time, and one time only, for free*—as in, you don't spend from your pool of fate points to take advantage of the aspect. If you invoke that aspect a second time, you'll need to pay the fate point as usual.

A tag is subject to one key limitation—it must occur *almost immediately* after the aspect has been brought into play. Some minor delay is OK, but should be avoided if possible. At worst, a tag should happen sometime during the scene in which it was established. Some assessments are an exception to this time limit (page 72, *Skills*).

If you wish, you can allow another character to use the tag for an aspect you've discovered or introduced. This allows for some great set-up maneuvers in a fight; you can maneuver (page 73, *Skills*) to place an aspect on a target, then pass the tag to an ally who attacks, using the advantage on his own roll. This can only be done, however, if it's reasonable that the advantage could be passed off. A sniper who uses a maneuver to aim his rifle at a target, putting an **IN MY SIGHTS** aspect on it, can't pass the advantage to someone else—the aspect placed is specific to him. But if Vala uses a maneuver to put a **FLOATING HELPLESSLY** aspect on a pirate via a singularity, she could reasonably pass the advantage to Tal, who aims for the knockout shot.

Tags, even when they're detrimental to a character, don't award a fate point like a normal invocation would. If no fate point was spent, there's no fate point to pass around.

Tagging often involves temporary aspects that result from maneuvers. Make sure you have a grasp on how temporary aspects behave (page 171).

Example: Tal just punched a Blue Suns thug, using his Fight skill to put a maneuver on him so he's **STUNNED**. Tal's next move is to pick up the thug and hurl him at the rest of the Blue Suns mercs who are attacking him and his team. Tal tags the **STUNNED** aspect—for free—to give him a +2 to this roll.

The throw takes out several of Blue Suns thugs, but the lead merc stands up, trying to shake off the attack. If Tal decides to put him down for the count and invoke **STUNNED** again, he'll have to pay one fate point for the privilege since he's already tagged it.

COMPELLING OTHER ASPECTS

Interacting with the aspects of others creates a powerful opportunity for the clever player to set up another character to be compelled. If you're aware of and can access an aspect on another character or non-player character, you may spend a fate point to try to trigger the circumstances of a compel (page 170) on the target. If the GM decides this is a compel-worthy circumstance, she takes the offered fate point and proceeds with a compel, running it as if she had initiated the compel herself.

This is a chain reaction—the first player calls for the compel, and if the GM accepts it as valid, she negotiates it with the player of the target character, who either decides to accept (gaining a fate point) or avoid (spending a fate point). Once the initiating player spends the fate point, *he does not get it back even if the target buys out of the compel*.

As with a normal compel, the final result can be negotiated as much as necessary.

SCENE ASPECTS

Scene aspects may imply some circumstances that will befall any (or many) of the characters in the scene—**EVERYTHING'S ON FIRE!** is a classic example. In such a case, it's entirely appropriate to act as if that aspect is on each character's sheet and compel the aspect for each of them, dishing fate points all around and nicely covering the effects the aspect has on the characters in the scene.

Technically speaking, a player could try to use a scene aspect to initiate a mass compel, but it'd be a pretty expensive proposition—he'd have to spend a fate point for every character he wants to be affected by the compel.

GAME ASPECTS?

Some GMs may wish to step things up to an even more “meta” level and allow for a game session or even the entire campaign to have aspects on it (**game aspects**), like **WE CAN'T CATCH A BREAK** or **REAPER INVASION**. Such aspects should be used sparingly, since their omnipresence will strongly shape the face of the game. When adding a game aspect to your campaign, ask yourself: Am I okay with this showing up in nearly every scene or session (or at least the majority of them)?

Making Character Aspects

More than anything else, aspects are a player's most explicit way of telling the GM, “This is the stuff I want to see in the game.” If the player picks an aspect like **DEATH DEFYING**, then he should be able to fully expect that the GM will put him in death-defying situations. Every aspect you give to a character influences play. You, the GM, and the other players will all invoke and compel these. They'll come up again and again.

Creating aspects can be one of the hardest things to do when creating your character. Aspects are basically catchphrases or short descriptions that colorfully describe your character or her relationships. An aspect should be short and punchy—when writing an aspect, if

the text starts to get longer than about six words or so, it's too long. Of course, a really good, vibrant phrase is an exception to this rule, but as a guideline, keep them short.

Aspects come up often in play, so make sure they're very descriptive and evoke your character. The best aspects give a vivid picture of your character's personality or relationships. Someone reading the character's list of aspects should have a pretty accurate idea who that character is.

WHY WOULD I WANT A BAD ASPECT?

You may have noticed that a number of the aspects described are “bad” aspects—they indicate a downside for a character, either in their directly negative connotations or in their two-edged nature. Aspects like **OBNOXIOUS DRUNK**, **I WON'T BACK DOWN**, and **I STAND BY MY WORD** all suggest situations where the character will have to behave a certain way—making an ass of himself at an important social function, pushing a volatile situation too far, or keeping a promise rashly made.

So why put such aspects on your sheet if they're only going to make trouble for you? Simple—you *want* that kind of trouble. On a basic, game-rules footing, “bad” aspects are a direct line to getting you more fate points—and fate points are the fusion core that powers some of the more potent positive uses of your aspects. We'll get more into how aspects can generate and use fate points later on in this chapter.

Outside of just the rules, a “bad” aspect adds interest and story to a character in a way that purely *positive* aspects don't. This sort of interest means time in the limelight. “Bad” aspects also immediately suggest story to your GM; they tell her how to hook your character in. From the perspective of playing the game to get involved and have fun, there's nothing but good in this sort of “bad.”

Clever players will also find positive ways to use “bad” aspects. Prying eyes might dismiss the **OBNOXIOUS DRUNK** as “just a drunk;” someone who **WON'T BACK DOWN** will be more determined to achieve his goals. This brings us the “secret” truth about aspects—the ones that are most useful are the ones that are the most interesting. And the most interesting aspects are neither purely good nor purely bad, but instead contain components of both.

As a rule of thumb, when picking an aspect, think of three situations where you can see the aspect coming into play. If you've got one reasonably positive situation and one reasonably negative situation out of that set, you're golden! If they're all of one type, you may want to reconsider how you've worded your aspect—try to put a little of what's missing in there. Ultimately, though, one aspect that's “all good” or “all bad” isn't that much of a problem, as long as you have a good mix throughout your whole set.



MAKING A GOOD ASPECT

Aspects are one of the major sources of flavor for your character; they're the first thing your GM will look at on your sheet when she's trying to work out what sort of stories to throw you into. This is strong stuff, and the best part is, you're in *total* control of it with the words you choose for your aspect.

Whenever you're writing down the name of an aspect, ask yourself, "How much attitude does this aspect suggest?" If it seems rather timid, then you might well be off the mark, and it's time to rethink it. Certainly, don't feel like you have to do this with every aspect you take, but if your character is described as boring, you may discover that your GM is at loose ends for keeping him involved in the story.

A few "good—better—best" examples are listed here.

Wimpy	Cool	Awesome
STRONG	STRONG AS A KROGAN	STRONGEST TURIAN IN ALL OF C-SEC
CRIMINAL PAST	FORMER PIRATE	NO ONE QUILTS THE STG
BRAWLER	BARROOM SCRAPPER	"YOU TALKIN' TO ME?"

In each of these cases, the Wimpy option certainly suggests its uses, but it doesn't really jump off the page as something that suggests story. The Cool option is better because it's more specific; both GM and player can see some potential story hooks in these, and they serve to differentiate themselves interestingly from their more demure predecessors. But the Awesome options are where it's at.

STRONGEST TURIAN IN ALL OF C-SEC could easily be the phrase others use to identify the character, and it suggests more applications than simple strength. **NO ONE QUILTS THE STG** names the organization the character was once a part of, creates built-in enemies pursuing her, and starts to put some non-player characters onto the map. **"YOU TALKIN' TO ME?"** gives the character more than just a history of brawling; it gives him attitude and presents lots of situations where he'll be belligerent even if that might be unwise. So when you pick an aspect, ask yourself: Is this Wimpy, is this Cool, or is this Awesome!?

STORY VERSUS SITUATION

In addition to positive and negative, aspects tend to divide into another set of two camps—**story** and **situation**—and it's a good idea to make sure you have aspects of each type.

Story aspects suggest sources for stories that involve your character by bringing in an external element from the world at large. They're most easily identified by asking yourself if the aspect, independent of the character, is something other characters might interact with, affect, and change. Gangs of criminals, lost items, enemies, hidden treasures, strange planets, spouses, and so much more all fit into this category.

Situation aspects suggest the *kind* of situations your character might get into much more than they suggest the *origin* of those situations. Situation aspects make a statement to your GM about the style of stories you want your character to be in. Aspects like **NICK OF TIME**, **I WON'T BACK DOWN**, and **LAST MAN STANDING** all suggest vivid situations—ones which should rightly repeat themselves over the course of playing the character—but they don't really suggest the context of those situations.

We're focusing on the split between story and situation aspects because it's an easy one to miss if you're not looking for it. You can very easily fall into the trap of creating a character who only has situation aspects. On the surface, situation aspects may be more attractive since they usually apply in a multitude of circumstances; certainly, you'll want to have at least a few situation aspects in your repertoire.

But if situation aspects are *all* that your character offers to the game, you run a real risk of being difficult to hook into the bigger storyline. Fundamentally, story aspects offer easy hooks to your GM to pull you into her story. You want this, since you came to the party to play the game. But it's more than just that. By providing story aspects, you're providing some things that exist separately from your character. At the core of it, this means you're helping to build the game world. You've got ownership and stakes in the bigger picture. The GM will be grateful for you for it, and that kind of gratitude pays out in the form of a more satisfying game.



GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE

You may have noticed that, so far, we're talking a lot about how your aspects communicate things about your character to the GM. We mean it. Out of all the things in the game, aspects are probably the clearest message you can send to the GM about what you want from the game, short of walking right up to the GM and saying so. Also, in all likelihood, the GM will have copies of your character sheets when you're not around, so the aspects you've picked are going to represent you in absentia. Once you've picked all the aspects for your character, take a step back and look at them as a whole. Ask yourself if they paint the kind of picture you want them to. If they don't, change them!

By themselves, aspects can't say it *all*, of course, and it's important to remember that. Short of making each aspect a paragraph or essay, you're dealing with a few short, catchy phrases and names here. You want them short, because you want to be able to talk about them casually without running out of breath. But the brevity of an aspect's name means some things are left unspoken. Take the time with your GM to speak these unspoken things when you can. Both you and your GM should look at an aspect not as the end of an idea, but the start of one. You both bring your own ideas of what the aspect means to the table and, at least to some extent, you're both right. Usually this works out fine—the combined perspectives make the whole greater than the sum—but sometimes you and the GM may have a radically different idea of what the aspect entails. Be clear with one another and figure out how to iron out any differences—ideally *before* the fate points start flying.

That said, after you've gotten some sessions of play under your belt, you might feel like you've picked one or more aspects that don't "feel right." We're sympathetic to that, and your GM should be, too. If an aspect doesn't seem to be working out well for you, you should feel free to ask your GM if you can change it.

Creating & Discovering Aspects In Play

There are several ways that previously unknown or nonexistent aspects can show up in play. Here, we'll discuss the methods.

GUESSING ASPECTS

Sometimes, you might want to use an aspect that's on a scene or character—except that you don't actually know if the target has the aspect in question. In other words, you're making a *guess*—maybe, just maybe, an aspect fitting a particular description is there—and, while guesses are allowed, they're subject to some special rules.

One way to make a guess is to roll it as an assessment action (page 72, **Skills**); if it's successful, the GM can reveal whether or not the target has a similar aspect. The good part about this option is that, even if your guess is wrong, you'll still get an aspect from the target if the action succeeds. The bad part is that the target usually gets a roll to defend himself from being assessed, and therefore the attempt might fail.

Another route is to spend a fate point and try to guess the aspect, explaining how you intend to use the aspect if it exists. This is basically “gambling” with an invocation or compel. You're committing your fate point on the possibility that your hunch about the target's aspects is correct. You won't get another aspect from the target if you're wrong, but because you're spending the fate point, the target doesn't get the option to defend against you.

If, conceptually speaking, the guess hits reasonably close to the mark—even if it doesn't match the aspect's exact name—the GM should exercise some flexibility and allow it.

Example: Nex is sneaking into a warehouse to ambush some smugglers. His player, Martin, might guess that the scene has a **DARKNESS** aspect on it and spend a fate point, asking if he can invoke it for his Stealth roll to get near the smugglers undetected. The scene has the aspect **SHADOWY CORNERS** instead, but Martin's guess is reasonably close to the mark, so the GM reveals that the aspect is **SHADOWY CORNERS** and allows the invocation.

If the guess just plain misses the mark, and the fact that the mark was missed doesn't amount to a significant and potentially secret piece of information, you should get the chance to reconsider your guess and take back the fate point you spent.

Example: Same as before, but this time, the GM's idea of the warehouse is that it's actually pretty well-lit—big lights hanging from the ceiling, etc. When Martin spends the fate point and explains his intent, the GM holds up her hand: “It's actually pretty well lit in here. There are big lights everywhere, most of them turned on.” Martin takes back the fate point, since this wasn't a particularly secret bit of information—it just hadn't been brought up yet.

If the guess misses the mark, but missing the mark tells you something significant and potentially secret, the fate point is still spent. This sort of circumstance almost never comes up with scene aspects, but it can come up when guessing at aspects on another character and may even amount to a “reveal” of the target's true aspect.

Example: Vala is at a high-end casino, undercover, trying to ply through the guests and find one carrying red sand using a subtle tracker she has disguised on her person. She bumps into a charming human and the device goes off; Don spends a fate point to guess at an aspect on the guy, **I'VE GOT RED SAND**. The GM smiles darkly and shakes her head. “No; the more you talk to this guy, the more you realize he's too well-adjusted and seems disgusted by the idea of taking any kind of alteration. It infuriates him!” The fate point stays spent—Vala has learned some valuable information about this obstacle to her immediate plans; she may even be able to guess at the existence of a human counter-narcotics organization that's running a counter operation in parallel to their own, **UNLIKELY ALLIES**, that she could invoke later on. Don could try to sweet-talk the GM into considering this to be a reveal of such an aspect, allowing for a tag (page 165).

In the worst case scenario, your guess misses the mark because you've been duped. This most often happens as the result of a Deceit action (page 81, **Skills**), although it might arise

from other circumstances. In such a case, the deceiver can either return the spent fate point to you or leave it spent.

If he leaves it spent, you just learned you were duped—you don't get the benefit of tagging the aspect, but you've learned something significant about your target. The deceiver doesn't get this spent fate point for himself, either—it's simply gone.

If the deceiver returns the fate point to you, things may actually be a bit worse for you—the deceiver gets to place a temporary aspect on you (and tag it), representing how he managed to snooker you.

Example: On the casino Vala finds herself, quite unknowingly, talking with the esteemed Shadow Broker, a smooth talker who is more aware of the red sand that is aboard. The Shadow Broker has convinced Vala that routine security checks are done and that absolutely nothing could be amiss; it's a tight ship. When making a Deceit roll against Vala, the Spectre takes the bait, gaining an aspect, **HOOK, LINE, & SINKER** against the Shadow Broker. Vala, although pretty new to counterintelligence, believes she's being fed a line (heh), tries to try to learn the truth and have the Shadow Broker tip his hand, using Rapport and tagging the new aspect **HOOK, LINE, & SINKER** for free. Unfortunately, this is all for naught, as the Shadow Broker had the upper hand all the time—there was no **HOOK, LINE, & SINKER** aspect—but is amused by the rookie Spectre going to all this trouble. The Shadow Broker returns the fate point and the aspect, **DRAWN TO VALA** as a “confident informer.” The Shadow Broker takes no chances, after all. Good to have a Spectre eating out of your hand.

Regardless, guesses can't, and shouldn't, be made willy-nilly. There must always be a justification for making the guess. If the guess seems unjustified—if the player is “shotgunning” guesses to randomly try to figure out another character's aspects—the GM is completely justified in shutting that player down cold.

TEMPORARY ASPECTS

Unlike the “permanent” aspects built into a character's sheet, **temporary aspects** are introduced to—or inflicted upon—a character or scene by the actions of a character in the game, but they fade over time. Temporary aspects differ in terms of the duration and the tenacity with which they stay on the recipient.

Most commonly, a temporary aspect results from a successful maneuver (page 73, **Skills**). If you get no shifts (page 173) on a maneuver roll, the maneuver is successful, but the aspect is considered **fragile**—that is, it can only be tagged once and then it goes away. Fragile aspects are usually described as very momentary changes of circumstance—if you use Guns as a maneuver to aim at a target and you don't get any shifts, you might call that aspect **A QUICK BEAD**. When you attack the target, you can tag it; but then you lose your bead on him for some reason, like he shifts position or slips behind cover or something else.

If you get shifts on a maneuver roll, the resulting aspect is said to be **sticky**—in other words, it “sticks” to the target until something can be done about it. Sticky aspects don't go away after they're tagged, allowing people to spend fate points to continue invoking them. These are usually described in more severe terms than fragile aspects, to represent that they're a tangible problem or advantage for a character. If you get shifts on a Guns maneuver to aim, you might call that aspect **RIGHT IN MY SIGHTS**—essentially, you can hold a steady aim on your target until he does something drastic to throw your aim off.

Sticky aspects may be easier to place on a location or scene rather than on another character, because the scene can't roll to defend against your maneuver. This is especially true when they potentially offer complications to everyone present—on both sides—such as with a maneuver to add a **THE BUILDING'S ON FIRE!** aspect to a scene.

Getting rid of a sticky aspect requires making a successful maneuver roll to cancel the effects of the maneuver. If a character is in a position to stop you from getting rid of the maneuver, he can try to make an appropriate defense roll to oppose you. If he succeeds, the

aspect remains. If you succeed, it goes away. If no one's in a position to stop you from getting rid of the maneuver, it's very easy—you just have to make a roll against a difficulty of Mediocre (+0). Temporary aspects that result from maneuvers always go away at the end of a conflict or scene.

Some temporary aspects have real staying power and have the ability to outlast a scene; they may even stay fixed to the target for as long as a session (or more) of play. Those kinds of temporary aspects are called **consequences**, and each character has a certain limit on how many he can take, based on his skills. They represent lasting effects such as physical wounds, psychological problems, and so forth. These aspects usually can't be removed by normal means—they require appropriate justification to remove, as well as a certain amount of recovery time (page 184).

ASSESSMENTS

Sometimes you may use your skills to make a careful **assessment** well in advance of taking action—maybe as part of putting together a plan, or simply observing the target long enough to learn something that would be a critical advantage. This approach is most often used with skills that have an element of perception—such as Investigation and Empathy—but knowledge skills could also be applied to discover “knowable things.” Here, the skill isn't used to place a temporary aspect on the target so much as to discover an *existing* aspect on the target that may have been hidden or secret.

Because this aspect is freshly introduced into play by your action, you should be able to tag this aspect. However, you're often going to use assessment as a way to prepare for a future encounter, which may not happen for several scenes. So, if you've discovered an aspect this way, *you don't have to worry about the usual time limit for tagging until the first scene where you encounter the target of your assessment*. Aspects discovered in this fashion are still present after these time limits expire, so they can still be invoked later.

All assessment efforts require the use of a significant chunk of time, usually indicated in the skill write-up. However, this time invested in preparation allows these skills to come to bear in more time pressured environments—like a fight—where they wouldn't typically be useful.

Example: Tal does a full scan of the pursuing geth vessel, trying to see if there are any weaknesses in the ship's defenses. He rolls his Systems skill to make an assessment against the difficulty set by the GM. He gets a success and learns that their engines are **RUNNING TOO HOT**.

DECLARATIONS

Traditionally, perception and knowledge skills focus on the discovery of what already exists (“knowable truths”). But in *Mass Effect* these skills also allow for **declarations**. That is to say, you can use these skills to introduce entirely new facts into play and then use those facts to your advantage. These new facts might also take the form of an aspect. For example, if your character has a strong Alertness or Investigation skill, you might use a declaration to add features to a scene for you to use to your advantage—when the fire starts, your character just “happens” to notice that the janitor left a bucket of water in the hallway.

As with maneuvering (page 73, **Skills**) and assessment (above), the resulting aspect can be tagged. Unlike assessment, declaration doesn't take any actual in-game time at all—just successful use of a knowledge skill at the right moment.

Example: The team is on Noveria when the geth decide to attack in force. As geth primes land in front of the team, Vala makes an Academics declaration to state that geth have a **SNOW BLIND** aspect that all geth share unless specifically built against it; their sensors are scrambled by the snow particles flying all about. The other players can now use this aspect to their advantage when fighting the geth.

Many skills allow for some kind of specialized knowledge—for example, you might use your Guns skill to make some declarations about the firepower an opponent is carrying.

As with assessments, aspects created with declarations don't go away after being tagged, as long as circumstances make it reasonable that they hang around. This does mean that occasionally assessments and declarations can backfire on the character establishing them—other characters might use the same aspect, or the GM might bring that aspect back around to complicate the character's endeavors.

Example: The pitched battle on Noveria eventually moves inside. For several rounds the team was able to make use of Vala's declaration of **SNOW BLIND** on the geth. Inside, however, the declaration no longer makes sense and the group can no longer use that aspect to their advantage.

Getting Stuff Done

Characters in your games are going to do a lot. For most things they do, there's no real need for rules. Characters can stand, walk, talk, and otherwise do normal things without needing to roll dice. They can even take actions that use their skills, like accessing a public terminal or driving to C-Sec, without worrying about the dice. The dice only come out when there's an interesting challenge with meaningful consequences.

On the simplest level, when a character rolls the dice, if he matches or exceeds the difficulty, he succeeds; if he doesn't, he fails. If the issue is simple, this may be all that's necessary; but sometimes you also need to know how well a character did or did not do. Clearly, if a character rolls three higher than the target, that's better than rolling only one higher.

The result of the roll is called the **effort**. Each point that the effort beats the difficulty by is one **shift**. If a roll is below the target difficulty, it's a failure and it generates no shifts—there are no "negative" shifts (although, if you flip the perspective, the opposition could be said to generate shifts). If a roll matches the target difficulty, it's a success but generates no shifts. If it beats it by one, it generates one shift; if it beats it by two it generates two shifts, and so on. The number of shifts generated by a roll is used as a measure of many elements; it's referred to as the **effect**.

Example: Tal rolls his Pilot skill to land the ship in inclement weather. The difficulty of this Pilot roll is Great (+4). He has a Great (+4) Pilot skill and he rolls a **⚡⚡⚡⚡**. His effort is Fantastic (+6) and he generates two shifts.

Using Shifts

You can spend shifts to affect the outcome of a roll. Often, your GM will implicitly spend shifts in accordance with how you've described your character's actions. Sometimes, you might explicitly spend shifts as well. Basic uses for one shift include:

- 🌀 **Reduce the time required:** Make the action take less time.
- 🌀 **Increase quality of outcome:** Improve the quality of the job by one step.
- 🌀 **Increase subtlety:** Make the job harder to detect by one.

Exactly how you can apply the shifts towards quality and subtlety depends on the skill; this is detailed in the write-ups of the individual skills (page 72, **Skills**).

TIME

When you take an action that isn't instantaneous, it's expected to take a certain amount of time; this usually ranges from a few moments to a few days. Sometimes you need to take longer to do something or you want to do something a little faster. When that happens, take a look at the following chart and determine how long the task should take. Each shift you put towards doing something more quickly makes the task happen one step faster.

Example: The guidance system on the *Cloak* has shorted out and Nex is attempting to fix it with an Engineering roll. The GM tells him that it will take a day to repair. Unfortunately, the cargo they're carrying is going to spoil if they're delayed that long. Nex makes his roll and generates three shifts. Looking at the time table, he's able to reduce the required time from a day to an hour.

SPIN

Spin is a rule that creates a special effect when a character scores a significant or better success (3 shifts or more). It let's you do even cooler things by leveraging excellent rolls set-up earlier or by leveraging good luck (fortune) on your Fate rolls.

The special effect caused by spin may simply be color—your character looks particularly cool doing whatever he's doing or perhaps he's due some recognition for excellence. In some cases, as outlined in skills and elsewhere, gaining spin can result in an actual game effect. In combat, for instance, if a character gets spin on a defensive, he can add a +1 to the very next action that occurs—even if it's not his own. You'll find other applications of spin throughout the text; in general, it serves as an easy way of noting that a character has done particularly well. Whenever your character rolls well enough to generate spin, it's time to sit up, pay attention, and spice up the details.

Remember, every three shifts generated on a roll gives your character one point of spin.

Example: Tal is fighting with a knife-wielding assassin. He uses his Fight skill to defend himself against the attack and gets an Epic (+7) result. The assassin only had a Good (+3) attack, so Tal beats him by four shifts. Three of these shifts give Tal a single point of spin, so he gets a bonus of +1 on his next turn to clobber the assassin with his fists using his Fight skill.

Time Increments

Instant
A few moments
Half a minute
A minute
A few minutes
15 minutes
Half an hour
An hour
A few hours
An afternoon
A day
A few days
A week
A couple of weeks
A month
A few months
A season
Half a year
A year
A few years
A decade
A lifetime

Taking Action

You'll roll dice in three types of situations:

Simple Actions: The character rolls against a fixed difficulty.

Contests: Two characters each roll; the high roll wins and generates shifts.

Conflicts: Two or more characters act in direct opposition to one another, but the resolution isn't as simple as a contest.

SIMPLE ACTIONS

Simple actions are rolled against a difficulty set by the GM; they're used to simply see if a character can do something and, possibly, how well he can do it. The GM describes the situation; the player chooses a skill to apply to it and rolls against a difficulty determined by the GM (page 227, *Running the Game*). The default difficulty is Average (+1). Some sample simple actions include:

- 🔪 Climbing a wall
- 🔪 Looking up obscure planetary survey data
- 🔪 Searching the scene of a battle for evidence about the combatants
- 🔪 Shooting a (non-character) target

CONTESTS

Contests are very much like simple actions in that they are easily resolved one way or another, except the action is in direct opposition to someone else instead of against a set difficulty. Each party rolls the appropriate skill, and the high roll wins as though it beat a difficulty equal to the low roll. A tie means both succeed, but whether that means the outcome is a tie or if it calls for another roll depends on the situation. Some sample contests include:

- 🔧 **An arm wrestling match**
- 🔧 **A footrace**
- 🔧 **A drinking contest**

CONFLICTS

Conflicts occur when two or more characters are in opposition in a way that can't be quickly and cleanly resolved. A conflict is broken down into a number of exchanges where each party attempts to achieve its goal, taking turns to act. Anyone affected by that attempt may be called upon to roll a response, such as defending against an attack. Each party accumulates success in the form of stress on their opponents. Eventually, one of the parties accumulates enough stress or suffers enough consequences to be taken out; alternatively, opponents may preemptively offer a concession.

Conflicts are the most involved actions in the game, and an entire scene may revolve around a conflict. Conflicts include:

- 🔧 **Any kind of fight scene**
- 🔧 **A financial negotiation**
- 🔧 **A long, tense staredown**
- 🔧 **Trying to talk your way past a security guard as he tries to scare you off**

Conflicts are complex enough that we're going to give you an entire section detailing how they're handled.



Running Conflicts

Once a conflict begins, follow these steps:

1. Frame the scene
2. Establish initiative
3. Begin the exchange
4. Take actions
5. Resolve actions
6. Begin a new exchange

FRAMING THE SCENE

During a conflict, elements in the scene might play a part in how the conflict unfolds. When framing the scene, the GM declares if there are any aspects on the scene, laying them out for the players. (Using scene aspects is discussed on page 164.)

If the scene takes place over a broad area, the GM also describes the **zones** the scene will be occurring in. Each zone is a loosely defined area; characters can directly interact with anyone else within the same zone (which is a nice way to say talk to or punch them). You need to determine who is in what zone so you know whether characters can punch each other or if they need to throw things or use ranged weapons. Determining which zones characters start in should be reasonably intuitive, but if there's a question, the GM can rule on where the character starts.

If you're looking for a quick rule of thumb, remember that people in the same zone can "touch" each other, people one zone apart can throw things at each other, and people two or three zones apart can shoot each other. A scene shouldn't involve more than a handful of zones. Considering that some guns can easily operate up to three zones, and occasionally a few more, a comfortable number of zones for the scene is usually three to nine zones—but don't feel like you need to cram in more zones than the area readily supports.

The measure of time during a conflict is expressed in **exchanges**. Each exchange represents a few seconds or "a few moments" of time (as shown on page 175). During an exchange each character is allowed to make one skill roll, the exception being to roll their defense (unlimited). **Supplemental actions** allow a character to make additional skill rolls and move simultaneously, albeit at a penalty. During an exchange characters go in order of their **initiative**.

ESTABLISH GROUPS

Your opposition might all be detailed characters like the players' characters, but often minions, goons, or other faceless supporters are there to help out the opposing force. These supporters are collectively called "minions" and they're handled slightly differently than other characters (page 190). Minions usually get divided into a number of groups equal to the number of opposing characters. If the players' opposition is composed of a mix of non-player characters and minions, enemy characters may "attach" themselves to a group of minions, directing it and taking advantage of its assistance.

Dealing with large groups is a potentially complex exercise for the GM. Later in this chapter we have several recommendations and strategies for making this a lot easier (page 191).

ESTABLISH INITIATIVE

The order of characters' actions is determined at the beginning of the conflict; this is referred to as the order of initiative (i.e., "who takes the initiative to go when"). In a physical conflict, characters act in order of highest to lowest Alertness skill; in a social conflict, it's based on Empathy; in a mental conflict it's based on Resolve.

Ties in initiative are resolved in favor of characters with a higher Resolve. Any remaining ties are in favor of the player closest to the GM's right.

When a character is attached to a group of minions, use the character's initiative. Otherwise the group of minions has initiative based on the quality of the group (as determined on page 190).

Once that order is established, that's the order in which actions are taken for the duration of the conflict. When the last person has gone, the exchange ends, and a new exchange begins with the first character acting again, and everyone else acting in the same order.

TAKING ACTION

When it's your turn in the conflict, you describe what your character's doing and, if necessary, roll an appropriate skill. Each action you take within the conflict is resolved as either a simple action (if there's no opposition), or as a contest, with the details depending upon the specifics of the action.

Most actions in a fight will be either attacks or maneuvers.

Attacks

An attack is when you attempt to force your agenda on a target—by attempting to injure him, by bullying him, or by some other means. An attack is rolled as a contest, with the attacker attempting to beat the defender in an opposed skill roll.

Not all attacks are necessarily violent. An attempt to persuade or distract someone is also a kind of attack. When determining whether the attack rules apply, see if you have two characters in conflict, an agenda (or "want") pushed by the acting character, and a target or obstacle to that agenda (the defending or responding character). The skills used to attack and defend depend on the nature of the attacker's agenda. Here are some examples.

the attacker wants...

To physically harm
To deceive
To scare
To charm
To force movement

So he uses...

Fists, Guns, Weapons
Deceit
Intimidation
Rapport
Might

And the defender can use...

Fists, Weapons, or Athletics
Resolve or Empathy
Resolve
Resolve, Deceit, or Might
Might

If the attacker wins the roll, he inflicts stress on the defender (page 181). If the defender wins, the attack fails; if the defender wins significantly, he may even earn spin (page 174), which he can use to his advantage.

Example: Vala biotically uses Lash against thug across the room, an attack that does Damage: 2. She gets a Superb (+5) result and his defense roll was only Fair (+2). She got three shifts on her roll and inflicts three physical stress on her opponent, as opposed to the basic Damage: 2 result. Vala also received spin on the result since she received three shifts and uses her +1 to help defend against the thug's counterattack.

An Alternative Initiative

Some groups may find the idea of using particular skills to determine initiative "unbalancing," or at least unpleasant, in that it tends to give certain skills particular prominence. Also, some GMs don't like keeping track of a detailed order of actions.

If your group doesn't like skill-based initiative, use this alternative method instead:

At the beginning of each exchange, the option to go first moves one player clockwise around the table

Initiative for that exchange proceeds clockwise, and includes the GM)

Thus, the person who went first on the prior exchange goes last on the next one, and the others get their turn one step sooner.

This simple method makes sure that everyone gets a chance to go first over the course of a game, and it doesn't require players to make any special initiative-based decisions in their skill selections.

Maneuvers

A maneuver is an attempt to change the situation in some way, affecting the environment or other people, but without damaging or forcing the target—if force is used or damage is dealt, it's an attack.

Some examples of maneuvers are jumping to grab a rope, throwing dust in your enemy's eyes, drawing all eyes to you in a ballroom, or taking a debate down a tangential path.

A maneuver that doesn't target an opponent is resolved as a simple action. In most simple maneuvers, you roll against a GM-set difficulty; the resulting shifts give you an idea of how well you succeeded. A maneuver can also target an opponent; if successful, it places a temporary aspect on him. Either kind can place a temporary aspect on a scene, see page 171 for details.

Example: Nex is under fire and wants to get to a better position. There's a pile of crates nearby, so he tries to jump on top using Athletics. This is a simple action, since no other character is impeding him and the GM says it has a Fair (+2) difficulty. Nex succeeds in his roll with a Good (+3) result and tells the GM he now has an aspect called **HOLDING THE HIGH GROUND**.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Free Actions

Some actions are “free”—they don't count as the character's action during an exchange, regardless of whether or not a roll of the dice is involved. Rolling to defend against an attack is a free action. So are minor actions like casting a quick glance at a doorway, flipping a switch right next to your character, or shouting a short warning.

There's no limit on the number of free actions a character may take during an exchange as long as the GM agrees that each action is free; the GM should feel free to impose limits if it seems like someone is taking excessive advantage of this rule.

Example: Vala is being pressed back by a mob of attackers. She's using all of her actions in attack and defense to keep them at bay, but she knows her shipmates are behind her, unaware of the oncoming horde. She uses a free action to shout over her shoulder, “close the airlock!”

Full Defense

You can opt to have your character do nothing but protect himself for an exchange. By foregoing your normal action, you gain a +2 on all reactions and defenses for that exchange.



You can declare that you're defending at the beginning of the exchange rather than waiting for your turn to come around. Similarly, if you haven't acted in the exchange at the time when you're first attacked, you may declare a full defense at that point; this means you'll skip your normal action for the exchange.

If you are wearing a kinetic shield generator and do a full defense action—and take no damage until your next exchange—you will recover all of your shields up to their maximum rating.

Hold Your Action

You can opt not to act when your turn comes around. When you hold action, you have the option of taking your turn any time later in the exchange. You must explicitly take your turn after someone else has finished his turn and before the next person begins. You can't wait until someone declares what he's trying to do, then interrupt him by taking your turn.

Block Actions

When your character's action is preventative—trying to keep something from happening, rather than taking direct action to make something happen—you're performing a **block** action. Declare what you're trying to prevent and what skill you're using to do it.

You may declare a block against any sort of action or actions and may theoretically use any skill, but unless the block is simple and clear, the GM may assess penalties based on how difficult it would be, or how much of a stretch it would be. You should never be able to "cover all bases" with a single block. When you're blocking, you can declare that you're protecting another character. Make this declaration on your turn and roll the skill you're using to block; the result is the block strength. When, later in that exchange, any enemy tries to attack the protected character, the protected character gets the benefit of your block or his own defense, whichever is better. The attacker rolls his attack as normal. The defender rolls his defense as normal. If that defense roll is higher than the block strength, he uses the defense result; otherwise he uses the block strength. The attacker then generates shifts as normal.

For other types of blocks, declare the block on your turn and roll the skill you're using to block, subject to any penalties imposed by the GM. The result is the block strength. Later in that exchange, every time another character tries to perform the blocked action, he enters into a contest with you. The character trying to get past the block rolls the skill he's using for the action (not necessarily a skill specifically appropriate to the block), and compares it to the block strength. If the attacker gets at least one shift, he successfully overcomes the block.

Trying to get past a block always takes an action, though the GM may grant latitude in deciding what skill is being used to get past it. Even if the action is normally a free action, getting past the block takes additional effort; thus the GM can declare that it takes up the player's action for the exchange. A variety of skills may be appropriate for getting past a block.

Example: The team has been searching for a thug who bolts for the exit as soon as he catches sight of them. However, they had the presence of mind to send Vala around to the back and she's standing in the door. Vala puts up a block to stop the thug from running, using her Stasis power. He has to beat her block to move. She gets a Fantastic (+6) result on her block, and he rolls a Mediocre (+0) on his Fight. He freezes in place, held firm by the stasis.

Supplemental Actions

Sometimes you need to do something more complicated than just taking a single, basic action. Sometimes the complication is simple, like drawing a weapon and attacking; sometimes it's more complex, like composing a sonnet while fencing.

When your character performs a simple action while doing something else—like drawing a weapon and attacking, or firing off a signal flare while intimidating the snapping varren at the edge of the firelight—it's a supplemental action and imposes a -1 on your primary action

roll (effectively spending one shift of effect in advance). When in doubt about which is the primary action and which is the supplemental one, the supplemental action is the one that normally wouldn't require a die roll.

Sometimes the GM may decide a supplemental action is particularly complicated or difficult, and may increase the penalty appropriately.

Example: The team is under heavy fire at the delivery point. The tech who just signed the manifest got shot and went down, dropping the datapad with the signed manifest on the ground. Tal's firing back at their attackers, but he needs that manifest too. He uses a supplemental action to scoop up the datapad while shooting at the enemy at the same time. His Guns roll will be at -1, but he'll have the manifest in hand.

Recover Shields

This is a special supplemental action that is used if the character is wearing a kinetic shield generator (page 205). Once damaged, by spending a supplemental action 2 points of shields can be restored, up to their maximum rating.

Movement

Movement is one of the most common supplemental actions. When it's reasonably easy to move from one zone to the next, you can move one zone as a supplemental action (see page 176, for an explanation of zones). If you want to move further than that, you need to perform a primary (not supplemental) sprint action, which entails rolling Athletics—you get to move an additional number of zones equal to the shifts generated.

You are easier to be noticed when using Stealth and moving: +2 for a slow creep, +4 walking, +6 jogging, and +8 while sprinting. During a conflict the bonus to spot a character trying to remain hidden is +2 per zone moved.

Sometimes, it's more difficult to move from one zone to the next, such as when there's some sort of barrier (like a fence or some debris) or there's some other difficulty (like getting from a rooftop to the street below and vice versa). This movement complication is called a **border**. The difficulty of that border increases the penalty for a move action and subtracts shifts from a sprint action.

Example: Nex is trying to move from his current position and regroup with the crew. He's one zone away, atop a roof, from where the rest of the crew has taken cover in the alleyway. The drop from the roof is a border, and the GM rules it's a border 2. Normally, moving one zone would be a supplemental action, but because of the border Nex must make an Athletics roll. He needs to get at least two shifts to get from the roof to his friends.

Sprinting

Your character may use his Athletics to move faster by taking a sprint action. Normally, characters may only move one zone on their turn by using one of their shifts as a supplemental action. If you spend your entire action moving, you're sprinting; rolling Athletics against a target difficulty of Mediocre (+0), you may cross a number of zones and borders equal to or less than the total shifts of effect. In the absence of borders, characters can always move a minimum of one zone.

Example: Vala decides the opposition is too fierce to hold off on her own and makes a sprint for the ship. The ship is three zones away. She needs to make an Athletics roll of Good (+3) to make it there if she sprints.

TEAMWORK

There are frequent times where characters need to work together to get something done. Perhaps sneaking together as a group, helping one another, or everyone lending a hand to repair the engines on their mass effect drive as quickly as possible. Each of these examples involve **teamwork**.

Declare who is in charge of the action. Typically this should be the person with the highest base skill bonus doing the work. So the engineer is the one in charge of fixing the mass effect

drive; everyone else is helping out. For each participant who has at least Average (+1) in the same skill—or a similar skill that may be used at the GM's discretion to assist—add a +1 to the leader's skill roll.

If you fail the roll then all the participants share in the failure; your sneak attempt gets you *all* caught, not just the leader of the attempt.

Remember, another form of teamwork is setting up aspects for other characters to use. You can do this in a number of ways, by making declarations (page 172), a skill declaration (**Skills**, page 73), or by placing a maneuver (**Skills**, page 73).

Long Conflicts

When your character is in a position to control the pacing of a conflict (which generally requires the conflict be one-on-one, or ritualized in some way), you can stretch it out and try to wear down your opponent. When this happens, actions in the conflict start using both characters' Endurance skill to restrict the skill used on any of their actions. Similarly, actions may be restricted by Alertness if the conflict has a lot of distractions, or restricted by Resolve if the conflict has become mentally fatiguing.

RESOLVING ACTIONS

Once a character takes his action, you need to determine the outcome.

Resolving Attacks

A successful attack inflicts stress on its target equal to the number of shifts on the attack—that is, the difference between the attacker's effort and the defender's effort. Stress represents non-specific difficulties a character can encounter in a conflict. In a fight, it's bruising, minor cuts, fatigue, and the like. In a social conflict, it's getting flustered or being put off your game. In a mental conflict, stress might mean losing focus or running in circles. Stress can usually be shaken off once a character has some time to collect himself, between scenes.

Stress

A character can only take so much stress before being unable to go on, represented by the stress track filling up. The stress track defaults to 3 boxes, but it can be increased by certain skills: Endurance and Resolve can both increase the stress track. See the skill descriptions of Endurance and Resolve on page 82 and page 90 for more details.

When your character suffers stress, mark off the appropriate box on your stress track. For instance, if your character takes a three-point physical hit, mark off the third box from the left on the stress track. Only one box is ever filled on a successful hit. So if your character hasn't yet been harmed in the conflict, the first and second boxes remain empty even as the third box is checked.

If the inflicted stress falls on a box that's already been filled in, the next higher empty box must be checked. This is called rolling up the stress. If you have no further boxes to fill, your character is **taken out** (described in more detail below). To avoid being taken out, you may take a consequence.

At the end of a scene, unless the GM says otherwise, a character's stress tracks clear out; minor scrapes and bruises, trivial gaffes and embarrassments, and momentary fears pass away. Deeper issues resulting from attacks—those consequences we just mentioned—may last beyond the end of the scene; they're discussed in more detail below.

Example: Nex gets shot. His opponent does two stress. Nex marks his stress track like so: ☐ ☒ ☐.

In the next exchange, he gets shot again, for two stress again. His two stress box is already full, so he rolls up and fills in the three stress box like so: ☐ ☒ ☒.

He's in danger of being taken out. If he gets shot for two stress again, he can't take the damage since he doesn't have any empty stress boxes higher than two. If he takes one stress in an attack, he can still fill in the one box, however.

Consequences

Stress is a transitory thing, but sometimes conflicts have lasting consequences—injuries, embarrassments, phobias, and the like. These are collectively called **consequences**, and they're a special kind of aspect.

Any time your character takes stress, you can choose to take a consequence and reduce the amount of stress you're forced to mark off. If your character takes a hit you don't have a box for—either because it's higher than the number of boxes on his stress track or because it rolls up past his last box—your character must take a consequence or be taken out.

The exact nature of the consequence should depend upon the conflict—an injury might be appropriate for a physical struggle, an emotional state might be apt for a social one. Whatever the consequence, it's written down under the stress track. The first consequence a character takes is a mild consequence, the second is a moderate consequence, and the third additional consequence is severe. (To understand exactly what these mean, see "Removing Stress and Consequences," page 183.) A mild consequence reduces the stress suffered by the character by 2, a moderate consequence by 4, and a severe consequence by 6.

Characters normally take no more than a severe consequence, but there is a fourth type—extreme consequences. Taking an extreme consequence reduces stress by 8, but the character is permanently injured or scarred. An extreme consequence permanently replaces one of the character's existing aspects.

Normally, the player accepting the consequence gets to describe what it is, as long as it's compatible with the nature of the attack that inflicted the harm. The GM acts as an arbitrator on the appropriateness of a consequence, so there may be some back and forth conversation before a consequence is settled on. The GM is the final authority on whether a player's suggested consequence is reasonable for the circumstances and severity.

Characters may only carry one of each type of consequence at a time (barring certain stunts which allow more). If the character has already taken a severe (or extreme, if he has that option) consequence, then the only remaining option is to be taken out. We'll talk about that next.

But here's the thing about consequences being a special kind of aspect—as long as the consequences are on your character's sheet, they may be compelled or tagged (or invoked!) like any other aspect. This also means that opponents may start compelling those aspects pretty easily, since it's no secret that the consequence aspects are now on the character's sheet!

Example: Nex's stress track is pretty full and he takes another hit for two stress. He would be taken out if he had to take the stress, so he takes a mild consequence to reduce the damage to nothing. He writes down **BRUISED** as his mild consequence.

On Nex's opponent's next action, he tags **BRUISED** for a +2 on his attack roll.

Taken Out

If your character takes a hit that exceeds his highest stress box, he's **taken out**. He's decisively lost the conflict and, unlike the other levels of consequence, his fate is in the hands of his opponent, who gets to decide how the character loses. The outcome must remain within the realm of reason—very few people truly die from shame, so having someone die as a result of a duel of wits is unlikely, but having him embarrass himself and flee in disgrace isn't unreasonable.

The option to determine how a character loses is a very powerful ability, but there are a few limits on it. First, the effect is limited to the character who has been taken out. The victor may declare that the loser has embarrassed himself in front of the Citadel Council, but he cannot

decide how the Council will respond—such as stripping away their Spectre status—or even if the Council is particularly bothered by the loss.

Second, the manner of the taken out result must be limited to the scope of the conflict. After the victor wins a debate with someone, he can't decide that the loser concedes his point and gives the victor all the money in his pockets—money was never part of the conflict, so it's not an appropriate part of the resolution.

Third, the effect must be reasonable for the target. People don't (normally) explode when killed, so that can't be part of taking someone out. Similarly, a diplomat at the negotiating table isn't going to give the victor the keys to the planetary system—that's probably beyond the scope of his authority, and even if it's not, it's unlikely to be something he'd give away under any circumstances. What he will do is make a deal that's very much in the victor's favor and possibly even thank him for it.

Lastly, players aren't always comfortable with being on the receiving end of this; they may, if they wish, spend all the fate points they have left (minimum one) and demand a different outcome, and the GM (or winning character) should then make every effort to allow them to lose in a fashion more to their liking. That said, if this is a real concern, the loser may want to concede before things reach this point (see "Concessions," on the next page).

Example: Nex has been fighting for his life; he's now out of consequences and has no empty spots on his stress track. The Blue Suns mercenary then delivers a blow that Nex can't defend. Nex has been taken out!

The GM, playing the part of the Blue Suns mercenary, gets to say what happens to Nex now. The GM could say that Nex is dead (not cool), stabbed through the heart with an omni-blade. However, dead is boring; also Nex has a fate point left and would most definitely spend it to avoid this. Instead, the GM says, "The Blue Suns mercs carry off your limp form. Your crew will find a big pool of blood and a note scrawled on the wall, 'We've got your drell, so surrender now!'"

Concessions

Whenever a character takes a consequence, he also has the option of offering a concession. A concession is essentially equivalent to surrendering, and it's the best way to end a fight before someone is taken out (short of moving away and ending the conflict). It allows the player to offer of the terms under which the character is taken out. If the concession is accepted, the conceding character is immediately taken out, but he's defeated according to the terms of his concession rather than having the victor determine the manner of his defeat.

Many conflicts end with a concession when one party or the other simply doesn't want to risk taking moderate or severe consequences as a result of the conflict, or when neither party wants to risk a taken out result that might come at too high a price.

The character inflicting the damage can always opt to not take the concession, but doing so is a clear indication that the fight will be a bloody one (literally or metaphorically). If the concession is refused and the GM declares that the concession was a reasonable offer, then the character who offered it gains one fate point, and the character who refused it loses one.

Example: Nex has a serious consequence slot left and one open stress box, the first one. The Blue Suns merc is moving in with his omni-blade and Nex knows that he's got about two rounds at best before he loses this fight. He decides to make a concession instead. "I want to make a concession—the merc takes over our control room, but I manage to jump into the closet and lock it behind me. By the time he gets it open I'll have slipped into the access ducts."

The GM agrees, and now Nex has a couple of rolls ahead of him to crawl through the access ducts. Meanwhile, who knows what mischief the merc will get up to in the cockpit?

Removing Stress & Consequences

Consequences fade with time—characters heal, rumors die down, and distance brings perspective. How long this takes depends upon the severity of the consequence, which in turn depends on how it was received.

Stress boxes are cleared any time the character has the opportunity to sit down and take a breather for a few minutes, usually at the end of the current scene. The only exception is if there's no break between scenes—if the character doesn't get a chance to take five, the stress boxes stay filled.

Mild consequences last a bit longer, but they're still transitory. Bruises and hurt feelings fade relatively quickly. Mild consequences remain for one additional scene after they're suffered. After a subsequent scene, they're removed from the character's sheet. This is time-dependent, however. If there's an extended break between scenes during which the character has a chance to recuperate, the mild consequence is removed.

Moderate consequences require the character get a little more time and distance. A good night's sleep or other extended period of rest and relaxation is required. Moderate consequences remain in place until the character has had the opportunity to take several hours (at least six) of "downtime." This may mean getting sleep in a comfortable bed, spending time with a charming member of the opposite sex, reading by the fire, or anything else of that ilk, so long as it's appropriate to the consequence. An evening of drinking with a sympathetic buddy might be a great way to get past a **HEARTBREAK** consequence, but it's not a great choice for a **BAD ANKLE**.

Severe consequences require substantial downtime, measured in days or weeks. Generally this means that such a consequence lingers for the duration of a session, but will be cleared up before the next adventure begins.

A character gets a break if he's in back-to-back sessions where no in-game time passes between them, such as in a multi-part adventure—any consequences he begins the session with are treated as one level lower for how quickly they can be removed.

Example: Nex has escaped the merc, and his stress track looks like this: . He's also got a mild (**BRUISED**) and a moderate (**LONG CUT ON THE ARM**) consequence.

He's escaped into the access tunnels and, rather than heading straight down to rendezvous with his squad, he takes a minute to rest in the tunnel before he continues. This lets him remove his stress, so his track now looks like this: .

He regroupes with the crew and they storm the control room. This is the first scene after his initial fight, so all of his consequences remain. The merc is driven off from the control room, but he's still aboard ship and the team needs to solve this issue. At this point, Nex recovers from his mild consequence—his bruise isn't bothering him anymore. He now has only the moderate consequence to deal with.

It causes the team a bit of trouble, but they eventually take back their ship and jump back into Citadel space. Nex hands off the control to Skaari and retires to his quarters for some much needed rest. When he wakes in the morning, he's refreshed—stress and consequence free.

Healing Injuries

When a character has suffered physical stress, another character may use Medicine to attempt a quick healing in the middle of a fight. Both characters must take a full action to do this. Make a roll against a target of Mediocre (+0); if it succeeds with one shift, the medic may remove the checkmark from the injured character's first physical stress box. Every two shifts beyond the first improves the effect by one; for example, with five shifts, you can remove the checkmark in the patient's third stress box. Only one stress box can be cleared per roll. Success can also be used to "stabilize" a character who has taken a severe or lesser consequence that would appear to be catastrophic (e.g., a **BLEEDING OUT** aspect)—in game terms, this has the effect of limiting the extent to which the aspect can be compelled. A single character can't be the target of more than one emergency Medicine action in an exchange. Medi-gel, usable once per scene, requires one action to use and recovers one stress box or a mild consequence.

When using Medicine to address a patient's long-term damage—i.e., the patient's physical, long-term consequences—you must spend a scene assessing and attempting to repair the

injuries. Such a scene needs to take place in a relatively safe and secure environment; a clinic or hospital is optimal, but sometimes just an empty room has to suffice. The GM should consider the circumstances when determining the difficulty of the roll. If the roll is successful, you can accelerate the normal healing process. The time it takes for the patient to remove the consequence may be reduced by one step on the time table (page 174) for every two shifts by which the difficulty is exceeded. Multiple Medicine checks may not be made; the first roll stands.



RESOLVING MANEUVERS

There are three types of maneuvers—uncontested maneuvers (without an opponent), scene-altering maneuvers, and maneuvers that target another character. If the maneuver is uncontested—for instance, the character is trying to grab a datapad from a table or leap across a gap—it's a simple action, resolved just like any other simple action. The GM sets a difficulty, and the character rolls his skill and applies the resulting shifts as normal.

A maneuver can also alter the scene in some way. This can range from trivially easy (setting a lighter to a puddle of fuel to add an **ON FIRE!** aspect to the scene) to virtually impossible (flapping one's arms very hard to try to remove the **FOGGY** aspect from a scene). Whatever the result, the GM decides whether or not the change the character makes merits adding or removing an aspect to the scene. The expenditure of a fate point can usually make a reasonable argument for making such a change—if the player's willing to spend the fate point, his character's actions to add or remove the aspect are invested with an unusual potency.

If the target is another character, the maneuvering character and the target make opposed rolls, using whatever skills the GM deems appropriate. Success is usually achieved if the maneuvering character generates at least one shift. A successful maneuver may add a temporary aspect to the targeted character; the target can either accept the temporary aspect or spend a fate point to avoid accepting it. An aspect that results from a maneuver is temporary and doesn't last very long—we'll get to the duration in a moment. The temporary aspect may then be tagged for a bonus on a subsequent roll. This first invocation usually doesn't cost the tagging player a fate point, but subsequent invocations usually do (page 165). If a character is simply trying to increase the difficulty of another target's action, this is considered a block action and should be resolved as such; see page 179.

SOME EXAMPLE MANEUVERS

This isn't a comprehensive list of all possible maneuvers, but the examples provided below should cover a wide range of circumstances and provide the tools needed to quickly adapt them to cover unexpected situations.

Blinding

Whether it's throwing sand in someone's eyes, spraying someone with a harsh chemical, or tossing a can of paint in someone's face, the goal is the same—keep that someone from being able to see. This likely involves the attacker rolling Fight and the defender rolling Athletics, with the maneuver succeeding if the attacker gets at least one shift. A successful maneuver gives your target the aspect **BLINDED**. You could compel that to add to the defense of anyone he attacks or to cause him to change the target or direction of an action. It can't force him to take an action he doesn't want to, so a blinded character can't be compelled to walk off a cliff if he isn't already moving around.

Disarming

A successful disarm maneuver forces the target to drop his weapon or otherwise renders the weapon temporarily useless. The target must either spend an action to become re-armed or pick up the weapon as a supplemental action. A supplemental action is normally a -1 penalty to the main action, but when a disarm maneuver is used, the shifts on the maneuver increase the penalty. For example, if the disarm attempt succeeds with three shifts, when the target tries to recover his weapon, he'll be at -4 (-1 for the usual penalty, plus an additional -3) to his action that exchange—essentially, the disarm maneuver has resulted in a block. His defensive rolls aren't directly affected by this penalty, but they're indirectly affected; without a weapon in hand, he'll have to rely on his fists (Fight) to defend (Athletics is still an option).

Indirect Attacks

Sometimes you want to do something like push a stack of boxes down on your opponent, or scatter marbles across the floor to trip him up. While this can potentially be an attack, it's usually meant as an inconvenience. If it's an attack, it's treated like any other attack. If it's an inconvenience, you have two options. The first option is to make an opposed roll—such as Endurance to knock over the boxes versus Athletics to dodge—and generate at least one shift, allowing a temporary aspect—such as **PINNED**—to be placed on the target. The other option is to create a block—such as using Endurance to knock over the boxes, with the value of the roll representing the block strength created by the scattered contents, causing an opponent to have to roll Athletics in order to move through the mess.

Carrying

When you carry something heavy, the penalty for a supplemental action is increased by the weight factor of what you're carrying for each zone you move. An object or person's weight factor is equal to 1 per 100 pounds of weight. Round to the nearest whole number when calculating.

Pushing

Pushing a target requires a successful attack—usually Endurance—that generates a number of shifts equal to the weight of the target +1 for each zone the target will be pushed (the +1 is basically the usual -1 for moving). While a throw or knockback moves the target to a different zone, a push moves both the target and the acting character into the destination. Because of this, the "cost" in shifts for pushing remains flat, while the cost for body-throwing and knockback increases over distance (see below). Any applicable border conditions affect the roll to push.

Throw or Knockback

It's possible to knock something or someone away from yourself, without moving. Knockback covers any maneuver that can accomplish this, including throws. To knock something back one zone requires the maneuver to generate a number of shifts equal to 1 plus the weight factor of the target (a normal person has a weight factor of 2, a small species has a weight factor of 1, a big species is 3, etc.). Each additional zone costs as much as the previous zone did plus one, so the cost increases dramatically over distance.

Other Common Situations

There are some common situations that we're going to look at more closely.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Environmental hazards—fire, vacuum, poisonous atmospheric conditions—are rated by their intensity. The intensity rating is the amount of physical stress the environment inflicts on every person in the scene at the beginning of each exchange. Intensity basically means:

0: The area is hazardous, but the danger can be avoided.

1: Almost everything around you is hazardous, and the danger is pressing in.

2: Everything is deadly, and any action runs a risk of damage.

3: There may well be nowhere to run or hide, and you have only moments to live.

Exposure to the vacuum of space is always a risk in a game like *Mass Effect*. Space is dangerous, and the intensity depends entirely on what protection you have against it. A leaking space suit is a 0 or 1, a large tear would rate a 2, and exposure to the vacuum of space with no protection is definitely a 3.

Some environments are fatiguing rather than damaging, such as trying to operate out in the hot desert sun or on a planet with a hostile or toxic atmosphere. In those situations, it's more appropriate to have Endurance restrict other skills, rather than inflicting physical stress.

ZERO GRAVITY

Ships and space stations in *Mass Effect* use technology that creates an artificial gravity field, allowing permanent living in space; it also enables ships to use massive acceleration without harming the crew inside. Outside the ship, or if the artificial gravity on board malfunctions, zero gravity conditions exist. For people unused to dealing with the conditions of zero or microgravity, activities are impaired.

Characters operating in zero gravity always suffer a -2 on all physical actions. This can be mitigated by certain aspects like **VETERAN SPACER** or **ZERO-G COMBAT TRAINED**. A character with an aspect like this can spend a fate point to be immune to the zero gravity penalty for the duration of a scene.



Explosions

Explosions and other area attacks have the potential to do damage against everyone within their radius. They're deadly and can quickly end a fight or alter a scenario significantly. Consider very carefully before allowing free and easy use of explosives in your game.

Explosives have three ratings—complexity, area, and damage. Here's what each of these mean.

Complexity is the difficulty to disarm the bomb once the fuse has been lit or the pin has been pulled.

The **area** of an explosion determines how many zones the explosion will cover. An area of 1 means the explosion affects only one zone. An area of 2 means it affects one zone and every zone adjacent to it. An area of 3 expands it out to all zones adjacent to that. An area of 10 can pretty effectively cover a small town, and a 20 can cover a large city. This, of course, assumes that your zones are roughly the same size, that the explosion originates in the center of its zone, and so forth—feel free to tweak how things behave. There's nothing saying every area 2 explosion hits all of its adjacent zones, merely that it could.

The **damage** of an explosion is a measure of how dangerous it is when it finally detonates. When an explosive detonates in a zone that your character is in, you get a free action to roll your Athletics against the damage value to try to jump clear of the zone or to take cover behind something solid. If you succeed, your character can leap clear or duck under cover if it's available in the zone. If he fails, he takes stress from the damage value of the explosive. The exception is if the explosive is thrown into your zone. If you're unaware that a detonation is impending, your defense against the damage of the explosive is automatically Mediocre (+0).

The good news is that the damage of an explosion drops by one for each zone it crosses, so characters in an adjacent zone have to deal with a damage level that's 1 lower. If there's a border between the zones that would provide some cover—like a wall—it also reduces damage by the value of the border. The damage of an explosion drops to zero once it reaches its maximum radius indicated by the area.

Setting and using explosives can usually be done using the Engineering skill, but throwing a grenade is a Athletics roll. Explosives fired from a gun or mortar use the Artillery skill. Before a character throws, the GM should ask if the fuse is short, medium, or long (for some explosives this is fixed, and not the player's choice). This doesn't need to mean a literal physical fuse—it could just as easily be a timer or some other control. If the explosive is supposed to go off on impact, it needs a hair trigger.



Throwing an explosive as an attack works in two stages. When a character throws an explosive, it's an attack using Athletics against a difficulty of Mediocre (+0). If successful, the explosive lands in an appropriate zone—remember that thrown weapons have a range of one zone. If unsuccessful, it lands in the thrower's zone.

When the explosive lands, everyone in a zone covered by its area can roll Athletics against the attack result to get clear; if they succeed on this defense roll, they may move one zone, essentially “diving clear” as a free action. The thrower can choose to reduce everyone's difficulty to dive clear—after all, his allies also need to dive away!—as long as that difficulty isn't reduced below Mediocre (+0). If the thrower makes a bad throw—missing the Mediocre (+0) target—then, as noted, the explosive lands in the thrower's zone; the difficulty for the thrower to dive free is increased by one for each step below Mediocre (+0). The thrower doesn't have the option to reduce it, though in such a circumstance everyone else merely faces a Mediocre (+0) difficulty to dive clear.

After this initial “dive clear” check, the GM makes a quick check before each individual action to see if the bomb explodes, by rolling 2 dice:

Dice result	Short Fuse	Medium Fuse	Long Fuse
+2	Explode	Explode	Explode
+1	Explode	Explode	No explosion
+0	Explode	No explosion	No explosion
-1	No explosion	No explosion	No explosion
-2	Fizzle	Fizzle	Fizzle

On a fizzle result, make a mark on a piece of paper. The second time a fizzle result comes up, the bomb is a dud or otherwise unable to explode. If the GM allows, characters with appropriate aspects may invoke them to demand that the GM re-roll the dice after revealing the result.

Each time the turn comes back around to the person who lit the fuse, a full exchange has passed and the fuse's length drops by one step. So if a long fuse explosive is out there for a full exchange, it becomes a medium fuse explosive, and so on. If it's a short fuse explosive (pretty improbable that it lasted a full exchange), then it goes off right then and there.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

When a character has an unexploded bomb in his zone and the opportunity to act, he can try a few things.

Pick It Up & Throw It

This uses the same rules for throwing the explosive that the original thrower used, but at a -1 penalty for taking the supplemental action of picking it up. This can turn into a deadly game of hot potato.

Pick It Up & Disarm It

A character may use Engineering to disarm a bomb. This action is at -1 for the supplemental action of picking it up and is at a difficulty equal to the complexity of the explosive. It's easy to pull the fuse out of a stick of dynamite, but somewhat harder to stop a grenade without the pin.

Leap On Top of It

Well, first off, this will pretty much kill the character dead. That said, it'll improve the chances of everyone around him by reducing the damage of the explosion by 3. If the character is armored in some way, then the value of the armor is also subtracted from the damage. Under particularly unusual circumstances, sets of stunts, or thick armor, the character might be able to walk away from this, but really, players should be discouraged from such actions unless

they're looking to start a new character. Fate points could be brought to bear, of course, to force a fizzle once this is done, but the GM should feel quite free to charge the player every single fate point he has to pull it off.

Run Away

Usually the wisest course—using Athletics to sprint away from the bomb—isn't such a bad idea. The trick is that you need the chance to take a turn so you can exercise this option. Players often want to bring their friends along as they flee from the scene of a bomb, so GMs should make sure to review the rules on throwing, pushing, and carrying (page 187 and page 186). While an individual almost always gets away faster, the nature of a fuse—getting checked on every action—may make a player willing get less distance if he's helping a slower person get some distance, too.

BOMBS OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

When a character encounters a bomb in a situation other than having it thrown by a maniac, there are a few commonalities you can expect. The bomb is usually larger, heavier, and more powerful, and it usually has an explicit trigger, such as a timer on a countdown or an event that will trigger it, like a tripwire.

Such bombs are inevitably powerful enough that characters in close proximity to them when they detonate have very little chance of survival. Thankfully, the role of such bombs is not to blow up; rather, their role is to threaten to blow up. Usually such bombs are in important places so that, if they go off, there'll be serious consequences—even if the characters are unharmed.

Attempts to disarm one of these bombs require one or more Engineering rolls against its complexity. A failure on any roll shouldn't result in the bomb exploding immediately; instead, turn the bomb into one with a fuse that starts counting down! Roll a single die; minus means it's become a short fuse, blank means a medium, and plus means a long. Hopefully, this buys time enough for everyone to run like the dickens.

Minions

The term minions is used to refer to the large number of “faceless” followers of more important “named” characters in a scene. The named characters are the villains of the piece; the minions are the bodies of the faithful (or at least the hapless) that the heroes must climb over to take on the named characters.

Minions have two important statistics—quality and quantity. The GM may build the villains' minion mobs using stunts—see page 109—but should feel free to play a little loose with the rules when sizing the minions appropriately to the opposition.

Minions may be of Average (+1), Fair (+2), or Good (+3) quality. This quality denotes their base effectiveness in one kind of conflict (physical, social, or mental), as well as their capacity for stress. Average minions can take one box of stress, Fair can take two, and Good can take three.

The quantity of minions is simply the number of minions present; however, minions act in one or more groups, each of which is treated as a single character in a conflict. This allows the GM to minimize the number of die rolls she's making, even when her heroes are facing off against a group of twenty screaming pirates. This shorthand technique also makes it a touch easier for the heroes to eliminate several minions in a single action.

Minion Bonuses

# of Minions	Bonus
1	+0
2-3	+1
4-6	+2
7-9	+3
10+	+4

Minions who act together as a group are much more effective than individual minions. When there are two or three minions in a group, the group receives a +1 bonus to act and react. If there are four to six minions in a group, the bonus is +2; seven to nine minions get a +3 bonus, and any single group with ten or more members gets +4.

As a rule of thumb, when a GM has a large number of minions, she should split them up into several smaller groups—preferably one group for each player character they face. These groups don't necessarily need to be equal in number; sometimes it makes sense to pit the largest group of minions against the most capable opponent.

When minions take stress, it's applied sequentially (i.e., filling all boxes instead of just a single one). Damage that overflows one minion is applied to the next minion. This means a solid enough effort can take out an entire swath of minions.

MIXED GROUPS

One of the main uses for minions, be they mercenaries or yes-men, is to improve the effectiveness of their leader. Whenever a named character and a group of minions are attacking the same target, they're considered to be attached. This has two benefits for the leader—he receives a bonus based on the group size (including him), and damage is applied to minions before it's applied to him. It has no benefits for the minions, who give up their ability to act independently, but that's more or less their job (see the Leadership skill for more, page 87). Leaving or attaching to a group is a free action, and a character may detach from a group automatically by moving away from it.

Allies

Where villains have minions (previous page), the heroes have allies. Barring special circumstances or your GMing awarding them, players can never have these type of allies without purchasing the Leadership stunt, **Allies** (page 109).

Whereas minions are simply a huge gaggle of people and creatures that provide bonuses and have little thought put into them, allies are a bit more. You get to build allies to tailor your needs, once per adventure.

By default, you start with two allies. Meaning, they have two stress boxes. After they've been hit and taken two stress, they're taken out. Also, your allies are considered of Average (+1) quality; they're merely "okay." Pick a conflict type (page 72) that they excel in: Mental, Physical, or Social. The allies' bonus applies to all rolls of that conflict type.

When you take the Allies stunt you also receive three upgrades you can use. An upgrade can be used to do the following:

More Allies

Increase the number of allies you have by +1. This is important because it adds another stress box. They're tougher and will last longer.

Better Allies

Sometimes it's important that your allies be skilled, not just numerous. Each upgrade you spend increases your allies' quality by +1 to Fair (+2), and again to Good (+3). Unfortunately, no ally can be rated higher than Good (+3).

Remember, you can use maneuvers and create aspects to assist your allies; allies have no fate points to spend, they use your own.

More Competent Allies

By default, allies can assist you with one type of conflict, like Physical, where their bonus applies to Fight, Guns, Piloting, Security, and Stealth. By spending one of your upgrades you can give them another conflict type, like Social. Now your allies are good at all Physical skills as well as Social skills, such as Contacts, Deceit, Empathy, and Intimidation. If you spend another upgrade then your allies are equally good at all three conflict types.

Do They Get Stuff?

Allies are abstracted, but they do get guns. Very basic ones. Maybe shields or armor, too. But they can be of the only very basic quality and you have to be able to afford them (page 198, **Weapons & Gear**).

In short, an ally is a quick, dirty group that you can direct, have help you, and can equally fade into the background. Allies will help you only once during an adventure. Anything more is a companion.

Companions

Companions are characters who are a little more important than allies but aren't quite full-fledged named characters in their own right. They're attached to named characters in the same way minion groups are, and they grant a +1 in appropriate conflicts due to group size. Companions don't have stress boxes, like minions do; instead, they give the named character the ability to withstand an additional consequence—specifically, the consequence that the companion is taken out, kidnapped, or otherwise removed from the conflict. Enemies have the option of taking out the leader or the companion, essentially.

While characters aren't obliged to take their companion as an aspect, it's highly recommended. Companions are the first people villains choose as hostages and targets; by choosing to take an appropriate aspect, you ensure that you'll be rewarded for the inconvenience.

Companion Types

Type	Conflicts
Sidekick	Physical
Aide	Social
Assistant	Mental

Companions are either granted as a short-term story element by the GM or are established by purchasing and using a number of stunts. By default, a companion is of Average (+1) quality and can assist in one type of conflict. The type of conflict that the companion can assist with determines his type.

A companion can have a number of advances, with each advance making him more capable. Usually, when your character takes a stunt to gain a sidekick, aide, or assistant, the companion gets a number of advances to begin with, and you can buy more advances with additional stunts.

An advance can do one of the following:

Quality

Improve the quality of a companion by one step— from Average (+1) to Fair (+2), Fair (+2) to Good (+3), and so on. This advance may be taken several times up to the companion's maximum quality, one step lower than that of his partner. Characters usually top out at Superb (+5), so typically the highest a companion could be is Great (+4). See page 22, "Power Level."

Scope

Improve the scope of a companion, allowing him to assist in an additional type of conflict (e.g., Physical and Mental, Physical and Social, Social and Mental). This may be taken twice, allowing the companion to be effective in all three scopes.

Independent

The companion can act independently of his partner, allowing the character to send the companion off to perform tasks. An independent companion is treated as a minion if he's caught out on his own (quality in this case indicates his capacity for stress), and isn't useful for much unless he's also skilled (see below).

Skilled

The companion may buy skills of his own. When your character and companion are together, you can roll the companion's skill rating instead of your character's skill rating. If the companion also has the Independent advance (above), the companion can use these skills even when he's not with your character. With one advance you can buy one skill at the companion's quality, two skills at quality -1, or three skills at quality -2. The Skilled advance can be bought multiple times, but a different skill or set of skills must be chosen each time.

Advancement

Characters change and improve over time. As you venture around the galaxy, your troubles and encounters teach you new things. Your character becomes more powerful and you take on greater threats. Change for a character is marked by **milestones**.

MILESTONES & CHARACTERS

Milestones mark important transitions for a character; they're opportunities for advancement and change. They happen mostly by GM discretion—how often milestones occur and for what reasons establish a lot about the tone of the game. GMs shouldn't be stingy with milestones, but you also don't want to have a major milestone every session. The more often milestones occur, the faster the characters will improve and the faster threats will escalate, compensating for the increase in player power.

There are three types of milestone—minor, significant, and major. Each is described below, along with what might prompt such a milestone and the effect on a character when one does occur.

MINOR MILESTONE

Minor milestones usually occur at the end of a session of play or whenever a significant piece of a story is resolved. A minor milestone allows the characters to evolve in response to the story that's been unfolding before them.

When a minor milestone occurs, you may choose one of the following:

- 🔧 **Switch the rank values of any two skills, or replace one Average (+1) skill with one that isn't on your sheet.**
- 🔧 **Change any single stunt for another stunt.**
- 🔧 **Purchase new stunts, provided you have the refresh to do so.**
- 🔧 **Rename one aspect.**

Minor milestones are ideal when you want to switch the focus of your character's existing abilities or change something on the character sheet, like a skill or the wording of an aspect. Maybe something happens in the story that makes part of your character's sheet seem inappropriate, or you've simply discovered that your choice of skills, aspects, and stunts don't match your expectations in play.

Obviously, these changes should be justified as much as possible, either within the story (“My companion Glada got killed, so I’m hiring a small gang to go after the guys who did it. I’m swapping out my companion for some minions.”) or as a result of play (“So I thought I wanted this guy to have a Good (+3) Empathy, but I’m not really using it much—it’d be more fitting if he had a lower Empathy and a higher Rapport, so I’m going to switch it out with my Fair (+2) Rapport.”). If the skill you’re switching out is at Average (+1), you may change it for a skill that isn’t on your sheet. Be careful when switching a character’s highest skills, though—this can significantly change the character, which isn’t the purpose of a minor milestone.

Keep it in character, so to speak.

SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE

A **significant milestone** usually occurs at the conclusion of a scenario or a major plotline—typically once every two or three sessions. Significant milestones are about advances of experience, as the characters have learned new things in dealing with problems and challenges.

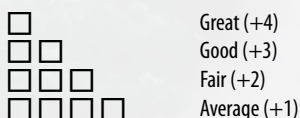
When a significant milestone occurs, your character gets all of the following:

- 🔥 **One additional skill rank.**
- 🔥 **Any of the benefits of a minor milestone.**

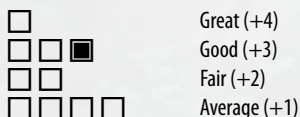
Spending the additional skill rank on a new skill slot can be a little confusing. One skill rank buys an Average (+1) slot, which you can then fill with any skill you want. If you want a bigger slot, you have to bank a few significant milestones’ worth of advancement first. When you’re upgrading an existing skill, you only need to pay the difference in cost—if you have an Average (+1) slot, you can upgrade it to a Fair (+2) slot by paying one rank.

Important: You can’t have more skills at any rank than you have at any lesser rank. For example, suppose you have a skill layout of one Great (+4), two Good (+3), three Fair (+2), and four Average (+1). Imagine that these are represented as building blocks stacked atop one another, each level representing a rank. Each block needs one below it to support it.

That would look like this:



During a significant milestone, you decide you want to upgrade one of your Fair (+2) slots to a Good (+3) slot:



But the resulting gap in the Fair (+2) category means that you can’t make that purchase at this time—you’d need an extra Fair (+2) skill in place to “hold up” the Good skill you want. You can buy a slot at Average now and upgrade it over the course of the next two milestones, or simply bank the points and buy a new Good slot directly when you have enough.

MAJOR MILESTONE

A **major milestone** should only occur when something’s happened in the campaign that shakes it up a lot—either when several scenarios have concluded or a long, large-scale plotline wraps up. When these happen, the characters jump up a step in power.

When a major milestone occurs, your character gets all of the following:

- 👉 You can “clear out” an extreme consequence slot, allowing it to be used again.
- 👉 An additional point of refresh.
- 👉 New stunts.
- 👉 Any of the benefits of a significant milestone.

Major milestones signify a *major change* in the power structure of your campaign—your characters will be dealing with a whole new tier of obstacles from here on out. You’re basically moving your game one power level upwards. Even just the bump to a skill that a stunt provides can radically alter the nature of a character’s effectiveness.

This is a *really* big deal; it means that the player characters are directly able to take on more powerful threats *and* have a wider variety of resources to draw on to face those threats. To use a boxing analogy, an advancement of power is like stepping up to the next weight class—you might be the most skilled boxer in the world, but if you’re a featherweight, there’s still only so much you can do against a less-skilled heavyweight.

Another option the GM has for a major milestone is to *increase the skill cap by one rank*. This allows the characters to raise their skills up into larger-than-life levels, transcending all previous expectations of human (or alien) capability. This can be combined with the normal refresh award as often as the GM wishes. By default, one skill cap increase should probably come every two or three major milestones, happening a few times per campaign. A campaign where the skill cap increases with every new refresh gain will get to Epic (literally) levels *very* quickly.





CHAPTER 8

WEAPONS & GEAR



The universe of *Mass Effect* is a dangerous place with the threat of the geth, collectors, and reapers...and more, all potentially standing in one's way. To that end, characters will need to equip themselves to handle these threats and defend against aggression. In this chapter we cover the basics of weapons, defensive options, bio-amp, omni-tools, and more, as well as the mechanism to acquire them during play.

Buying Things

Predominately within the *Mass Effect* universe common items can be had with minimal fuss, and only luxury, illegal, and military items (weapons, explosives, et al.) are restricted. As the player characters are members of a larger organizational structure, their resources are not limited per se—but their ability to influence requisitioning items is. Wealth is even more of an abstract concept than previously and is instead represented by a character's overall ability to obtain gear, be it via legal, illegal means, or manipulation of others or the system.

These capabilities are measured via five skills: **Contacts**, **Leadership**, **Rapport**, **Resources**, and **Security**.

When a character leverages connections they have—be they legal or illegal—they are using their **Contacts** skill to acquire an item. Contacts need not be codified upfront; the player need only provide a reasonable accommodation to the GM that reflects their connection in a manner consistent with their high concept and/or backgrounds. The GM makes the determination as to whether the contact may reasonably have access to the item(s) being sought after, potentially providing a temporary adjustment to the rating for the purposes of the purchase.

Leadership is utilizing one's standing within the community or organization to obtain gear. This may be via calling in favors, pulling rank, or successfully navigating the bureaucratic red tape. If the organization is likely or unlikely to have the gear a modifier to the rating may result at the GM's discretion.

Influencing others to make gear available to the character is the domain of **Rapport**. In this instance the character attempts to sweet talk, influence, or sway another into making the gear available, either for free or potentially at the cost of a favor, much like a contact. If the target is likely to unlikely to have access to the gear—or is in a position where doing so may have adverse consequences to the NPC—then a bonus or penalty to the Rapport rating may result. This manner of acquisition is likely to generate a story-related aspect.

Resources still exists as an option to obtain gear. Beyond its normal use, Resources also measures the ability for a character to have liquid capital to make a purchase equal to its rating. The level of rarity or legality may affect the acquisition cost of the item in question, temporarily modifying the Resource rating at the GM's purview.

Finally, a more circumspect manner of obtaining equipment may be made via **Security**. This represents a character's ability to successfully leverage their network to acquire gear by theft, copying (reverse engineering), or "borrowing" it for a time. Security is best when dealing with illegal or highly-regulated equipment.

MAKING A PURCHASE

Each of these skills are useful in their own traditional way but their rating also serves as a base fixed amount of **cost** that a character can purchase without any ill effects. If a rating is equal to or exceeds the cost of an item it is presumed that the character can acquire them item easily. However, the method in which the character makes their acquisition is colored by the specific skill. No roll is made: the character either can overcome the cost of the item or cannot. However this rating may be temporarily raised via the use of **resource aspects**.

In addition, utilizing a skill as a resource to purchase gear may have inherent bonuses or penalties based on the circumstances. Acquiring gear through legal means is more effective

with Leadership or Resources while Contacts or Security are more applicable for illegal transactions.

RESOURCE ASPECTS

Throughout play characters may be awarded or receive favors in the form of aspects. These aspects may be leveraged (“spent”) to achieve a one-time bonus of +2 to a character’s resource attribute (Contacts, Leadership, Rapport, Resources, or Security). They may also be given to another player to represent the pooling of the group’s collective resources to purchase gear. Multiple aspects may be used but must come from different sources (i.e. be different aspects). Example aspects would include **A BIG SCORE**, **SALVAGED PARTS**, or **SPECTRE ACQUISITION OFFICER**.

No roll is made; the relevant resource skill—including bonuses and/or penalties—need only equal or exceed the item’s cost to acquire it. One used, the relevant aspects go away unless deemed otherwise by the GM. A permanent resource aspect is quite powerful and requires a fate point to invoke each time.

Selling Things

Liquidating assets can, at the GMs discretion, result in the acquisition of a resource aspect—fragile or permanent—to be used later to acquire items. It can also result in a non-resource aspect such as an in-game favor. Where applicable, an opposed Resources roll or appropriate skill can be used to determine if the aspect is created successfully. For every two shifts, a resource aspect is created for use. These aspects are temporary in that they may only be used once, then disappear. Should the player roll incredibly well the GM may decide to make the resource aspect permanent, as previously discussed above.

On a failure, the character is unable to sell the goods for any appreciable positive gain. On a purely spectacular failure this should create a negative aspect, such as **STOLEN GOODS** or **WANTED!**

Weaponry

Weapons in the *Mass Effect* universe are micro-scaled mass accelerators, using mass-reducing fields and magnetic force to propel miniature slugs to lethal speeds. Nearly every gun on the battlefield is laden with features, from targeting auto-assists to projectile shavers that can generate thousands of rounds of ammunition from a small, internal block of metal.

Recently personal weapons have undergone a massive shift. It was discovered that, in an age of kinetic barriers, most firefights were won by the side who could put the most rounds downrange the fastest. As such, detachable heat sinks, known as thermal clips, were adopted first by the geth, and shortly thereafter by organic arms manufacturers. Ammunition may never be a concern with modern arms, but the availability of thermal clips is; weapons without thermal clips have nowhere to disperse their heat and are incapable of firing.

Weapons have the following attributes:

Every weapon has a **bulk** rating. Bulk is the measure of how cumbersome a weapon is while in use. A weapon that is not currently being wielded does not apply its bulk to a roll. For every point of bulk that a weapon has apply an equal recharge penalty to any power rolls as well as Athletics. A weapon can never have a bulk rating less than 0.

All weapons have a **damage** attribute. Damage measures how deadly a weapon is; the higher the damage, the more you want to avoid being hit by it. A weapon’s damage is the minimum amount of stress it causes with a successful hit. If you hit someone with a weapon with a Damage: 2 and generate no shifts on your attack roll, it still deals 2 stress. In order to deal more stress, you have to generate shifts above and beyond the weapon’s damage attribute. So, in the example above, you’d have to generate at least 3 shifts to

deal extra stress (which would, in this case, be a total of 3 stress). Stress damage may be reduced by barriers, shields, and armor before being applied.

Penetration is a weapon's ability to defeat armor. Penetration is subtracted from an opponent's armor rating before damage is applied. Negative penetration numbers mean that the armor receives a bonus to defend against the attack as the weapon is particularly ineffective when dealing with armor. Attacks against unarmored targets ignore negative penetration, as there is no armor to be ineffective against. Penetration never increases damage, it only reduces the effectiveness of armor.

All weapons have a **range**, expressed as a minimum and maximum value. Range indicates the number of zones you can attack someone with the weapon effectively. Range: 0 represents the immediate area around a character or melee range. A weapon with Range: 0-3 can be used in melee range, the same zone you are in (1), the adjacent zone (2), and the next zone beyond that (3). A weapon with Range: 2-5 can effectively be used to attack a target two zones away and up to five; attacking inside a weapon's minimum range or outside its maximum range imposes a -2 penalty to the attack roll. No weapon may be used in melee range (0) unless it has Range: 0 in its template.

Some weapons—notably explosives—have an **area**. The specific rules for explosions are covered under "Explosions," page 188; suffice it to say that the larger an explosive's area is, the more zones the explosion will affect.

GUNS

When you're creating a gun, you choose a base type (assault rifle, pistol, sniper rifle, etc); this gives you your basic attributes (damage, penetration, and range). Adding various attributes—improvements—increases the cost of the weapon while lowering its attributes will reduce its cost. Then modify the **base cost** by the improvement costs to determine the weapon's new total cost.

Calculating Basic Costs

All of the basic weapons provided are used as the foundation for creating new variants by modifying the basic version's cost. The formula used to calculate the basic version's cost is as follows:

$(\text{Damage} + \text{Sum of Areas of Effective Range} + \text{Penetration} - \text{Bulk}) \text{ divided by } 2, \text{ rounded down}, - 1 = \text{Base Cost}$

There are many improvements that can be given to a weapon, as indicated below. Some improvements can be added multiple times; their cost adjustment is cumulative.

Aspect: You can add an aspect to a weapon. This aspect can be invoked and compelled just like any aspect. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1.

Autofire: With a weapon capable of autofire, you can focus fire on a single enemy or attack multiple enemies in the same zone. You can either add Damage: +1 or attack one additional target within a single zone; however, it's a supplemental action and you suffer -1 on your attack roll. Taking this improvement again increases the damage bonus and the number of targets you can attack by one, but it also causes an additional -1 penalty to hit; it doesn't add to the number of supplemental actions you need to take. When autofire is used an opponent can free tag the **OUT OF AMMO** aspect, compelling you to reload that weapon or use another instead of attacking for a round. Cost: +1 per improvement, -1 if removed.

Awkward Reload: Weapon gains the **OUT OF AMMO** aspect, freely compelled after regular fire. Cost: -1.

Bulk: You can increase or decrease a weapon's bulk rating, making it more difficult or easier to use Athletics and powers. A weapon can never have a positive bulk value or provide a bonus. Cost: +1 or -1 per bulk rating, maximum of zero.

Concealable: Sometimes it's important to be able to hide a gun on your person. Maybe your gun is just smaller than normal, it's collapsible, or it can be reconfigured to look like something non-threatening. You gain a +2 bonus to any Deceit rolls made to hide this weapon. Cost: +1.

Damage: The weapon does more or less damage than others of its kind; it has Damage: +1 or -1. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

High Capacity: The **OUT OF AMMO** aspect cannot be freely compelled. If a weapon has two levels of Autofire only the first free tag may be negated. To eliminate the free tag entirely would require adding a second improvement of high capacity. Cost: +1 per improvement.

High Explosive: This gun fires an explosive projectile with a large blast area. The gun gains an area of 1; each time you choose this improvement, the area increases by 1. Any gun with this improvement is considered to fire hair-trigger explosives ("Explosions," page 188). Weapon is fired with the Artillery skill. Cost: +1.

High Recoil: The weapon can only be fired every other round unless the firer is prone. Cost: -1.

Indirect Fire: The weapon is capable of firing shots over walls, around corners, or otherwise past obstacles that pose difficulties for direct-fire weapons. When you use Artillery instead of Guns to fire this weapon, you can ignore 1 point of borders. This improvement makes the most sense with explosive and unconventional guns, though it could be applied to others with sufficient justification. Cost: +1.

Non-Lethal: This gun, though it deals stress normally, can't be used to kill someone. Whenever someone gets a consequence or is taken out as a result of an attack from this gun, its non-lethality must be taken into account. Cost: +0.

Penetration: This weapon is either more or less effective against armored opponents. Increase or lower the weapon's penetration by 1. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

Persistent Effect: Whether it's a flamethrower that lights things on fire, a laser gun that stuns enemies in addition to causing stress, or some other effect that persists, this improvement lets you apply an aspect to the target each time you attack successfully. The aspect is chosen when you choose this improvement. Once you've applied the aspect to a target, it lasts until the end of your next turn; you or one of your allies can tag the aspect once for free. Also see ammunition upgrades (page 152). Cost: +2.

Range: Increase or decrease the number of zones the weapon can attack. A weapon can never have a range less than zero. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

Scattershot: This gun fires a spread of projectiles, a wide cone of blast shot or similar. This grants the weapon +1 on attack rolls to hit, but if you fire at a target outside your zone, you get Damage: -1 for each zone it crosses. Cost: +1 if added, -1 if removed.

Specialized: Some weapons are really good against armor while others are extremely effective against synthetic targets, such as geth. Some guns are designed to disrupt shields or fire extremely well in low-gravity. When you choose this improvement, the weapon gains Damage: +2, +2 penetration, or +2 to attack under specific circumstances or against specific targets. The GM is the final arbiter of what circumstances or targets are too general or too specific. In general, you should get the benefit of the specialization at least a couple of times per session, but probably not much more than that. This improvement may be taken more than once, but not for the same circumstance. Cost: +1.

Scoped: Typically applied to sniper rifles, a weapon with this quality usually requires sighting through to use properly. This reduces situation awareness which results in a -1 to Alertness checks for noticing and for initiative purposes. Cost: -1.

Example: Jaben decides to make a shotgun that can drop a charging krogan with one shot. It needs to be effective against armor and shields and deal out a stupendous amount of damage. He decides that he's not really concerned with cost. He starts out with the base shotgun template which gives him Damage: 3, Range: 0-2, Penetration: -1, Bulk: 1, Cost: 2, Qualities: **Scattershot**.

Jaben adds the **Damage** improvement to increase the damage to 5 which adds +2 to the cost of the shotgun for a total of Cost: 4. But he also wants this shotgun to be effective against armor and adds 3 **Penetration** improvements to increase its penetration against armor from -1 to a respectable 2. This raises his cost to 7! That is a bit too high so he increases the weapon's bulk to 2 which lowers the cost to 6. That is still too expensive. Jaben decides a weapon this powerful is likely hard to maneuver and would have a small magazine. So he increases the **Bulk** and **Awkward Reload** improvements by one each, reducing the cost by 2 more points. The final stats for the weapon: Damage: 5, Range: 0-2, Penetration: 2, Bulk: 3, Cost: 4, Qualities: **Scattershot** and **Awkward Reload**.

Armory



M-8 Avenger



M-15 Vindicator



N-7 Valkyrie



M-76 Revenant



M-96 Mattock



M-97 Harrier



M-99 Saber



Phaseton



Geth Pulse Rifle



N7 Typhoon



M-4 Shuriken



M-9 Tempest



M-12 Locust



N7 Hurricane



Geth Plasma SMG



M-3 Predator



M-5 Phalanx



M-6 Carnifex



M-77 Paladin



N-7 Eagle



Arc Pistol



Acolyte Pistol



M-358 Talon

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-8 Avenger	3	2-4	1	1	2	Autofire
M-7 Lancer	3	2-4	1	0	5	Autofire, High Capacity, Aspect: HAND CRAFTED BY A MASTER
M-15 Vindicator	3	2-5	1	1	3	Autofire
N-7 Valkyrie	4	2-5	2	2	3	None
M-76 Revenant	3	2-5	1	2	4	Autofire x2, High Capacity
M-96 Mattock	4	2-5	1	1	3	None
M-97 Harrier	4	2-5	1	1	4	Autofire
M-99 Saber	4	2-5	2	2	4	Aspect: CUSTOM MADE
Phaeston	3	2-5	1	1	4	Autofire, High Capacity
Geth Pulse Rifle	2	2-5	-1	1		Autofire x2, High Capacity
N7 Typhoon	3	2-5	1	2	6	Autofire x2, High Capacity, Aspect: KINETIC REDUCER , Aspect: FACE SHIELD
N7 "Special"	4	0-2	1	0	7	Autofire, High Capacity, Scattershot
M-23 Katana	3	0-2	-1	1	2	Scattershot
M-27 Scimitar	3	0-2	-1	1	3	Scattershot, Aspect: RAPID FIRING SHOTGUN
M-22 Eviscerator	3	0-3	0	1	4	Scattershot
M-11 Wraith	4	0-3	0	1	4	Scattershot, Awkward Reload
Disciple	3	0-2	-1	0	4	Scattershot, Aspect: STUNNING SUBMUNITIONS
M-300 Claymore	5	0-2	2	3	4	Scattershot, Awkward Reload
Geth Plasma Shotgun	4	0-3	1	3	5	Scattershot
N7 Piranha	3	0-2	-1	1	3	Scattershot, Autofire
M-92 Mantis	4	3-7	1	2	2	Scoped, Awkward Reload
M-97 Viper	3	3-7	1	1	3	Scoped
M-29 Incisor	3	3-7	0	1	3	Scoped, Aspect: EFFECTIVE AGAINST SHIELDS
M-13 Raptor	3	2-6	1	1	3	Scoped
M-98 Widow	5	3-7	3	3	4	Scoped, High Recoil, Awkward Reload, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL RIFLE
Black Widow	5	3-7	3	3	4	Scoped, High Recoil
M-4 Shuriken	2	0-3	-1	0	2	Autofire
M-9 Tempest	2	0-3	-2	0	3	Autofire, Aspect: EFFECTIVE AGAINST SHIELDS
M-12 Locust	2	0-4	-2	0	3	Autofire
M-25 Hornet	3	0-3	0	0	3	None
N7 Hurricane	2	0-3	-1	0	3	Autofire x2
Geth Plasma SMG	2	0-3	-2	0	3	Autofire x2, High Capacity
M-3 Predator	2	0-3	0	0	1	Aspect: WEAK VS SHIELDS/BARRIERS
M-5 Phalanx	3	0-3	0	0	3	None
M-6 Carnifex	4	0-3	1	1	4	None
M-77 Paladin	4	0-2	0	0	4	Concealable
N-7 Eagle	3	0-3	0	0	4	Autofire
Executioner Pistol	4	0-3	2	1	4	Awkward Reload
Arc Pistol	2 (4)	0-3	0	0	3	Aspect: CHARGED
Acolyte Pistol	3	0-3	-1	0	3	Aspect: DEVASTATING VS SHIELDS/BARRIERS
Adept Pistol	3	0-2	0	0	3	Aspect: DEVASTATING VS SHIELDS/BARRIERS
M-358 Talon	4	0-2	-1	0	3	Scattershot

Basic Assault Rifle

Damage: 3
Penetration: 1
Base Cost: 3

Range: 2-5
Bulk: 1
Qualities: Autofire.

Assault Rifles in *Mass Effect* are a class of rapid firing ranged weapons, which also encompasses battle rifles, marksman rifles and light machine guns.

Basic Shotgun

Damage: 3
Penetration: -1
Base Cost: 2

Range: 0-2
Bulk: 1
Qualities: Scattershot.

Shotguns are particularly deadly at close range. The shotgun is stored on the small of the back in its collapsed form, below your character's assault rifle and sniper rifle.

Basic Sniper Rifle

Damage: 3
Penetration: 1
Base Cost: 3

Range: 3-7
Bulk: 1
Qualities: Scoped.

Sniper rifles are slow to fire often requiring re-cocking after each shot. However, they make up for this in range and damage—higher-level sniper rifles retain accuracy at incredible ranges, and they will often kill weaker enemies in one shot. Beware, though; close-range encounters are not recommended due to the fact that you will more than likely miss shots in close combat due to penalties.

Basic Submachine Gun

Damage: 2
Penetration: -1
Base Cost: 2

Range: 0-3
Bulk: 0
Qualities: Autofire.

Submachine Guns (SMGs) in *Mass Effect* are a class of rapid-firing weapons, including both fully automatic and burst fire weapons. They generally have low accuracy and damage per shot, offset by their clip size and rate of fire. They are best suited for close- and mid-range combat. SMGs are very effective against shields and biotic barriers, but are weak against armor.



Basic Heavy Pistol

Damage: 2
Penetration: 0
Base Cost: 2

Range: 0-3
Bulk: 0
Qualities: None.

Heavy pistols are a class of semi-automatic weapons which have a low rate of fire and limited ammunition, but do relatively high damage per shot. They are an invaluable backup weapon, somewhat effective against armor, less so against shields, and relatively accurate at mid-range.

Personal Defense

The galaxy is a dangerous place, full of people and creatures with dangerous weapons that want to shoot you, stab you, burn you, or blow you up. In order to protect yourself from such hostiles, it can be useful to wear body armor and to use personal energy shields. You can use one, both, or neither of these options, in any combination, but you can only wear one suit of armor and you can only benefit from one personal energy shield; you can't stack layers of personal defense.

Armor and shields have a numerical rating, just like weapon damage. This result is directly subtracted from any stress inflicted on the character by an attack. When struck, shields (and barriers) absorb damage first with any remaining damage—modified by penetration (page 200)—reduced by any armor worn. The remaining damage is the amount of stress the target takes.

Armor and shields have a number of qualities associated with them that determine how effective they are.

Armor is how much damage is subtracted (after shields and barriers) from the attack, reducing stress. Attacks that have a penetration value modify an armor's value for determining how much damage gets through. A suit of armor with a rating of 2 that is shot by a weapon that has penetration 2 does not provide any protection; the target takes 2 stress.

Like weapons, armor can add **bulk**. It's heavy and can get in the way, making it difficult to perform actions. For every point of bulk your armor has, you apply a +1 recharge penalty to all powers and a penalty to any Alertness rolls. These penalties stack with any bulk you may have from weapons.

If you attach a **shield generator** to your armor it provides you with extra protection. Shields are typically rated light, medium, or heavy, providing shield ratings of 4, 6, and 8, respectively. Shields absorb damage and are reduced during play. After a scene they recharge to full, but during combat require a supplemental action to increase by +2 to their maximum rating. Barring text that specifically says otherwise, shields and barriers stack and are treated effectively the same.

ARMOR

Armor is protective body covering intended to prevent injury in combat, and is differentiated by species. Turians, krogan, quarians and humans all have specific types of armor; asari and humans use the same type of armor. There are, however, three general armor categories. These rate armor based on the protection it provides. Armor can be customized with upgrades to give better shields or health regeneration, improve cooldown times for tech abilities, or protect against melee attacks depending on individual preference.

Medium to heavy armor—and almost all turian and krogan armor—is classified as 'hard-suit' because it uses thick ceramic plating to protect non-flexible parts of the body. Each set of armor, regardless of its weight, has a kinetic shield generator and an onboard computer that

can give readouts on the environment, liaise with terminals to download data, and check local wildlife against the xenobiology database.

Armor is especially useful as it provides your character with an additional consequence that they may take. Should this consequence be used during battle, then the armor has been sacrificed for that consequence. The consequence still exists—say, **COVERED IN FLAMES**—but the armor no longer provides any protection.

You can add improvements to your armor by adjusting its cost.

Aspect: You can add an aspect to armor. This aspect can be invoked and compelled just like any aspect. This improvement may be taken more than once. See “Armor & Shield Upgrades,” page 208, for example aspects. Cost: +1 each.

Bulk: You can reduce the bulk modifier of your armor. Each improvement reduces the Alertness and power recharge penalty by one to a minimum of zero. This improvement may be taken multiple times. Cost: +2 each.

Camouflage: Armor can be made to blend in with various environments—most modern armor utilizes a reprogrammable surface pigment system that allows for multiple camouflage patterns and colors. Camouflage armor gives you a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls. Cost: +1.

Enviro-Suit: Armor with this improvement allows you to survive in hostile environments. It's equipped to mitigate the effects of extreme heat and cold, caustic or poisonous atmospheres, or even the vacuum of space. An enviro-suit gives you a +2 bonus to Survival and Endurance rolls made to resist the effects of hostile environments. Cost: +0.

All armor starts with the enviro-suit improvement and shields at 0.

Light Armor

Armor: 1
Bulk: 1
Base Cost: 1

Provides 1 point of protection and an additional mild consequence but penalizes any Alertness by -1 and increases power recharge by +1 because of its bulk. This is typically basic nanoweave armor that is easy to wear, flexible, and actually somewhat fashionable. It is possible to try to wear armor under clothing but increase any Alertness rolls to detect by +2.

Medium Armor

Armor: 2
Bulk: 2
Base Cost: 2

Provides 2 points of protection and two additional mild consequences but penalizes any Alertness by -2 and increases power recharge by +2 because of its bulk. Basic nanoweave armor with reinforced ceramic plating built into strategic areas. Unfortunately this makes movement more difficult. This is the type of common armor you could expect a mercenary or a C-Sec officer to be wearing.

Heavy Armor

Armor: 3
Bulk: 3
Base Cost: 3

Provides 3 points of protection, an additional mild consequence, and an additional moderate consequence but penalizes Alertness by -3 and increases power recharge by +3 because of

its bulk. Built on a double-layer of nanoweave fabric, heavy armor has thick ceramic plating or other dense, penetration-reducing alloys attached to stop damage. Wearing heavy armor is an arduous task for most people and is typically limited to front line soldiers, such as marines.

KINETIC SHIELDS

Shields act as a kind of additional stress track that is filled up from beginning to end as stress is absorbed by it. Any time the kinetic shields of a character are struck they are reduced by the amount of stress taken from the attack. They will stay at that reduced level until recharged or until they are reduced by further attacks. If the damage from an attack exceeds their capacity then the shields are down, no longer providing any protection until they are recharged.

This can only be done in one of three ways:

- By moving from cover to cover as a supplementary action (at a penalty of -1 to any other actions for that turn) a character can automatically regain 2 points of kinetic shields.
- If a character performs the maneuver **Taking Cover** with Alertness and doesn't take any damage for a round they will fully recharge their kinetic shields. The difficulty of the Alertness check is determined by the GM based on the prevailing conditions of the zone the character is in. A warehouse floor with lots of cover might be a difficulty of 1 while an empty field might require a roll of 5. The character will also gain the full defense bonus of +2 to their Athletics rolls while taking cover.
- Finally, if a character is desperate enough, they can spend a fate point with a free action (page 178) to fully recharge their shields.

Barring any special abilities or verbiage that says otherwise, you may never charge your shields higher than its base shield rating. Some tech powers in particular, allow you to “over-charge” your shields. Also, barriers are effectively the same as shields and their effects stack.

You can also add improvements to your shields.

Aspect: You can add an aspect to a shield. This aspect can be invoked or compelled just like any aspect. This improvement may be taken more than once. See “Armor & Shield Upgrades,” below, for examples. Cost: +1 each.

Stealth Field: Some shields are designed to be able to bend light around them, rendering the wearer effectively invisible to normal vision. However, enabling a stealth field is taxing on a shield, draining its power quickly. You can deplete your shield's charge in order to become effectively invisible, granting you a +4 bonus to Stealth checks—if the GM even rules that you need to make them—and causing enemies to suffer a -2 penalty to any attack rolls against you. This effect lasts for the rest of the scene or until you attack. Recharging the depleted shield follows the rules for regaining shield strength. A stealth field can only be employed when the shield is at full strength. This effect is similar to, but not quite as effective as, the tech power Tactical Cloak (page 150). Cost: +2.



A shield generator can be purchased separately from armor although they do not provide the enviro-suit improvement and the only improvements available for shield generators are shield enhancements. Kinetic shields do not penalize the wearer due to bulk as armor does. Only one generator can be worn at a time.

Light Kinetic Shield Generator

Shields: 4

Base Cost: +2

Medium Kinetic Shield Generator

Shields: 6

Base Cost: +3

Heavy Kinetic Shield Generator

Shields: 8

Base Cost: +4

ARMOR & SHIELD UPGRADES

Below is a sample of aspect improvements available to add to armor and shields. Each one adds a cost of +1 per improvement. They can be invoked and compelled just like any aspect. Please note this list is not exhaustive so feel free to be creative and make your own, subject to GM's approval.

Augmentations

KINETIC EXOSKELETON

This prototype armor upgrade combines multiple technologies to maximize the wearer's physical abilities and athletic prowess. This is an aspect that can be invoked for a bonus to Athletics skill rolls. It is a complication to use in microgravity due to exaggerated movements.

KINETIC BUFFER

Motorized support built into the armor allows the user to maximize combat prowess during extended engagements. This aspect can be invoked for a bonus to Endurance skill rolls for the purposes of resisting fatigue. It can be compelled as a complication to Athletics.

EXOSKELETON

The Exoskeleton increases the strength of the wearer, allowing them to deliver powerful blows in combat situations. It lacks overall reinforcement and does not grant greater lifting strength. It adds a great deal of bulk to armor, making it a complication for Athletics rolls.

MOTORIZED JOINTS

Reinforced motorized joints increases the lifting capacity of the wearer, allowing them to move great weights. Mechanical augmentations often add a great deal of bulk to armor, making it a complication for Athletics rolls.

Combat Augmentations

AUGMENTED HEADS UP DISPLAY

This augmented HUD model's optic display interfaces with most small arms' auto-targeting software, linking hand and eye for improved accuracy. The display can be a distraction when compelled, though.

TARGETING VISOR

By detecting the focal point of the wearer's eyes and enhancing the image at that location, the visor helps direct a shot from an omni-tool exactly where the wearer is looking at the cost of reduced peripheral vision.

BIOTIC INTERFACE

The biotic interface uses an efficiency algorithm to balance processing power for biotic amps and a heads-up display and voice command software allows users to micromanage the systems, reducing the cool-down period between energy expenditures. When compelled the biofeedback received can be distracting.

Damage Protection

ARMOR PLATING

Hardened ceramic plates can be applied to body armor suits, increasing their effectiveness. This is an aspect that can be invoked for extra armor protection, reducing a weapon's armor penetration by 2 for an attack. It can be compelled to constrict a wearer's movements or Athletics checks.

ABLATIVE COATING

Ablative coating is designed to chip away when impacted, redirecting the energy of incoming projectiles away from the body. This can be invoked for extra armor protection reducing a weapon's armor penetration by 2 for an attack. It can also be compelled to say that the armor is thinner in a certain area leaving the wearer exposed for specific shots.

HARDENED WEAVE

Advanced firewall technology provides protection against tech attacks. This aspect can be invoked for extra protection against tech attacks. Because of the extra complexity it requires extra maintenance. This causes complications if the wearer wishes to use tech talents.

ENERGIZED WEAVE

A complex filament network of element zero microcores into the armor provides maximum protection for the user against biotic attacks. Because of the delicacy of the filaments they are relatively easy to damage. It can be compelled as a complication to the wearer's biotics.

SHOCK ABSORBERS

Installing micro-gravimetric emitters into a combat suit artificially increases mass, providing protection against concussive force delivered by explosives, high impact ammo and biotic attacks such as Lift or Throw. It makes lifting weights more difficult when compelled.

Medical Enhancements

FIRST AID INTERFACE

Microprocessors wired into a combat suit can monitor vital functions and release small, localized doses of medi-gel to accelerate the healing process.

TOXIC SEALS

Specially-sealed body armor provides increased protection against radiation, gases, and a host of other toxins. Wearing armor with toxic seals can impact long-term performance in combat due to fatigue.

STIMULANT PACK

Metabolic enhancers monitor the wearer's vital systems and release genetically engineered stimulants to maximize reaction times. Stimulants can make the user a bit hyper and easily distracted during long deployments

Shield Enhancements

SHIELD BATTERY

To generate kinetic barriers, combat suits rely on capacitors to store energy from a generator. The greater the capacitor storage, the more potent the barrier. It also makes the target more noticeable to sensors due to a greater power signature.

SHIELD MODULATOR

Varying shield modulation makes it more difficult to bring down using tech talents like Overload or Energy Drain. The fluctuating frequencies can cause interference, making it more difficult for the wearer of the armor to utilize tech talents.

SHIELD REGENERATOR

A secondary power source increases the rate at which a combat suit's kinetic barrier capacitors can be replenished. This aspect can be invoked when attempting the **TAKING COVER** maneuver with Alertness to recharge shields. The extra capacitors can be vulnerable to attacks, however.

Personal Items

A number of pieces of specialized equipment are available to personnel to further customize their loadouts.

BIO-AMPS

Species that have been exposed to eezo (element zero) can develop biotic abilities. These abilities, however, are not controllable without the use of a bio-amp. Surgically installed into the user, the bio-amp implant provides the ability to harness the eezo for a variety of effects when combined with extensive training. This training allows the biotic to utilize the implant to manipulate the mass effect fields that their bodies generate in coordination with mnemonic actions to yield a number of effects. Since bio-amps are implanted during puberty, it is extremely dangerous to modify or upgrade one; there is the risk of serious brain damage. Bio-amps, once installed, can never be removed.

Asari, as natural biotics, can never use a bio-amp, although they are adept at assisting in the designing of bio-amps due to their long standing familiarity with biotics.

A character equipped with a bio-amp may potentially receive a bonus or penalty when using biotic powers, as shown by a number of mechanical adjustments. These improvements include:

Aspect: The bio-amp has some special feature or design that makes it unique, giving it an aspect. This aspect can be invoked and compelled just like any other.

Biotics: A properly synced bio-amp can provide a bonus when making Biotics checks. Each bonus also has a cap associated with it; the bonus is only applied to Biotics skill rolls at or below the listed cap. For skill rolls above the cap, the bio-amp's bonus provides no benefit. Thus, it is possible for a biotic to "outgrow" their amp over time.

Cost: The cost to obtain the implant and have it installed. Bio-amps can never be sold (removed) nor upgraded without GM's approval, even then only with great risk of death...or worse. If at the beginning of a game, during character creation, a player would like access to a bio-amp beyond what they could normally afford, they can spend a point of refresh to do so with the GM's permission. One of their aspects should speak to how they got their hands on such a powerful bio-amp, though.

Duration: A modifier to the duration of a power used with this type of bio-amp. For instant effect powers this has no effect. For all other powers the duration can be extended or shortened, turning the power into, essentially, an instant effect power if reduced to zero. Biotic powers that achieve a duration via an aspect at creation are modified by this type of bio-amp.

Range: A bio-amp can modify the range that powers can be used, either reducing them in order to gain other benefits or by further extending the biotic's reach.

Recharge: Modify the recharge rating for all powers. This can be a negative (beneficial) or positive (penalty) value. Lowering a power's recharge can never be less than zero.

Bio-Amp	Range Bonus	Recharge Modifier	Duration Bonus	Biotics	Cost	Qualities
Basic L2 Amp (retired)	+0	+0	+0	-1	-	Aspect: HEADACHES
Basic L3 Amp	+0	+0	+0	0	2	None
Solaris Amp	+0	-1	+1	+1 (1)	6	None
Prodigy Amp	-1	-2	+2	+0	5	None
Gemini Amp	+1	+0	+0	+0	5	Specialized: Devastating vs Shields
Polaris Amp	+0	-1	+3	+1 (1)	8	
Savant Amp	-1	-2	+3	+2 (4)	12	
Unity Amp	+2	+2	+1	+1 (2)	7	Aspect: CUTTING EDGE
HMBA Basic	+1	+0	+1	+1 (1)	6	
HMBA Advanced	+1	+0	+1	+2 (2)	8	
HMBA Master	+0	-1	+1	+2 (3)	10	Aspect: CUSTOM MADE

Specialized: The bio-amp is tailored in such a way that it provides an improvement when powers are used against a specific circumstance or targets. The bio-amp may also be specialized in such a way to provide a bonus when using a single power. The bonus for being specialized is +2 to a power's roll when used in said situation.

Basic L2 Amp

Range Bonus: +0

Duration Bonus: +0

Cost: na

Recharge Modifier: +0

Biotics: -1

Qualities: Aspect: **HEADACHES**.

The most basic bio-amp available on the market, the L2 has long since been replaced with superior models. However, for some biotics, this may have been the only option available to them at their time of birth when the fledgling technology was still being improved. The L2 is no longer sold and has been replaced by the L3 design.

Basic L3 Amp

Range Bonus: +0

Duration Bonus: +0

Cost: 2

Recharge Modifier: +0

Biotics: +0

Qualities: None.

The current and most prevalent type of bio-amp currently installed, it is sold by various manufacturers in several models. The L3 amp has none of the side-effects of the original L2 designs while having roughly of the same capabilities. Any non-asari character with biotic mastery and an appropriate high concept is presumed to be outfitted with a L3 amp at no charge.

Solaris Amp

Range Bonus: +0

Duration Bonus: +0

Cost: 5

Recharge Modifier: -1

Biotics: +1 (1)

Qualities: None.

By today's standards, a low-end model, but still met with great success by its manufacturer, Aldrin Labs. The Solaris amp was the first amp of its kind to not only allow a biotic to harness their potential and control it, but also in some cases enhance the biotic fields generated. This made the Solaris Amp at its introduction the most widely sought after bio-amp and hefty premiums were paid for the privilege.

Prodigy Amp

Range Bonus: -1
Duration Bonus: +2
Cost: 5

Recharge Modifier: -2
Biotics: +0
Qualities: None.

Interestingly, the Prodigy amp is a product of the Armali Council, an asari-owned manufacturer. While asari themselves cannot use bio-amps, their familiarity with biotics provides them with a unique understanding of how to harness mass effect fields. The Prodigy allows the biotic to use their powers not only more frequently but also with longer effect at a very reasonable cost. The Armali Council provides only a token of R&D to their bio-amp division, instead contracting with other manufacturers for their consultation.

Gemini Amp

Range Bonus: +1
Duration Bonus: +0
Cost: 5

Recharge Modifier: +0
Biotics: +0
Qualities: Specialized: **Devastating vs Shields.**

A human design, the Gemini amp is difficult to secure outside of human contacts or a tight affiliation with its manufacturer, Kassa Fabrication. The Gemini line is favored by the human biotic brigades because of its increased range and because it enhances the biotic's mass effect fields to penetrate shielding quite easily. When using a Gemini amp against a shielded target, do an additional +2 damage. Designed for combat, the Gemini delivers

Polaris Amp

Range Bonus: +0
Duration Bonus: +3
Cost: 8

Recharge Modifier: -1
Biotics: +1 (1)
Qualities: None.

Without a doubt the Polaris amp is the amp of choice currently. Armax Arsenal, a turian-controlled company, does not make the amp widely available outside of turian space. However, anything can be bought with the right contacts. The turian cabal members who have used the Polaris praise its—albeit minor—biotic enhancement effect as well as extended effects. The amp is difficult to use, however, and tends to slow down the wearer's reaction time slightly.

Savant Amp

Range Bonus: -1
Duration Bonus: +3
Cost: 12

Recharge Modifier: -2
Biotics: +2 (4)
Qualities: None.

There is nothing to say beyond that the Savant amp is the best amp on the market, hands down. The waiting list to receive one from Serrice Council is lengthy. Unsurprisingly the Savant amp is of asari design; just about every bio-amp advancement was worked into this unit. Not only does the biotic hit harder and faster but their powers have longer effects. The cost of this increased power limits the Savant's range slightly, however.

Unity Amp

Range Bonus: +2
Duration Bonus: +1
Cost: 7

Recharge Modifier: +2
Biotics: +1 (2)
Qualities: Aspect: **CUTTING EDGE.**

Brand new, the Unity amp nearly did not make it to market. Its manufacturer, Sirta Foundation, has flirted with bankruptcy, requiring the Unity amp to be released earlier than preferred. Even so, the amp is getting good reviews, although its unfamiliarity gives it both good and bad qualities. A solid new entry, much is expected of its sequel.

HMBA Basic Amp

Range Bonus: +1
Duration Bonus: +1
Cost: 6

Recharge Modifier: +0
Biotics: +1 (1)
Qualities: None.

Available only to specific individuals and regulated by the Alliance, this is the amp most frequently employed by those within C-Sec who possess biotic abilities. On the whole, it is a solid amp with no downsides and a good reliability rating thus far.

HMBA Advanced Amp

Range Bonus: +1
Duration Bonus: +1
Cost: 8

Recharge Modifier: +0
Biotics: +2 (2)
Qualities: None.

Another regulated amp, the advanced model is more refined, providing the biotic with better mastery over their powers. This amp is typically reserved for high-ranking officers in the military or through special requisition.

HMBA Master Amp

Range Bonus: +0
Duration Bonus: +1
Cost: 10

Recharge Modifier: -1
Biotics: +2 (3)
Qualities: Aspect: **CUSTOM MADE.**

Very few of these amps are in existence, primarily reserved for Spectres and other high-ranking officials. Like the other restricted amps, this model is well-rounded in its usage. The neural connectors on this model are so cutting edge that the amp must be custom made for each individual. This allows the biotic to further call upon the amp's power to bolster their own or, in some rare cases, cause issues with feedback.

OMNI-TOOLS

Omni-tools are handheld devices that combine a computer microframe, sensor analysis pack, and manufacturing fabricator. Versatile and reliable, an omni-tool can be used to analyze and adjust the functionality of most standard equipment, including weapons and armor, from a distance. The fabrication module can rapidly assemble small three-dimensional objects from common, reusable industrial plastics, ceramics, and light alloys. This allows for field repairs and modifications to most standard items, as well as the reuse of salvaged equipment.

Nearly everyone carries an omni-tool, if not for its technical benefits and utility then as a personal assistant and portable interlink. In Citadel space having an omni-tool is common among citizens.



In combat, omni-tools can manufacture a melee weapon known as an omni-blade, a disposable silicon-carbide weapon flash-forged by the tool's mini-fabricator. The transparent, nearly diamond-hard blade is created and suspended in a mass effect field safely away from the user's skin. Warning lights illuminate the field so the searing-hot blade only burns what it is intended to: the opponent. The standard omni-blade is a Weapon: 2 cutting edge.

Typically the omni-tool is considered within the purview of those who use tech powers only. Truth is that anyone can benefit from an omni-tool, even front line combatants and biotic users. Omni-tools also provide several mechanical bonuses in the *Mass Effect RPG* and can be customized accordingly via improvements. Some of the improvements include:

Aspect: You can add an aspect to your omni-tool. This aspect can be invoked and compelled just like any aspect.

Cost: The cost to obtain the omni-tool through normal channels. During character creation if a character's high concept or background provides sufficient justification—and with the GM's approval—a more expensive model may be selected at the cost of one refresh.

Penetration: This omni-tool is either more effective against armored opponents. Increase its Penetration by 1.

Range: When using powers, an omni-tool can modify the range at which these powers can be used, either reducing them in order to gain other benefits or by further extending the tech's reach with powers.

Recharge: Modify the recharge rating for all powers. This can be a negative (beneficial) or positive (penalty) value. Lowering a power's recharge can never be less than zero.

Shields: A properly configured omni-tool can provide a bonus to a worn shield generator or draw current away from it. To provide a shield bonus the user must be wearing a shield generator (page 205) or armor configured with a shield generator. An omni-tool unto itself cannot project a barrier field. An omni-tool's shield bonus is incompatible with a biotic barrier ability; only one or the other may be used.

Specialized: Some omni-tools excel at hacking data nodes while others are particularly good at making detailed data recordings. When you choose this improvement, the weapon gains Damage: +2, +2 Penetration, or +2 to rolls under specific circumstances or against specific targets. The GM is the final arbiter of what circumstances or targets are too general or too specific. In general, you should get the benefit of the specialization at least a couple of times per session, but probably not much more than that.

Systems: The omni-tool can provide a benefit or penalty when making Systems rolls, depending on how it was designed. Some combat soldiers modify their omni-tools so that they excel at manufacturing more resilient omni-blades at the expense of the tool's computing abilities. Tools with a bonus have a skill cap associated with the rating; the tech only receives the bonus when making Systems checks at or below the listed cap. For skill rolls above the cap, the tool's bonus provides no benefit.

Chameleon Tool

Range Bonus: +0

Shields Modifier: +0

Cost: 2

Recharge Modifier: +0

Systems: +0

Qualities: None.

The most common—and affordable—omni-tool that is available to all for use. Although various manufacturers produce a number of specialized omni-tools for your needs, the baseline utility version is ubiquitous and found nearly everywhere, sold under a variety of labels and brands.

Omni-Tools

Omni-Tool	Range Bonus	Recharge Modifier	Shields Modifier	Systems	Cost	Qualities
Chameleon Tool	+0	+0	+0	+0	2	None
Bluewire Tool	+0	+1	-2	+1 (3)	3	None
Logic Arrest Tool	+0	+1	+1	+0	4	Specialized: Sabotage VI
Nexus Tool	-1	-3	+0	+1 (3)	8	None
Polaris Tool	+1	0	+0	+2 (2)	7	None
Savant Tool	-1	-3	+2	+1 (3)	10	None
Cipher Tool	-1	+3	+0	+2 (3)	6	Specialized: Hacking , Aspect: CUTTING EDGE
HMOT Basic	+1	+2	+1	+0	3	Penetration: 1
HMOT Advanced	+0	+2	+1	+1 (3)	7	Penetration: 2
HMOT Master	+1	+0	+0	+2 (3)	11	Aspect: CUSTOM MADE , Penetration: 2

Bluewire Tool

Range Bonus: +0
Shields Modifier: -2
Cost: 2

Recharge Modifier: +1
Systems: +0
Qualities: None.

The Aldrin Labs-manufactured Bluewire tool is your next step up from the traditional omni-tool. It was one of the first tools to provide a Systems bonus when using tech-related skills. Unfortunately, to do so a heavy power drain is created, lowering the wearer's kinetic shield pool.

Logic Arrest Tool

Range Bonus: +0
Shields Modifier: +1
Cost: 4

Recharge Modifier: +1
Systems: +0
Qualities: Specialized: **Sabotage VI**.

Made by Ariake Technologies, high-yield capacitors channel additional energy into the user's shield grid, providing a minor improvement. Unfortunately—and somewhat counterintuitive to its name—the Logic Arrest tool has limited technical or system application capabilities. However, when used to plant a virus or perform an overload against a VI-controlled system, the Logic Arrest tool receives a +2 bonus.

Nexus Tool

Range Bonus: -1
Shields Modifier: +0
Cost: 8

Recharge Modifier: -3
Systems: +1 (3)
Qualities: None.

Armali Council's Nexus Tool is highly-regarded in technical circles as providing good bang for the buck. While its range is somewhat limited, it gives a massive recharging capacitor to ensure that tech powers are readily available to use at a moment's notice. The tool also gives a minor bonus but has room to grow and remain in service beyond its inception date. The Nexus 6 version was particularly testy in that regard.

Polaris Tool

Range Bonus: +1
Shields Modifier: +0
Cost: 7

Recharge Modifier: +0
Systems: +2 (2)
Qualities: None.

The Polaris line of tools has had good success over the years. Kassa Fabrication's desire to provide a tool with no true downsides puts it in a class of its own. Unfortunately its high cost makes it out of reach for save the most dedicated of engineers.

Savant Tool

Range Bonus: -1
Shields Modifier: +2
Cost: 10

Recharge Modifier: -3
Systems: +1 (3)
Qualities: None.

This is the tool of choice if you use any kind of tech abilities. Having gone through several iterations over the years, Serrice Council has finally settled on a model that provides all the needs that techs are looking for, although at a premium cost. Serrice has an annoying practice of keeping their designs under tight wraps and sending the community into a flurry of excitement with each reveal.

Cipher Tool

Range Bonus: -1
Shields Modifier: +0
Cost: 6

Recharge Modifier: +3
Systems: +2 (3)
Qualities: Specialized: **Hacking**,
Aspect: **CUTTING EDGE**.

A relatively new up-and-comer in the omni-tool arena, Elboss Combine has nonetheless hit a home run with their Cipher tool, regarded as the must have omni-tool for any serious hacker. Optimized software runs in parallel to drive a multithreaded attack threat vector for the user, significantly speeding up attempts to bypass system security. The obvious downside is that the power requirements for the tool are exceedingly large and cause a long delay between tech usage. When used to hack a system, the Cipher tool provides a +2 bonus.



HMOT Basic

Range Bonus: +1
Shields Modifier: +1
Cost: 3

Recharge Modifier: +2
Systems: +0
Qualities: Penetration: 1.

These are military-grade omni-tools, made available to very select forces. Acquiring them is extremely difficult, except for those in the military. The HMOT Basic model is used for battlefield commandos with tech abilities. While the omni-tool itself doesn't provide any tech benefits, it does have a slight shield protection upgrade and better close-quarters damage capability.

HMOT Advanced

Range Bonus: +0
Shields Modifier: +1
Cost: 7

Recharge Modifier: +2
Systems: +1 (3)
Qualities: Penetration: 2.

Like the HMOT Basic, the Advanced version has a decidedly military feel. This model imposes some restrictions on powers in an effort to bolster defensive and offensive capabilities. The omni-blade has been hardened significantly.

HMOT Master

Range Bonus: +1
Shields Modifier: +0
Cost: 11

Recharge Modifier: +0
Systems: +2 (3)
Qualities: Aspect: **CUSTOM MADE**,
Penetration: 2.

The Master series are always custom made for their wearer, allowing them to more easily control the tool for their needs. The tool's melee capabilities allow it to make short work of most combatants while still providing a healthy tech bonus.

EXPLOSIVES

This section includes those items that blow up by design: bombs and grenades. Typically you will either be throwing the item in question (a grenade) or setting it up ahead of time with a timer (explosive).

Explosives start with an area of 1, which is to say they affect everyone within one zone at a minimum. The details on how to detect an explosion and potentially escape the blast is covered on page 188.

Throwing a grenade uses the Athletics skill. Setting a bomb is a Engineering test. Launching an explosive—say from a grenade or rocket launcher—requires the use of Artillery.

Also, both the fragmentation and inferno grenades can be used as detonation and source powers, respectively, to cause tech explosions. See pages 137 and 138.

Explosives

Weapon	Damage	Area	Cost	Qualities
Fragmentation Grenade	5	1	2	None
Concussion Grenade	4	1	1	Non-Lethal
Arc Grenade	4	1	2	EMP
Inferno Grenade	4	1	3	Persistent Effect: ON FIRE!
Lift Grenade	4	1	3	Persistent Effect: FLOATING HELPLESSLY
Explosive Satchel	4	2	2	Remote Detonator

In general, use these guidelines to start with a basic grenade or explosive that you can modify.

Grenades are small, hand-held explosive devices designed to be thrown. Compared to other explosives, they do relatively low damage to a relatively small area, but they're still devastating in comparison to other kinds of weapons. A grenade has the following starting attributes:

Damage: 4
Range: 1
Cost: 1

Area: 1
A hair-trigger fuse

Charges are explosives that are set in place and detonated at a later time, whether through a remote detonator, a timer, a pressure sensor, or some other method. Charges tend to be larger than grenades and considerably harder to use in the midst of combat, but they're considerably more dangerous, too. They require some planning to utilize effectively, as well as some skill in Engineering. When creating a charge, you start with your base stats, then use improvements to increase damage, area, and complexity, and to apply different types of fuses. Use the following rules to create charges:

Damage: 4
No range or accuracy attribute
Cost: 1

Area: 1
A hair-trigger fuse
Complexity: 4

Just like building weapons, you can customize and create your own explosives or use the ones pre-created for you; they should work in most cases. Once you pick your starting baseline you can start adding improvements, similar to the methods used earlier in this chapter.

Aspect: You can add an aspect to an explosive. This aspect can be invoked or compelled like any aspect. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 each.

Concealable: Some explosives are smaller than normal, or designed to be assembled on-site, or made to look non-threatening. You gain a +2 bonus to any Deceit rolls made to hide this weapon. Cost: +1.

Damage: The weapon does more or less damage than others of its kind; it has Damage: +1 or -1. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

EMP: Unusual and specialized, but no less potentially dangerous than other explosives, an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) explosive disables any electronics within the blast radius—including personal shields, but not including synthetic characters—until they can be repaired. Against synthetic characters, these explosives deal Damage: 4. However, EMPs deal no damage against organic targets. Cost: +1.

Fuse: Rather than detonating on impact, the explosive detonates after a short, medium, or long period of time (page 189). Cost: +1.

Non-Lethal: This explosive, though it deals stress normally, can't be used to kill someone. Whenever someone gets a consequence or is taken out as a result of an attack from this explosive, its non-lethality must be taken into account. Cost: +0.

Persistent Effect: Whether it's incendiary charges or grenades that snap-freeze their targets, some explosives are designed to do interesting things; this improvement allows you to apply an aspect to a target each time you successfully attack it. Choose an aspect when you choose this improvement, and once you've applied the aspect to a target, it lasts until the end of your next turn. When you apply this aspect to someone, you or one of your allies can tag it once for free. Cost: +2.

Recharge & Reuse: Most energy-based explosives release their charge when detonated, but this doesn't damage the device itself. If recovered, the explosive can be fitted with a new energy charge and used again. Cost: +2.

Remote Detonator: Once you've thrown the grenade or set the charge, you can use a small device to detonate it remotely, reducing the risk to yourself and others. Cost: +0.

Specialized: Some explosives are really good against armor, while others are extremely effective against synthetic targets, such as robots. When you choose this improvement, the explosive gains Damage: +2 or +2 to the skill roll under specific circumstances or against specific targets. The GM is the final arbiter of what circumstances or targets are too general or too specific; in general, you should get the benefit of the specialization at least a couple of times per session, but probably not much more than that. This improvement may be taken more than once, but not for the same circumstance. Cost: +2.

Tamper-Proof: Usually used on charges, this improvement makes it very difficult to disarm the explosive. Complexity: +3. This improvement may be taken more than once, increasing the complexity by another +3. Cost: +2 each.

ARCHAIC WEAPONS

Most often than not your characters will be using their guns when violence is called for. But on the off chance you visit an alien world, have all your gear taken away, or otherwise want to mix it up close, archaic weapons come into play. Now, "archaic" doesn't mean it's a fossil, it just means that it isn't in the same league as an Avenger assault rifle. A turian sword has nothing "archaic" about it.

All archaic weapons are considered equally useful (or useless) against armor and shields/barriers and come in the following three forms:

Melee weapons are designed to be used in close combat. Swords, axes, bludgeons, and even more exotic things like whips or pole-arms fall into this category. A melee weapon has a Range: 0, meaning you must be melee engaged to use.

Projectile weapons fire physical—or, sometimes, non-physical—projectiles at much lower speeds than guns. Bows and crossbows are the most common examples of projectile weapons. Projectile weapons have a starting Range: 2.

Thrown weapons tend to be smaller and lighter than most melee weapons, but they can be used as melee weapons in a pinch. They're designed for short-range combat and are typically concealable, though this isn't always the case. Daggers and axes are the most common thrown weapons, though more exotic varieties do exist. Thrown weapons have one serious disadvantage—once you throw one of them, you have to retrieve it if you want to throw it again. Thrown weapons have a starting Range: 1.

Just as with guns, once you combine a type and a form for your archaic weapon, you can add improvements to it. Most of the improvements are the same as those listed for guns, and the rules for adding them are the same. The following improvements can be added to archaic weapons:

Aspect: You can add an aspect to a weapon. This aspect can be invoked and compelled just like any aspect. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 each.

Awkward Reload: Your weapon gains the **OUT OF AMMO** aspect, freely compelled after regular fire. Firing a crossbow would be a good example. Cost: -1.

Bulk: You can increase or decrease a weapon's bulk rating, making it more difficult or easier to use Athletics and powers. A weapon can never have a positive bulk value or provide a bonus. Cost: +1 or -1 per bulk rating, maximum of zero.

Concealable: Some weapons are designed to be hidden, such as collapsible bows or swords that disguise their sheath in a cane. These weapons are typically used by assassins. You gain a +2 bonus to any Deceit rolls made to hide this weapon. Cost: +1.

Damage: The weapon does more or less damage than others of its kind; it has Damage: +1 or -1. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

High Explosive (projectile and thrown weapons only): This weapon explodes on impact or fires ammunition that does the same. The weapon gains an area of 1; each time you choose this improvement, the area increases by one. Any weapon with this improvement is considered to fire hair-trigger explosives. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: 1 each.

Indirect Fire (projectile weapons only): This weapon is capable of firing shots over walls, around corners, or otherwise past obstacles that pose difficulties for direct-fire weapons. When you use Artillery instead of Fight to fire this weapon, you can ignore 1 point of borders. Cost: 1.

Non-Lethal: This weapon, though it deals stress normally, can't be used to kill someone. Whenever someone gets a consequence or is taken out as a result of an attack from this weapon, its non-lethality must be taken into account. Cost: +0.

Penetration: This weapon is either more or less effective against armored opponents. Increase or lower the weapon's penetration by 1. This improvement may be taken more than once. Cost: +1 or -1 each.

Persistent Effect: Whether you're talking about a staff that stuns its target with an electrical discharge, a sword that lights things on fire, or some other effect that persists, this improvement allows you to apply an aspect to the target each time you successfully attack it. The aspect is chosen when you choose this improvement. Once you've applied the aspect to a target, it lasts until the end of your next turn. When you apply this aspect to someone, you or one of your allies can tag it once for free. Cost: +2 each.

Range (projectile and thrown weapons only): Many modern bows and crossbows use high-tech alloys for their bodies and incorporate pulley systems that allow for increased tension and force. In addition, some thrown weapons incorporate propulsion systems to improve range. When you fire this weapon, you can attack things that are further away. The weapon gains Range: +1. Cost: +1 each.

Specialized: Some weapons are really good against armor, while others are extremely effective against synthetic targets, such as geth. Some weapons are designed to disrupt shields or to secrete poison that's effective against a specific species. When you choose this improvement, the weapon gains Damage: +2 or +2 to the skill roll under specific circumstances or against specific targets. The GM is the final arbiter of what circumstances or targets are too general or too specific; in general, you should get the benefit of the specialization at least a couple of times per session, but probably not much more than that. This improvement may be taken more than once, but not for the same circumstance. Cost: +1 each.

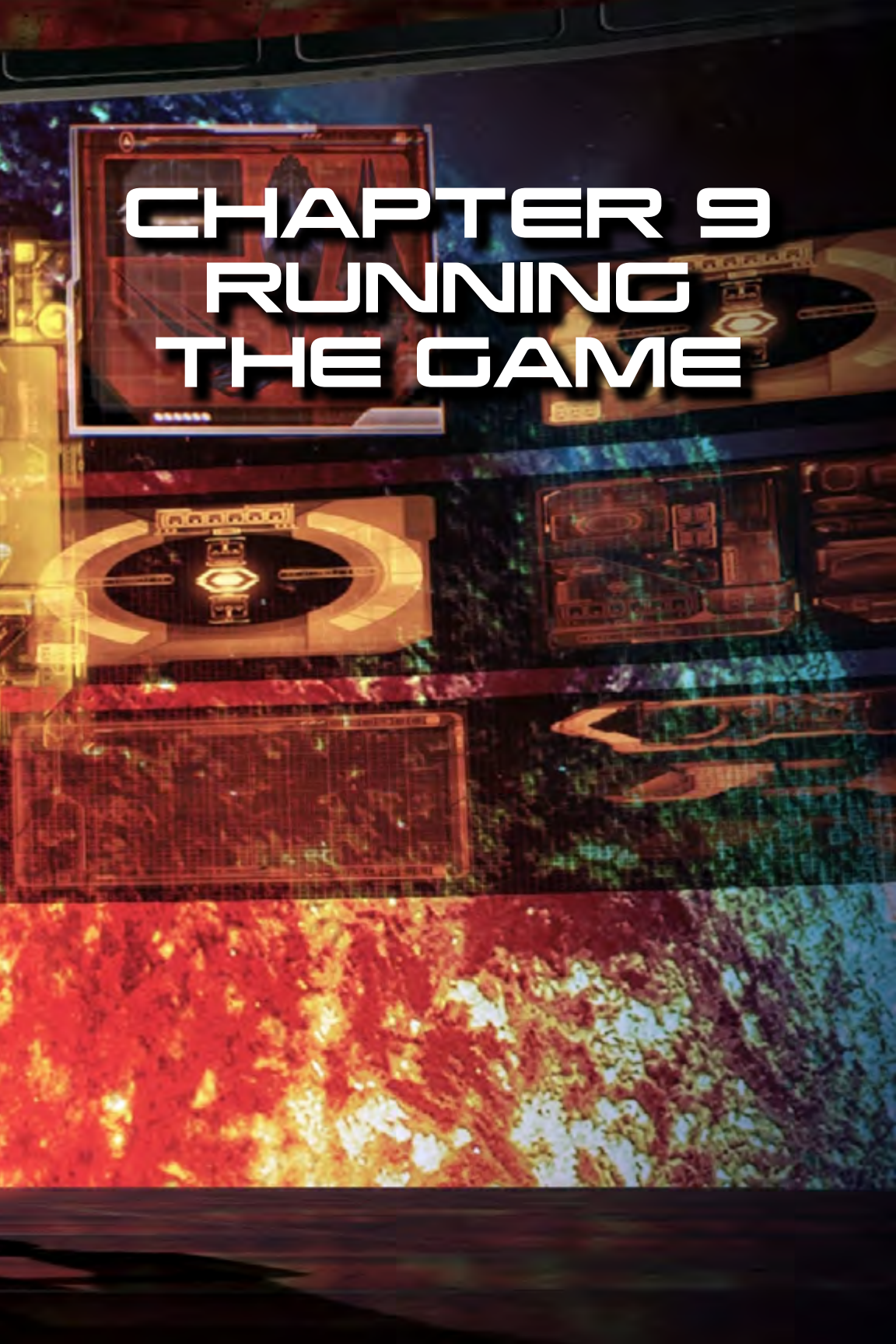
Archaic & Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Knife	1	0-1	0	0	0	None
Sword	2	0	1	1	1	None
Giant Axe	2	0	2	1	2	None
Microsteel knife	3	0-1	0	0	3	Concealable
Microsteel sword	4	0	1	1	3	None
Omni-blade	2	0	0	0	2	None
Bow	1	1-2	0	1	2	None
Crossbow	2	1-3	1	2	2	Awkward Reload





CHAPTER 9 RUNNING THE GAME

The background is a complex collage of digital and sci-fi imagery. At the top, a monitor displays a character in a dark, industrial setting. Below it, a futuristic cockpit or control panel is visible, featuring a glowing central light and various buttons. To the right, a detailed architectural or mechanical diagram is shown. In the lower-left, a grid-like interface with data points is present. The bottom half of the image is dominated by a large, intense fiery explosion or a close-up of a planet's surface, rendered in vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows.

This chapter is entirely dedicated to those running a *Mass Effect* game using the Fate rules and how to get the most mileage out of this book. In general, if you're familiar with being a GM in any other game, much of this will feel familiar. As such, this chapter is less about how to be a good GM, and more specific as to the types of situations you may have to adjudicate in a *Mass Effect* Fate game.

Good Fate Techniques

As you've read, the entire foundation of Fate is based on the fate economy and players—and the GM—influencing the events that take place in the game via aspects. In general, the GM technically has an unlimited supply of fate points to spend. Does that mean that at every opportunity the GM should be forcing compels and draining the fate points of the players? Absolutely not.

WHEN TO COMPEL

You should attempt a compel whenever it would add something interesting to the story or to a character's actions. For example, compelling an aspect where a character recklessly goes into danger, warnings unheeded, isn't intended to kill the character but instead to create an interesting plot point.

Ideally, players suggest compels to the GM; they are active participants and are willingly sacrificing some control of their character to earn a fate point (a mechanical benefit) but also to make the story more interesting and/or focus on their character.

As previously discussed (page 163), a compel can be negotiated. Sometimes a compel will make perfect sense as-is, in which case you should agree and provide the player with a fate point. Other compels may be a little too weak—or in some cases, too detrimental to the character or group. It's within your purview—and a good idea—to shape those compels in a manner that is less disruptive and more in the spirit of aspects. Remember, aspects are both good and bad, so players shouldn't view aspects as simply the bad parts of their character that lend fate points, but opportunities to use their strengths against them at opportune moments to further the story.

But what if players don't offer compels? Certainly as the GM you can—and are encouraged—to do so. Preferably compels come from the players but you can always suggest a compel and negotiate it. Remember, however, that players can refuse a compel by paying a fate point. The intent is not to create compels that players will block, *but to create compels that players are likely to accept.*

So while the GM does have an unlimited pool of fate points to draw from in this capacity, it is the manner in which they are used that is important.

In general, look to create a compel opportunity in the following circumstances:

- ★ **When a skill roll would otherwise be too bland by simply succeeding, raising the stakes**
- ★ **When a player has no fate points**
- ★ **When a player tries an action and you can think of some interesting way it could go wrong and help advance your story or make it more interesting.**

NPC Aspects

Your NPCs will have aspects. Remember, when an NPC—not the GM/environment—forces a compel, the NPC spends a fate point. In that vein, there is a limited pool of fate points for the GM to use. If the scene is responsible for a compel (i.e. by the GM because it's interesting), then the NPC's fate points are unaffected.

Conversely, when players use aspects directly against an NPC, those fate points that are spent are received by the NPC to use. They don't just disappear into the ether. When the NPC

runs out of fate points their option is much like the players: offer compels. In this case the GM is essentially “paying himself” but the end result is that the NPC suffers negatively, provides an opening or weakness for the players to exploit, or is in some way inconvenienced. If that doesn’t happen then the NPC shouldn’t receive a fate point for that compel.

DECLARATIONS

Perhaps the most powerful tool in the players’ arsenal is the ability to create declarations, as discussed on page 172. Like compels, declarations should be negotiated. The declaration that solves the adventure is not a good declaration. One that prods the players in the right direction or provides exactly what they need at the right time is a good declaration. Because the players are spending a fate point for the declaration the effect should be “fate point-worthy.” These points can help shape a story, introduce a new fact, or even help the players out of a seemingly impossible bind. Fate point declarations aren’t all-powerful, but they can get pretty close.

For example, the players have had several NPCs turn out to be spies, informants, or turn-coats. It’s starting to detract from the game. A player offers up a fate point to make a declaration that “the remainder of the crew is trustworthy.” This unto itself isn’t game-breaking, offers the players a sense of relief and provides them with comfort in knowing that the NPCs immediately around them are “safe,” but could throw your current adventure out of whack, especially if there’s still one or more undercover agents to be found. However you could still agree with this declaration—and should—and as part of the declaration have that agent be found. So the declaration has rooted out the last of the spies and the story can continue. Now fate points don’t last in perpetuity, so there’s nothing to state that during the next adventure, the new crew members that join may have shady backgrounds.

Skill Declarations

In some cases the skill declaration (see page 73, **Skills**), if possible, can be more powerful. First, they’re instantaneous and second, they don’t cost a fate point; only a skill roll. Clever players should be using these a lot, although a skill can only be used for this purpose once per scene. Some skills in the **Skills** chapter don’t have a Declaration section. That doesn’t mean that a clever player can’t think of one up, only that skill isn’t often used for making declarations. If it makes sense to you, by all means, let the dice fly.

Skill declarations should be weaker and more concentrated (i.e. specific) than a fate point declaration. They introduce a new fact into the story related to the skill, such as a species weakness, a problem with that model of gun, or some minor, previously unknown—until now—fact. Because skill declarations can so readily be used, you’re well within your purview to treat them with careful consideration and adjust the required roll accordingly. The less likely the declaration, the higher the difficulty. But you should also factor in as to whether the declaration, if successful, will add something to the game. Is it “cool?”

The base difficulty should be Mediocre (+0). Using the following litmus test, adjust accordingly:

- ★ Is the declaration self-serving, annoying, or otherwise outside the spirit of Fate and collaborative role-playing/storytelling?
- ★ Does the declaration slow down or hinder the story in some way?
- ★ Does the declaration feel non-heroic or pretentious?
- ★ Would this declaration feel wrong to happen in a *Mass Effect* game?



For each answer of “yes” increase the difficulty of the roll by +2. If the declaration makes it through unscathed and seems reasonable and in line with the spirit of the game, keep the default Mediocre (+0) difficulty! Make sure to explain to players why the difficulty may be so high and, if possible, offer your own suggestions that make the declaration more reasonable.

ASSESSMENTS

Players don't tend to make a lot of assessments, either forgetting that they can or being unwilling to do so because they may have to risk a fate point. But in the right hands, assessments can be very useful. The difficulty of an assessment is tied to how it is being done. If an assessment is being tried against an NPC or player, it is an opposed roll. The NPC or player has a chance to hide or protect their aspect from being discovered. For objects or locations the difficulty should be based on either the quality of the object or the nature of the location. For example, a rare object may have a Good (+3) difficulty while making an assessment on a previously unknown planet with strange fauna has a Great (+4) difficulty. That same roll in the Citadel gardens? Mediocre (+0).

DESCRIBING ASPECTS IN PLAY

During the rush of everything that happens in a scene during an exchange it can be easy to handwave aspects when used. Don't! Always have players describe how their aspects are being used and also challenge when they're not appropriate. As the GM you should have a cheat sheet of every character's aspects along with a sample invoke and compel for each. When a player invokes an aspect their description of how the aspect benefits them should be in line with the short description of the aspect. When aspects are just being tagged “willy nilly” and no explanation given, your undermining their purpose and cheapening the role-playing experience. In some cases the player may not be able to come up with a good reason as to why that aspect could be invoked, in which case they may be out of luck.

The intent isn't to corner or trap players with bad aspect descriptions, but to encourage players at the table to fully role-play out just how the aspect helped them. Conversely, when compelled, have them describe how that aspect hindered their character.

It's the same with spin. It can be easy to ignore spin results and just move on; try to have players who generate or receive the spin describe how the previous roll assisted them. These are all good ways to involve players more deeply into the game and role-playing experience!

WHEN TO ROLL?

It's always challenging to know when it's appropriate to ask for a skill roll. The general rule of thumb is that you should pick up and roll the dice when the outcome is in question or the outcome would yield interesting results for the game. In either case, the consideration of failure comes into play.



Success & Failure

Before every roll consider what success and failure will result in. Success is typically easy to codify: they'll hit someone, dodge the debris, or discover the consort's aspect. Failure is the more tricky one. If the player fails, what happens? In some cases, nothing at all ("You see nothing"). In other cases—particularly those around information-gathering—a failure may mean that the players don't learn the vital clue to help progress the adventure! That could lead to a large problem and frustration.

Thus, you should have a basic result, even for failure, determined before asking for a roll. A failed roll that results in no effect is a *boring roll*. It will quickly disenfranchise players from investing in failure or viewing failure as an option with consequences.

The key point is that unless there is a material risk or change to the story for failure—will it matter?—then you likely do not need a roll. Move the story along. When you do think of an interesting outcome for failure you can ask for a roll at a later date. There's little point in hiding key information or trivial items behind meaningless skill roll "gates."

Difficulties

Depending on the level of the skill being used, it's easy to determine how difficult a roll will be. If a skill is Fair (+2) then, on average, any roll with a difficulty of +2 or more will require the use of fate points to succeed (or a really awesome roll). Likewise, a difficulty that is two or more less than the skill—in this case Mediocre (+0)—will nearly always result in success. Using this metric you can tailor difficulties to allow players a chance to shine or throw meaningful challenges at them. Unnecessarily raising difficulty levels just to make rolls "challenging" is a poor blueprint to follow; it'll likely just sap players' fate points and make things less interesting.

If all else fails and you can't think of a difficulty, use Average (+1). It's called "average" for a reason. In general, difficulties should be higher when the stakes of the game and the dramatic tension calls for it. During lull periods or when players are establishing themselves at the beginning of an adventure, lower difficulties help make them shine—and make them more likely to offer compels to build up their fate point pool.



Shifts

Fate allows for easy identification of extraordinary success through shifts. Every shift result should result in a better layer of success. There's a difference between barely jumping across a chasm during a chase, just jumping across the chasm successfully, and really nailing it as you fly through the air, hit the ground in a roll, and spring up running afterwards. As players earn additional shifts increase the quality of information or activity that they are performing. If they get three or more shifts, they've achieved spin (page 174) and should really get something cool for their efforts. Some examples:

- ★ **Add an aspect.** For every two shifts, allow the player to place an aspect on another character or into a scene that they can then tag for free. These can be fragile or not, depending on the quality of the roll.
- ★ **Reduce the time.** For tasks that take time, consult the time chart on page 174 and reduce by one shift achieved. So not only is the task successful, but the player made it look incredibly easy by doing it so quickly.
- ★ **Provide more information.** Making a successful Systems test may tell you a bit about what's on the sensors. For each shift beyond that, add a little more information.

The better the players' rolls, the more they should receive, be it information, aspects, or something in return.

USING SPIN

Spin (page 174) is a mechanic for characters to achieve extraordinary success and then pass that good fortune to their next roll or to other players. Normally, a character achieves a +1 bonus to their next roll for every three shifts they exceed their target. When combined with spending fate points and compelling aspects, it can be possible for characters to achieve multiple spin, leading to large—or trivial—rolls afterwards. In general, spin is relative to the difficulty of the tasks being presented to the characters. If spin is happening too often or the amount excessively large, then consider evaluating the difficulties being used; they may need to be raised.

Tightening the allowance of spin—making sure that players fully describe what their characters are doing to achieve their outstanding roll—can help. Roll your spin, explain it, pass it, and use the spin immediately or lose it.

Another option is eliminating spin entirely from your game, although this isn't recommended in a heroic setting such as *Mass Effect*. Spin also has the byproduct in that it makes ancillary rolls to assist on tasks to allow characters who might not otherwise be able to contribute to a task potentially generate spin, passing that bonus onto the next player. Ergo, the spin mechanic provides a gateway where every character can potentially contribute to a task, even if its outside their scope or skillset, without necessarily having to invoke an aspect. Also, since spin does not require a fate point to be used, spin can be generated by characters who have no fate points available.

Spin can also be tied to a game's power level (page 22), as such that no character can achieve a spin bonus greater than the skill cap. In practice, this won't affect most rolls that generate spin, but it will prevent attempts to boost rolls to truly outrageous levels.

A good middle ground option is to limit spin to once per character per scene. This turns spin into a tactical decision, "do I take spin on this roll now or wait for a potentially better roll later?" The byproduct is that characters may hoard their spin allotment and not end up using at all, or saving only for the large fight in the adventure.

DISTRIBUTING FATE

During play you can distribute fate points as an organic reward for play. However, do so with care. Giving a fate point for a player providing a detailed recap of the previous session, a particularly outstanding bit of role-playing when no roll was required, or even just doing something that feels like it was torn right from the *Mass Effect* games are all good reasons. Bad ones are for fart jokes, disruptive play, or generally distracting from the game. If you can, target those players who have no fate points, likely because they struggle coming up with compels. But you can also reward those players who have plenty of fate points already, as giving them more will progress the story down the line even more.

Remember, *the style of play that you reward is the style of play you will engender.*

Applying Modifiers

The *Mass Effect RPG* has a number of powers, equipment, and stunts that can modify skill rolls and damage. It can be confusing as to what order to apply these or how they work. Apply in this order:

- ★ **Base damage**
- ★ **Damage multiplier or reduction (e.g. "half damage")**
- ★ **+/- modifiers for stunts, powers, situation, etc.**
- ★ **Apply, reducing for shields, barriers, and armor, then applying as stress or consequence**

For any division called for (e.g. "for every three shifts"), round up when applicable.

Example: Nex strikes from cloak on an unaware guard with his omni-blade. His blade has the aspect **DEVASTATING VERSUS SHIELDS** giving him +2 to his damage. In addition, his tech power doubles the amount of damage he does versus shields. He has a stunt that gives him +1 damage when striking from stealth. Lastly, his omni-blade has a Penetration modifier of -1; it's not particularly good against armor.

Nex hits with four shifts, doing 4 damage. The guard has shields, so the damage is immediately doubled to 8. Now, his omni-blade's aspect adds another +2 to his damage versus shields and his stunt another +1 for a whopping total of 11! The guard's shields are only medium (6) so they go down immediately. The remaining 5 damage is reduced by 3 by the guard's armor: 2 for medium armor and another 1 for the Penetration penalty. All told, 2 points of stress are inflicted. However, the guard now has no shields and is a prime target.

Were Nex to attack again and achieve the same number of shifts, 4, his damage would not be doubled by his tech power (target has no shields) and he wouldn't receive the +2 bonus for his blade's aspect (again, no shields). If he somehow managed to get back into stealth prior to attacking, his stunt bonus of +1 would come into play, totaling his damage to 5. The guard's armor still reduces this by 3—2 for medium armor and 1 for the Penetration penalty—meaning only 1 point of stress gets through.

Nex wisely put up his tech armor just before the attack, getting 4 shifts on the roll. He gets one point of armor for every three successes, rounded up, so a total of +2 armor.

Mental & Social Combat

On occasion an adventure may provide an opportunity for parties to engage in either mental or social combat. The rules to run a combat of this nature are identical to the standard rules for physical combat, except that different skills are used. Defenses may also be different—or non-existent—as kinetic shields do little to stop a social attack that bruises one's ego. Likewise, there are few weapons in the traditional sense that provide bonus damage or penetration; most mental and social combats are a series of opposed rolls.

Like physical combat, determine initiative (page 176) but use the appropriate mental and social skills: Resolve and Rapport. Combat skills could include Academics, Biotics, Empathy, Intimidation, and Leadership, possibly others at your discretion.

Remember, the stress track and consequences are combined for all three types of damage: physical, mental, and social. If a character has already filled their second stress box from being shot and takes 2 stress during a mental combat, then their 3 stress box must be filled. Same with consequences; a character can have their consequence boxes filled by any combination of physical, mental, or social damage.

Starship & Vehicle Combat

In the *Mass Effect* universe starships and combat between them is certainly an occurrence that happens more than a few times, typically during the climatic ending of an adventure. However they're not the focus of the *Mass Effect* games and neither are they in the RPG. That said, one can abstract starship combat fairly easily.

SHIPS AS CHARACTERS

The basic concept is that starships can be built as you build characters. Have them prescribe to the power level of the campaign as well as the skill cap within reason. Assign vessels aspects that represent their special abilities, such as **INVISIBLE TO SENSORS**. During a mission or combat, the players can invoke that aspect, making their ship that much harder to detect by an opposed Systems test.

The starship should come with skills. Artillery for its weapons, Piloting for flying, and Systems for sensors and communications. These skill ratings represent the crew on board. Have a ship with a rag-tag group of human rebels? Then only give them an Average (+1) skill rating for their ship in key skills. The turian cruiser off the port bow? Perhaps a Good (+3) or higher skill may be in order.



When players take over a station on a ship—such as grabbing the controls to fly after the pilot is thrown clear during an explosion—use their skill ratings instead. In most cases this should be an improvement. At the very least the players have a stream of fate points to muddle their way through the fight.

As with chases, opposed Piloting checks can determine, in shifts, how many zones a ship closes or pulls away. Zones in space are massive; several starships can fit in one zone. Two zones may be several kilometers away, while five zones is barely on the edge of sensor range.

Where it gets dicey is weapons and defenses. The easiest way to handle them is to repurpose the **Weapons & Gear** chapter for ships. So a turian battlecruiser effectively has medium armor, medium shields, and rail guns that are equivalent to an N-7 Valkyrie. Just change the names to something more appropriate. Each ship should have basic stress boxes; higher Engineering ratings can improve the number of boxes for every +2 in the skill. Give each ship a mild, medium, and severe consequence box; more if it has been outfitted with armor. A ship performs one action a round just like a character, although during that round multiple characters may be acting. Some ship actions may be treated as a supplemental action, such as trying to recover shields while firing back.

All-in-all, while it may not be the most elegant solution, it's certainly serviceable. In most cases, *Mass Effect* adventures should be more about the characters' actions on the ground than faceless foes shooting at each other across kilometers of space.

NPCs & Threats

Having crafted your adventure together at some point you're going to need to populate it with NPCs as well as the villains for your players to interact with. In this section you'll be given some tools and templates to get you off the ground; with a little effort you can create your own in no time at all.

BASIC NPCs

These tend to be the throwaway characters that you only meet once and then they're gone. The players may not ever learn their name. The basic NPC exists mechanically in case there is an unforeseen skill challenge or perhaps things go wrong and a fight breaks out. They're rarely fairly competent in more than one skill and generally only have one aspect.

The basic NPC comes in three power levels to represent their level of skill: mundane, competent, and qualified. As you move up the scale the NPC gains a little more skill but they are still far, far below that of the player characters. They're different than minions (page 190) in that they have a personality and the player characters will interact with them in some fashion. Minions are just fodder to be shot or stabbed.

Mundane NPC

Aspect: Select one

Skills: Two at Average (+1)

Stress: No stress boxes—a hit is enough to take one out

Your typical mundane worker, waitress, or unskilled street informant. No one who poses any credible threat to the PCs.

Competent NPC

Aspect: Select two

Skills: One at Fair (+2), two Average (+1)

Stress: One stress box—a two-shift hit is enough to take them out

A trained professional, like a guard, who knows a little but never quite lived up to their potential. They have some minor experience in a singular area and can annoy the PCs in the right circumstances or in numbers.

Qualified NPC

Aspect: Select two

Skills: One Good (+3), one at Fair (+2), and two Average (+1)

Stress: Two stress boxes—a three-shift hit is enough to take one out

Highly-trained professionals, typically serving a specific role: hired mercs, a C-Sec operative, or a quarian engineer. Nearly to the level of a starting PC, especially if given decent equipment. Can slow the PCs down and drain some resources in doing so.

SUPPORTING NPCs

Every villain needs a strong arm to do their dirty work and that task falls to one of the many supporting NPCs. These NPCs can stand out in a crowd, are nearly always geared, and can definitely pose a threat to the player characters. Because the player characters will interact with the supporting NPC, they should have fully fleshed-out personalities, traits, and aspects that set them apart. The supporting NPC—unlike a basic NPC—should be memorable in some fashion.

They are made much like basic NPCs but they have a few more of the standard character elements, such as a high concept, trouble, an aspect or more, and a stunt—possibly even powers. They have a handful of skills, stress boxes, as well as consequence boxes.

Skills for the supporting NPC are best done in a column distribution. That is, determine their highest skill rank and provide one skill for each rank below. What rank should the supporting NPC start at? That depends on the power level of the campaign. At the very least the supporting NPC should have a skill rank that matches that of the PCs. A more serious threat, a level higher.

MAIN NPCS

These are your villains or main rivals to the player characters. They are, for all intents and purposes, created just like player characters. You can trim the edges a little, but after creating one or two you should have no problem repeating the process going forward. They have a full sheet, distribution of skills, stunts, and powers. Main NPCs have stress boxes, consequences, and any reasonable gear one would expect to find on them. Because of this, your main NPCs should have really well thought-out aspects, perhaps a small amount of backstory known to you, and a reason for existing. What are their goals, aspirations, or why do they oppose the PCs?

The main NPCs will fight until their goals are achieved and will rarely concede in a fight, unless part of that concession is to get away to fight another day. They should rely on minions (page 190) and use them—and supporting NPCs—to great effect. Don't forget that the main NPC can even attach to minions for greater bonuses!

You should set the skill level of your main NPC to be at least one higher than your PCs. Over an expansive adventure as the players grow, so should the main NPC. A very capable main NPC can have a skill rating that's two higher than that of the PCs. So if the PCs are capped at Great (+4), your main NPC villain should have one or two skills at Fantastic (+6), plus the supporting columns underneath.

While you might not bother tracking their refresh, a main NPC should be able to call upon a pool of fate points of its own, typically around three. It can use these fate points to invoke aspects or force PC compels. In such cases, the fate points go to the opposing player or main NPC depending on who initiates the invoke or compel.

TEMPLATES

A number of pre-made NPC templates are included for your use, each with varying difficulty levels. Feel free to modify to best suit your campaign. You can easily change the flavor of an NPC by swapping out its species. For example, using the Blue Suns Mercenary template you can rename as a Turian Soldier, adjust some aspects, and have an entirely fresh NPC.

How To Use The Templates

The templates that follow are done in the vein of supporting NPCs. Each has a series of skill columns organized from left to right by the difficulty of the NPC. Their skills are ordered from top to bottom as the most common to least common; more difficult versions of NPCs gain new skills from the bottom, moving upwards. The colors differentiate between three difficulty types:

Red = Challenging

Yellow = Threatening

Green = Capable

A **Challenging** supporting NPC has all the abilities of a **Threatening** supporting NPC and those of a **Capable** supporting NPC. Likewise, a **Threatening** supporting NPC also has those attributes of a **Capable** supporting NPC, but not those of a **Challenging** supporting NPC. A **Capable** supporting NPC stands on its own, as-is.

Stunts align with the highest difficulty column used and combine, moving downward.

ASARI COMMANDO

DEFENDERS OF THESSIA, TO THE VERY END, NIMBLE AND DEADLY

SINGULARITY (page 132), FLARE (page 125)

BARRIER (page 121), SLAM (page 131)

THROW (page 134), BIOTIC SHIELD (use Biotics to defend against an attack from 2 or more zones away)

Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Stress	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Armor	1				2	Mild	4	Moderate

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-8 Avenger	3	2-4	1	1	2	Autofire

Asari Commandos are powerful biotics who form the elite of the asari military. Often in the maiden stages of their lives, they usually fight in small groups using guerrilla tactics.

Some asari commandos were among the first to be chosen as Spectres. They may serve as bodyguards to prominent asari, such as Matriarch Benezia. Commandos also carry out mercenary work; Nassana Dantius has Eclipse commandos stationed at her towers.

Commandos dress in distinctive dark uniforms and are usually armed with shotguns or assault rifles. They are considered amongst the finest individual warriors in the galaxy, comparable to krogan battlemasters.



ATLAS

BUILT CERBERUS TOUGH, BLINDSIDED, TWO TON PUNCH

DEVASTATING BARRAGE (+1 damage to Artillery attack)

HERCULEAN STRENGTH (reduce weight-based difficulties by two)

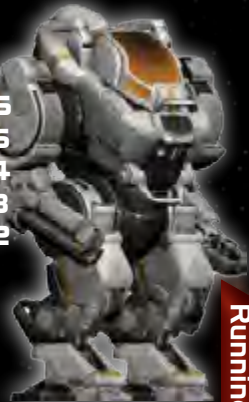
PRECISION TARGETING (gain +2 to hit man-sized or smaller targets), CRIPPLING BLOW (once per scene when injuring a foe with Fight, force the target to take a consequence rather than a stress box)

Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Stress	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Armor	5				2	Mild	4	Moderate	4	Moderate

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Minigun	4	2-5	2	2		Autofire x2, High Capacity, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL GUN
Rocket Launcher	5	3-6	1	2		Area: 1, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL EXPLOSIVE

With the Atlas, Cerberus's research arm has combined the deadly armor and firepower of a YMIR mech with the tactical superiority of a trained human pilot. An element zero core allows the Atlas to be air-dropped onto a battlefield with minimal impact damage. Its thick armor includes a robust transparent canopy made from a polycrystalline composite proprietary to Cerberus. Alliance engineers hypothesize that the material is some kind of synthetic sapphire composed with interlayers to resist cracking and thermal damage.

Although the Atlas is somewhat unwieldy in the field, its antipersonnel machine guns and ability to shrug off damage from anything short of a heavy weapon make it a fearsome opponent. Heavy loss of life is to be expected in any unprepared encounter with this unit.



Running The Game



BATARIAN THUG

FOUR-EYED BULLY, SHORT TEMPER, SAFETY IN NUMBERS

INFURIATE (+2 bonus to make others angry)

Guns 4

BRAWLER (+1 to Fight defense outnumbered; +1 Fight damage)

Guns 3

QUICK DRAW (no penalty for drawing a gun as a supplemental action)

Guns Fight Intimidate 2
Fight Intimidate Endurance 1

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stress 1 2 3 4

Armor 1 2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate

Weapon

M-25 Hornet

Damage

3

Range

0-3

Penetration

0

Bulk

0

Cost

3

Qualities

None

A race of four-eyed bipeds native to the world of Khar'shan, the batarians are a disreputable species that chose to isolate themselves from the rest of the galaxy. The Terminus Systems are infested with batarian pirate gangs and slaving rings, fueling the stereotype of the batarian thug. It should be noted that these criminals do not represent average citizens, who are forbidden to leave batarian space by their ubiquitous and paranoid government.

Despite several disagreements with the Citadel and simmering hostility toward humans, most batarians prefer profitable pursuits such as drug running and slave grabs to out-and-out warfare. They have a reputation for being shrewd businessmen and merchants, though in more lawless regions of the galaxy like Omega, negotiations with a batarian are likely to be conducted at gunpoint.



BLUE SUNS MERCENARY

CODE 10-DELTA, GUN FOR HIRE, WHATEVER IT TAKES

DANGER IS MY MIDDLE NAME (take a full action; cannot be surprised/ambushed)

Guns 5

NOW YOU'VE MADE ME MAD (page 104; no fate cost)

Guns Endurance 4

QUICK DRAW (no penalty for drawing a gun as a supplemental action), HAIL OF LEAD (+2 to place a block using Guns)

Guns Endurance Alertness 3
Endurance Alertness Intimidate 2
Alertness Intimidate Athletics 1

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Stress 1 2 3 4 5

Armor 1 2 3 2 Mild 4 Moderate 6 Severe

Weapon

M-15 Vindicator

Damage

3

Range

2-5

Penetration

1

Bulk

1

Cost

3

Qualities

Autofire

The Blue Suns are a "private security organization," in reality a mercenary outfit, operating in the Skyllian Verge. The Blue Suns have a reputation for being both discreet and ruthlessly efficient, and as such charge a sizable fee.

Blue Suns mercenaries often have a tattoo of a blue sun somewhere on their body. During high-risk jobs, the tattoo would be removed with an acid wash to prevent them being identified, then reapplied once the job was finished.

Blue Suns consist mostly of batarians, turians, and humans, and also employ YMIR, FENRIS, and LOKI Mechs.

CERBERUS CENTURION

CERBERUS TRAINING, LEAD FROM THE FRONT, EXECUTE CONTINGENCY PLAN

UNFLAPPABLE (page 112), IN COMMAND (1/scene give ally +3 to an action) **Guns** 6

AURA OF COMMAND (1/scene Intimidate as a free action) **Guns** **Leadership** 5

LONG SHOT (+2 zones when using rifles), LIGHT ORDINANCE (use Guns instead of Artillery to fire rifle-based heavy weapons)

Guns	Leadership	Athletics
Leadership	Athletics	Endurance
Athletics	Endurance	Intimidation
Endurance	Intimidation	Resolve

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Stress 1 2 3 4 5 6

Armor 2 3 2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate 6 Severe

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-96 Mattock	4	2-5	1	1	4	Aspect: GRENADE LAUNCHER
Frag Grenade	5	2-5	0	0	2	Area: 1
Smoke Grenade	0	2-5	0	0	2	Area: 1, Aspect: BLINDING

Centurions are Cerberus's front-line tacticians. They are meant to enact the Illusive Man's strategic goals, although it is clear that they have leeway to adapt as an encounter develops.

The only useful intelligence that the Alliance has gathered on centurions relates to their armament. Each centurion carries an M-96 Mattock heavy rifle modified to launch smoke grenades, leaving enemies vulnerable to crossfire.



CERBERUS TROOPER

CERBERUS TRAINING, LOYAL UNTIL DEATH, AN ARMY OF ONE

UNFLAPPABLE (page 112), HIDDEN WEAKNESS (+2 Security to bypass protocols) **Guns** 6

SWIFT RUNNER (move an additional zone at no penalty) **Guns** **Athletics** 5

ONE STEP AHEAD (+1 to overcome a block or border placed against the trooper), HAIL OF LEAD (+2 to place a block using Guns)

Guns	Athletics	Endurance
Athletics	Endurance	Alertness
Endurance	Alertness	Security
Alertness	Security	Resolve

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stress 1 2 3 4 5 6

Armor 2 2 Mild 4 Moderate 6 Severe

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-99 Saber	4	2-5	2	2	4	Aspect: CUSTOM MADE

Assault troopers are the backbone of Cerberus forces. Those candidates who make it through the grueling basic training are submitted to an intensive psychological program that renders them fearless, disciplined, and unrelenting. Outfitted with custom-designed armor and rifles, these soldiers function with determined precision and practiced teamwork.

The first to rush into a fight, assault troopers often work in tandem with more powerful units. They make strategic use of this scenario, keeping their opponents occupied until it is too late to react to the combined Cerberus force bearing down on them.





CERBERUS NEMESIS

CERBERUS TRAINING, TUNNEL VISION, ONE SHOT, ONE KILL

STAYING ON TOP OF IT (first exchange only, go to top of the initiative order)	Guns	5
READY FOR ANYTHING (+2 to initiative)	Guns	Stealth 4
STAY ON TARGET (automatically place an IN MY SIGHTS aspect on a target with no roll), IN PLAIN SIGHT (page 113)	Guns	Stealth 3
	Stealth	Alertness 2
	Alertness	Resolve 1
	Resolve	Security 1

Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Stress	1	2	3	4				
Armor	1				2	Mild	4	Moderate
							6	Severe

Weapon
M-98 Widow

Damage 5 **Range** 3-7 **Penetration** 3 **Bulk** 3 **Cost** 4 **Qualities**
Scoped, High Recoil, Awkward Reload, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL RIFLE

The nemesis is a Cerberus sniper specialist. Customized implants allow the nemesis to withstand the crippling kickback of the M-98 Widow sniper rifle, turning a redoubtable opponent into a force capable of inflicting instant death. A suite of high-tech scanning equipment makes the sniper adept at maintaining cover, meaning a nemesis is usually spotted only after opening fire—assuming the target survives the first round.

Because of self-destruct mechanisms that activate upon the sniper's death, the Alliance has never retrieved an example of nemesis augmentation technology. This fact, combined with Cerberus forces' penchant for suicide when faced with capture, has made scientific study of their implants impossible.



COLLECTOR TROOPER

HIVE MIND, EXPEDIENT RETREAT, HIDDEN AGENDA

SCARY (counter Intimidation attempts with own Intimidation)	Guns	Fight 4
HAMMERLOCK (page 106)	Guns	Fight 3
	Fight	Endurance 2
	Endurance	Intimidation 1

Shields	1	2	3	4				
Stress	1	2	3	4				
					2	Mild	4	Moderate
							4	Moderate

Weapon
Pulse Rifle

Damage 2 **Range** 2-5 **Penetration** -1 **Bulk** 1 **Cost** 2 **Qualities**
Autofire x2, High Capacity

The Collectors are an enigmatic race that live beyond the Omega 4 Relay, a mass relay within the same system as Omega, in the Terminus Systems. They are rarely seen in the Terminus itself, let alone Citadel space, and are generally regarded as a myth by Citadel citizens. Definite sightings of Collectors have been made on Omega every few centuries.

HUMAN MARINE

ALLIANCE PROTECTOR, UPSTART SPECIES, INDOMITABLE RESOLVE

OVERLOAD (page 147), FINAL LEG (1/scene, avoid a taken out or cancel 1 consequence)	Guns	5		
TECH ARMOR (page 151), MASTER JAMMER (+2 Systems to break lock)	Guns	Athletics	4	
	Guns	Athletics	Artillery	3
HAIL OF LEAD (+2 to place a block using Guns)	Athletics	Artillery	Systems	2
	Artillery	Systems	Endurance	1

Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Stress	1	2	3	4						
Armor	2				2	Mild	4	Moderate	6	Severe

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-8 Avenger	3	2-4	1	1	2	Autofire

Humans joined the galactic community after discovering a Prothean data cache on Mars in 2148. Their devotion to understanding and adapting to modern warfare left the staid Council races stunned. Humanity's persistence and unflappable spirit has taken them further than anyone in the galaxy could have imagined.

Alliance soldiers are renowned for their impressive fire support, flexibility, and speed. Humans have quickly integrated new technology into their combat gear and can unleash VIs, drones, and artillery on the battlefield.



HUMAN RUFFIAN

UNSAVORY FELLOW, UNDERHANDED, FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

			Fight	4
ANYTHING GOES (no complications using an improvised weapon)	Fight	Guns		3
EAR TO THE GROUND (+2 to Contacts to hear in advance about some threat)	Fight	Guns	Contacts	2
	Guns	Contacts	Athletics	1

Stress	1	2	3						
Armor	1			2	Mild	2	Mild	4	Moderate

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
M-3 Predator	2	0-3	0	0	1	Aspect: WEAK VS SHIELDS/BARRIERS

Because of their pervasiveness, humans are sometimes looked down upon by the other Citadel species. Prolific and capable of being highly adaptable, humans can be found plying any number of trades—legitimate and non—throughout Citadel and Alliance space.





KROGAN BATTLEMASTER

BUILT FOR WAR, SINGLE-MINDED, COMBAT TACTICIAN

CHARGE (page 122), PAIN PROMISE (1/scene cause a mild consequence instead stress)	Guns	7								
IN COMMAND (1/scene give an ally +3 to an action), NOW	Guns	Fight	6							
YOU'VE MADE ME MAD (page 104, no fate cost)	Fight	Endurance	5							
GREAT STRENGTH (+1 Fight rolls), TWO FISTED SHOOTER (when using two weapons and inflict at least 1 stress do +1 damage), BRAWLER (+1 to Fight defense when outnumbered; deal 1 additional stress on a successful hit)	Guns	Endurance	Intimidation	4						
	Fight	Intimidation	Leadership	3						
	Endurance	Leadership	Biotics	2						
	Intimidation	Biotics	Alertness	1						
Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Stress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
Armor	3		2	Mild	4	Moderate	4	Moderate	6	Severe

Weapon

M-300 Claymore
M-6 Carnifex

Damage

5
4

Range

0-2
0-3

Penetration

-2
1

Bulk

3
1

Cost

4
4

Qualities

Scattershot, Awkward Reload
None

Krogan battlemasters are some of the toughest krogan in existence. They are rare because of their biotic abilities and their determination.

The battlemasters were officers of the krogan military. Tough, disciplined, well-armed, and biotically gifted, a single battlemaster is said to be an equal match to ten soldiers of any other species. Battlemasters regard killing as a science and focus on developing economy of motion which allows them to maximize the advantage gained from their incredible strength in battle; a single blow from a battlemaster is usually enough to kill or severely incapacitate any non-krogan.

Battlemasters hold little regard for the honor that other races often display in combat; they will use any means necessary to achieve their goals, no matter how reprehensible. Hostage-taking and genocide are generally accepted tactics if they ensure that a victory is gained with minimal krogan casualties.



GETH TROOPER

EVOLUTIONARY AI, THE COLLECTIVE, LASER FOCUSED, ELECTROMAGNETIC VULNERABILITY

DEMOLITIONS (page 105)			Guns	5
BLACK HAT (+2 damage with malware attacks)		Guns	Systems	4
LIGHT ORDINANCE (use Guns instead of Artillery to fire rifle-based heavy weapons)	Guns	Systems	Artillery	3
	Systems	Artillery	Endurance	2
	Artillery	Endurance	Engineering	1

Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6				
Stress	1	2	3	4			2	Mild	4	Moderate

Weapon

Geth Pulse Rifle
Rocket Launcher
Flamethrower

Damage

2
5
4

Range

2-5
3-6
0-2

Penetration

-1
1
-1

Bulk

1
2
1

Cost

Qualities

Autofire x2, High Capacity
Area: 1, Aspect: **ANTI-MATERIAL EXPLOSIVE**
Persistent Effect: **ON FIRE!**

Geth Troopers are standard geth infantry. These units are lightly equipped, with no exotic weapons, and are normally found in groups of two or more. They are dark gray in color, with pale green synthetic "flesh" and a bright blue eye. They lack heavy armor, resulting in a weakness to weapons fire, and their low weight makes them vulnerable to biotics or grenades.

Variations use rocket launchers and flamethrowers depending on deployment.

GETH HUNTER

EVOLUTIONARY AI, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL, HIDDEN PREDATOR, ELECTROMAGNETIC VULNERABILITY

IN PLAIN SIGHT (page 113), DECRYPTING (+2 to crack an encrypted communiqué)	Guns	6
UNSTOPPABLE (all blocks to movement are considered 2 lower)	Guns	5
	Systems	4
	Guns	3
	Systems	2
	Endurance	1
TACTICAL CLOAK (page 150), HAIL OF LEAD (+2 to place a block using Guns)	Systems	3
	Endurance	2
	Engineering	1
	Alertness	1
	Stealth	1
Shields	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
Stress	1 2 3 4 5 2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate	

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Geth Plasma Shotgun	4	0-3	1	3	5	Scattershot

Hunters possess cloaking devices, shields and shotguns. Save for their shorter stature, their appearance is very similar to Geth Destroyers, Geth Juggernauts, and Geth Primes.

The Geth Hunter's combat behavior is to close in and eliminate opponents with its shotgun. Their stealth devices mean they are capable of catching opponents off guard, particularly in the middle of combat where more visible threats are likely to be targeted first. However, the luminous eye is still always partially visible, as is their bodily outline.



GETH PRIME

EVOLUTIONARY AI, THE BIGGER THEY ARE..., COMMAND & CONTROL, ELECTROMAGNETIC VULNERABILITY

CRIPPLING BLOW (1/scene when injuring a foe with Fight, force the target to take a consequence), IN COMMAND (1/scene give an ally +3 to an action)	Artillery	8								
	Endurance	7								
DECRYPTING (+2 to crack an encrypted communiqué), UNSTOPPABLE (all blocks to movement are considered 2 lower)	Artillery	6								
	Endurance	5								
HERCULEAN STRENGTH (reduce all weight-based difficulties by 2 steps), DEVASTATING BARRAGE (+1 damage to Artillery attack)	Artillery	4								
	Endurance	3								
	Systems	2								
	Leadership	1								
Shields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Stress	4	6			4	Moderate	4	Moderate	6	Severe
	4	6			4	Moderate	4	Moderate	6	Severe
Armor	4	6			4	Moderate	4	Moderate	6	Severe
	4	6			4	Moderate	4	Moderate	6	Severe

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Geth Pulse Cannon	4	2-5	0	2		Autofire x2, High Capacity, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL WEAPON
Rocket Launcher	5	3-6	1	2		Area: 1, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL EXPLOSIVE

Standing twelve feet high and boasting the deadliest arsenal of any geth infantry, a Geth Prime is a terrifying opponent. They are instantly recognizable by their white armor and huge stature. Primes carry a pulse cannon—which can also launch rockets—have layers of shielding and are incredibly resilient. They also boost nearby geth combat stats; it is this ability that sets them apart from the Geth Juggernaut. Primes have no major weaknesses and are resistant to most biotic and tech talents. They are the largest bipedal geth unit, towering over the second largest unit, the Geth Juggernaut.





PROTHEAN VANGUARD

ANCIENT PROGENITORS, LAST AMONG US, THE CYCLE MUST GO ON!

DARK CHANNEL (page 123), UNFLAPPABLE (+2 to defend against fear or Intimidation)	Guns	6
SLAM (page 131), TRACKER (page 115)	Guns	5
	Biotics	4
	Systems	3
PULL (page 128), TELEPATHIC LINK (page 102)	Biotics	2
	Systems	1
	Survival	1
	Engineering	1
	Leadership	1

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stress 1 2 3

Armor 1 2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate

Weapon
Pulse Rifle

Damage 3 Range 2-5 Penetration 1 Bulk 1 Cost 4 Qualities Autofire, High Capacity

The Protheans are an ancient alien race which mysteriously vanished over 50,000 years ago. The Protheans arose from a single planet and developed an immense galaxy-wide empire encompassing many other spacefaring species. Not much is known about them, but many of their artifacts, ruins and technology have apparently survived the ages.

The Protheans have been credited with creating the Citadel and the mass relays, feats of engineering that have never been equaled and whose core mass effect field technology forms the basis of contemporary civilization. Prothean artifacts, therefore, have immense scientific value and are seen to belong to the whole galactic community.



REAPER HUSK

REPURPOSED ABOMINATION, MINDLESS, RECKLESS ABANDON

	Fight	4
SWIFT RUNNER (move an additional zone at no penalty)	Fight	3
PILE ON (gain +1 Fight when reapers outnumber their opponents)	Athletics	2
	Alertness	1
	Survival	1
Stress	1 2 3	2 Mild 2 Mild 2 Mild

Husks are synthetic-organic "zombies" created from the bodies of organic beings. When a human is captured, they are placed on impaling devices, huge spikes that Alliance marines have nicknamed "dragon's teeth." Over time the body's organs, skin, and water content are converted into cybernetic materials; blood is changed to a sickly green fluid, and the body generates an electrical charge.

When the spikes are approached—say, if marines try to recover their dead comrades—the husks are released and attack. The husks will charge at their enemies with no thought towards their own safety and attempt to overwhelm targets with their numbers.

REAPER CANNIBAL

REPURPOSED ABOMINATION, BATARIAN MOCKERY, RELENTLESS HUNGER

DEVASTATING BARRAGE (+1 damage to Artillery attack)

Artillery 5

PILE ON (gain +1 Fight when outnumber their opponents)

Artillery 4 Fight 4

CONSUMPTION (spend an action to devour a body to recover the highest stress box available and gain +1 armor)

Artillery 3 Fight 3 Athletics 2
Fight 2 Athletics 2 Endurance 2
Athletics 1 Endurance 1 Survival 1

Stress 1 2 3 4 2 Mild 2 Mild 4 Moderate

Weapon	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Rocket Launcher	5	3-6	1	2		Area: 2, Aspect: ANTI-MATERIAL EXPLOSIVE
Grenade Launcher	5	2-5	0	0		Area: 1

Cannibals are front-line Reaper units created from corrupted batarians. The nickname refers to their propensity to devour the bodies of fallen comrades. This triggers a biochemical process through which the cannibals spontaneously heal themselves and grow new chitinous armor. The transformation also appears to give cannibals a greater awareness of their surroundings, leading to more strategic behavior and careful use of battlefield cover.



REAPER BRUTE

REPURPOSED ABOMINATION, TOWERING FLESH, RELENTLESS, TOO BIG TO LIFT

NOW YOU'VE MADE ME MAD (page 104, no fate cost)

Fight 7

GREAT STRENGTH (+1 Fight rolls)

Fight 6 Endurance 6

PILE ON (gain +1 Fight when reapers outnumber their opponents), SWIFT RUNNER (move an additional zone at no penalty)

Fight 5 Endurance 4 Resolve 4
Endurance 3 Resolve 3 Survival 3
Resolve 2 Survival 2 Intimidation 2
Survival 1 Intimidation 1 Alertness 1
Intimidation 1 Alertness 1 Athletics 1

Stress 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Armor 4 6 2 Mild 4 Moderate 6 Severe 6 Severe

Special Attack	Damage	Range	Penetration	Bulk	Cost	Qualities
Crushing Blow	6	0	0	0		High Recoil
Charge	4	1-2	0	0		Area: 1

The brute is a hulking amalgamation of turian and krogan victims of the Reapers. Because tissue from dextro-protein species like the turians is incompatible with levo-protein species like the krogan, implants regulate the brute's body chemistry to combat organ rejection.

It is the fusion of turian military skill and krogan blood rage that makes the brute such a formidable enemy, capable of destroying armored vehicles to get to the soldiers inside. Troops are advised to keep their distance, and, whenever possible, not engage a brute alone.





REAPER MARAUDER

REPURPOSED ABOMINATION, TURIAN STRATEGIST, MOBILE COMMANDER

HAIL OF LEAD (+2 place block), IN COMMAND (1/scene give ally +3 to an action) **Guns** **6**

PRESS ON (gain +1 Guns when outnumber their opponents) **Guns** **Leadership** **5**

ABHORRENT FORTIFICATION (+1 armor to other reapers in same zone), TURIAN TOUGHNESS (page 63)

Guns **Leadership** **Athletics** **4**
Leadership **Athletics** **Endurance** **3**
Athletics **Endurance** **Alertness** **2**
Endurance **Alertness** **Fight** **1**

Shields 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Stress 1 2 3 4 5 6

2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate 4 Moderate

Weapon

Phaeston

Damage

3

Range

2-5

Penetration

1

Bulk

1

Cost

4

Qualities

Autofire, High Capacity

Marauders are harvested turians that command and protect other Reaper troops. The lean, armored creatures present a significant threat in and of themselves, but they are especially dangerous when leading a Reaper task force.

Alliance marines have observed marauders fortifying husks and cannibals by enveloping them in a ribbon of energy that forms a scabby shell of armor. For this reason, when Alliance soldiers encounter a marauder alongside husks or cannibals, standing orders are to target the marauder first.



VORCHIA ENFORCER

GALAXY SCOURGE, DUMB AS A HUSK, CLAN MEMBER

BRAWLER (+1 to Fight defense when outnumbered; +1 stress on hit) **Fight** **4**

SCARY (counter Intimidation attempts with own Intimidation) **Fight** **Guns** **3**

SCAVENGER (+2 to Survival roll to find just the thing you need) **Fight** **Guns** **Intimidation** **2**
Guns **Intimidation** **Endurance** **1**

Stress 1 2 3 4

Armor 1 2 2 Mild 4 Moderate 4 Moderate

Weapon

M-4 Shuriken

Damage

2

Range

0-3

Penetration

-1

Bulk

0

Cost

2

Qualities

Autofire

Known for their unique biology and aggressive behavior, the vorchia of Heshtok are a primitive race that live among the galaxy's darker and more dangerous locations, such as Omega. Many vorchia are trained by the krogan Blood Pack as mercenaries due to their savage nature and adaptability to different environments. The rest of galactic civilization regards them as pests and scavengers, and their presence is generally seen as a blight.

APPENDIX A

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In order of appearance.

Please contact feedback@masseffectrpg.org with additions and/or corrections.

INDEX

A

- Ablative Coating (upgrade) 209
- Academics (skill) 74–75
- Acrobat (skill stunt) 101
- actions 174–175
 - attack 177
 - blinding 186
 - block 179
 - carrying 186
 - conflicts 175
 - contests 175
 - disarming 186
 - free actions 178
 - full defense 178
 - holding your action 179
 - indirect attacks 186
 - knockback 187
 - movement 180
 - pushing 186
 - recover shields 180
 - resolving 181–185
 - resolving maneuvers 185–187
 - simple actions 174
 - special actions 178–180
 - sprinting 180
 - supplemental actions 179–180
 - throw 187
- Adrenaline Rush (combat power) 152
- Adrenaline Rush, Hardened (combat power) 152
- Advanced Armor Training (combat power) 153
- Advanced Weapon Training (combat power) 153
- advancement 193–195
 - major milestone 194–195
 - minor milestone 193–194
 - significant milestone 194
- Alertness (skill) 76
- Allies (skill stunt) 109, 191–192
- ammunition upgrades 152
- Animal Companion (skill stunt) 114
- Anything Goes (skill stunt) 106
- applying modifiers 228
- archaic weapons 219
- Ardat-Yakshi *See* Asari: Ardat-Yakshi
- Ardat-Yakshi (stunt) 33
 - See also* Asari: Ardat-Yakshi
- area 200
 - See also* explosions
- armor *See* personal defense
- Armor Piercing Ammo (combat power) 152
- Armor Plating (upgrade) 209
- Army of One (skill stunt) 106
- Artillery (skill) 76–77
- Art of Conversation, The (skill stunt) 111
- Asari 32–38
 - Ardat-Yakshi 36
 - biology 33–34
 - culture 35–37
 - government 37–38
 - history 34–35
 - military 38
 - Asari Commando (template) 233
 - Aspect (improvement) 200, 206, 207, 210, 214, 218, 219
 - aspects 23, 158
 - background 23
 - “bad” aspects 167
 - character 23–26
 - compelling 18, 158, 160–164
 - compelling multiple 164
 - compelling other 166
 - creating during play 170–173
 - declaration 158, 159, 172–173
 - discovering 170–173
 - encountering others 164–166
 - fragile 171
 - game aspects (meta) 166
 - good aspects (examples) 168
 - guessing 170–171
 - high concept 23
 - invoking 158, 159
 - invoking other 165
 - making character aspects 166–169
 - negotiating a compel 163
 - NPC aspects 224
 - resource aspects 198–199
 - scene compels 166
 - situation aspects 168
 - skill assessment 172
 - sticky 171
 - story aspects 168
 - tagging 158, 165–166
 - temporary 171–172
 - trouble 23
 - using 158
 - when to compel 224
 - Assassination Training (combat power) 153
 - assisting 180–181
 - See also* teamwork
 - Athletics (skill) 77–78
 - Atlas (template) 233
 - attack 177
 - See also* conflicts
 - resolving 181
 - Augmented Heads Up Display (upgrade) 208
 - Aura of Menace (skill stunt) 107
 - Autofire (improvement) 200
 - Autofire Spray Training (combat power) 153
 - Awkward Reload (improvement) 200, 219

B

- background 23–24
- Barrier (biotic power) 121
- Batarian Thug (template) 234
- Been There, Done That (skill stunt) 99
- Best of Care, The (skill stunt) 109
- bio-amps 210–213
- biotic explosions 118–119
- Biotic Interface (upgrade) 209
- Biotic Mastery 118–135
 - biotic explosions 118–119
 - refresh cost 118
- biotic powers 119–135
 - Aspects 120
 - buying 119
 - Duration 119
 - Range 119
 - Recharge 119
 - Type 119
- Biotic Shield (skill stunt) 101
- Biotics (improvement) 210
- Biotics (skill) 78–79
- Black Hat (skill stunt) 115
- blinding 186
- block action 179
 - See also* conflicts: special actions
- Blue Suns Mercenary (template) 234
- Booster (skill stunt) 110
- Bounce Back (skill stunt) 104
- Brawler (skill stunt) 106
- Built for War (Species Aspect) 45
 - See also* Krogan
- bulk 199, 205
- Bulk (improvement) 201, 206, 219
- Bulldogs!** 11
- Bump and Grab (skill stunt) 113
- buying things 198–199

C

- Camouflage (improvement) 206
- Capable Researcher (skill stunt) 99
- carrying 186
- Cat Burglar (skill stunt) 113
- Center of Attention (skill stunt) 111
- Cerberus Centurion (template) 235
- Cerberus Nemesis (template) 236
- Cerberus Trooper (template) 235
- Chain of Command (skill stunt) 109
- character aspects 23–26
 - character creation 21
- Character Creation Flowchart 29
- Charge (biotic power) 122
- Clever Disguise (skill stunt) 103
- Close at Hand (skill stunt) 106
- Cold Read (skill stunt) 103
- Collector Trooper (template) 236
- Combat Mastery 152–154
- combat training 153–154
- combined actions 180–181
- Companion (skill stunt) 109, 192–193
- compelling aspects *See* aspects: compelling
- complications 161
 - See also* aspects: compelling
- Concealable (improvement) 201, 218, 219
- concessions 183
- Concussive Blast (combat power) 154
- Concussive Shot (combat power) 154
- Concussive Shot, Heavy (combat power) 154
- conflicts 176–187
 - attacks 177
 - concessions 183
 - consequences 182
 - framing the scene 176
 - inflicting stress 181
 - initiative 176
 - maneuvers 178
 - resolving actions 181–185
 - resolving maneuvers 185–187
 - special actions 178–180
 - taken out 182
 - zones 176
- Con Man (skill stunt) 103
- consequences 182
 - See also* aspects: temporary
- removing 183–184
- Contacts (skill) 79–80
 - buying things 198–199
- contests 175
- Cool Customer (skill stunt) 112
- cost 198
 - calculating 200
- Covering Fire (skill stunt) 100
- Creative Commons License 2
- Criminal Mind (skill stunt) 113
- Crippling Blow (skill stunt) 106
- Cryo Ammo (combat power) 152
- Cryo Blast (tech power) 139
- cryo explosions 136
- Crystal Clarity (stunt) 39
 - See also* Drell
- Cut the Red Tape (skill stunt) 109

D

- damage 199
 - See also* explosions
 - calculating modifiers 228
- Damage (improvement) 201, 218, 220
- Danger Is My Middle Name (skill stunt) 100
- Danger Sense (skill stunt) 100
- Daredevil (skill stunt) 110
- Dark Channel (biotic power) 123
- death 182–183

- Deceit (skill) 81
 declaration
 See aspects: declaration; See also skills: declaration
 making 20, 159
 setting difficulty 225
 skill 73, 225
 Decoy (tech power) 141
 Decrypting (skill stunt) 115
 Deep Scan (skill stunt) 115
 defend 177
 Defense Matrix (tech power) 140
 Defensive Flying (skill stunt) 110
 Demolitions (skill stunt) 105
 Demoralizing Stance (skill stunt) 106
 Devastating Barrage (skill stunt) 100
 difficulty 17
 GM setting 227
 disarming 186
 Disruptor Ammo (combat power) 152
 Dominate (biotic power) 124
 Drell 39–40
 culture 40
 history 39–40
 Drone (tech power) 142–144
 drone creation 143
 Due North (skill stunt) 114
 Duration (improvement) 210
- E**
- Ear for Bull (skill stunt) 112
 Ear to the Ground (skill stunt) 102
 effect 173
 effort 17, 173
 Eidetic Scorpion (Species Aspect) 39
 See also Drell
 Embrace Eternity (Species Aspect) 33
 See also Asari
 Empathy (skill) 81–82
 EMP (improvement) 218
 Endurance (skill) 82–83
 Energized Weave (upgrade) 209
 Energy Drain (tech power) 145
 Engineering (skill) 83
 environmental hazards 187
 Enviro-Suit (improvement) 206
 exchanges 176
 See also time increments
 Exoskeleton (upgrade) 208
 Experienced Survivor (skill stunt) 114
 Expert Climber (skill stunt) 101
 explosions 188–190
 complexity 188
 damage 188
 defending 189
 fuses 189
 explosives 217–219
 area 200
 Extensive Education (skill stunt) 99
 Extraordinary Regeneration (stunt) 45
 See also Krogan
- F**
- Fast Runner (skill stunt) 101
 Fate dice 12
 buying 16
 rolling 17
 Fate ladder 16
 fate points 19
 distributing during play 228
 earning more 20
 refreshing 20
 spending to invoke an aspect 19
 tracking 16
 Feel the Burn (skill stunt) 104
 Field Medic (skill stunt) 110
 Fight (skill) 84
 First Aid Interface (upgrade) 209
 Fish Out of Water (Species Aspect) 58
 See also Salarian
 Five Minute Friends (skill stunt) 111
 Fix Is In, The (skill stunt) 103
 Flare (biotic power) 125
 Flash Forward (skill stunt) 102
 Flawless Parry (skill stunt) 106
 Focused Fire Training (combat power) 153
 Focused Senses (skill stunt) 108
 Fortification Training (combat power) 153
 Fortress of the Mind (skill stunt) 102
 fragile aspects 171–172
 See also aspects: temporary
 free actions 178
 See also conflicts: special actions
 free invocations 165–166
 full defense 178
 See also conflicts: special actions
 fuse 189
 See also explosions; See also explosives
 Fuse (improvement) 218
- G**
- game aspects 166
 Genetically Engineered (stunt) 41
 See also Humans
 Geth Hunter (template) 239
 Geth Prime (template) 239
 Geth Trooper (template) 238
 Grease Monkey (skill stunt) 105
 Grease the Wheels (skill stunt) 102, 109
 Greater Fortification Training (combat power) 153
 Great Strength (stunt) 45
 See also Krogan

- grenades 218
See also explosives
 Gunner's Eye (skill stunt) 101
 guns 200–205
 Guns (skill) 84–85
- H**
 Hammerlock (skill stunt) 106
 Hardened Weave (upgrade) 209
 Hard Target (skill stunt) 110
 healing injuries 184–185
 Heart's Secret (skill stunt) 103
 Heavy Concussive Shot (combat power) 154
 Heightened Reflexes (stunt) 33, 52
See also Asari; *See also* Quarian
 Herculean Strength (skill stunt) 104
 Hidden Weakness (skill stunt) 113
 High Capacity (improvement) 201
 high concept 23
 High Explosive (improvement) 201, 220
 High Recoil (improvement) 201
 Hit Them Where It Hurts (skill stunt) 103
 holding your action 179
See also conflicts: special actions
 Honest Lie, The (skill stunt) 103
 Human Marine (template) 237
 Human Ruffian (template) 237
 Humans 41–44
 biology 41
 culture 43–44
 history 42–43
- I**
 I Know a Guy (skill stunt) 102
 impossible Detail (skill stunt) 108
 Incendiary Ammo (combat power) 153
 Incinerate (tech power) 146
 incineration explosions 136
See also tech fire explosions
 indirect attacks 186
 Indirect Fire (improvement) 201, 220
 inflicting damage 181
See also stress
 inflicting stress 181
 Infuriate (skill stunt) 108
 initiative 176
 alternate system 177
 Inner Strength (skill stunt) 111
 In Plain Sight (skill stunt) 113
 Insider (skill stunt) 102
 Intimidation (skill) 85–86
 Investigation (skill) 86–87
 invoking an aspect 18
See also aspects: invoking
 Iron Will (skill stunt) 112
- J**
 Jury-Rigger (skill stunt) 105
 Just Not There (skill stunt) 102
- K**
 Kinetic Buffer (upgrade) 208
 Kinetic Exoskeleton (upgrade) 208
 kinetic shields 207
 knockback 187
 Krogan 44–51
 biology 44–46
 culture 47–50
 government 50
 history 46–47
 military 50–51
 Krogan Battlemaster (template) 238
 Krogan Tough (stunt) 45
See also Krogan
- L**
 ladder 16
 Lash (biotic power) 126
 Last Leg (skill stunt) 104
 Leadership (skill) 87
 buying things 198–199
 Legal Eagle (skill stunt) 109
 light armor 206
 Lightfoot (skill stunt) 113
 Light Touch (skill stunt) 113
 Like the Wind (skill stunt) 113
 Linguist (skill stunt) 100
 Location Awareness (skill stunt) 108
 Long Shot (skill stunt) 107
 Long Term Investment (skill stunt) 112
- M**
 magnitude 17
 maneuvers 178
See also conflicts: maneuvers
 blinding 186
 carrying 186
 disarming 186
 indirect attacks 186
 knockback 187
 pushing 186
 resolving 185–187
 taking cover 207
 throw 187
 Mappin, Alloryn *See* munchkin
 Marathon Training (skill stunt) 101
 Marksman (combat power) 154
Mass Effect: Operation Resurgence 12
 Master & Commander (stunt) 63
See also Turian
 Masterful Feint (skill stunt) 103
 Master Jammer (skill stunt) 115

- Medicine (skill) 87–88
 medium armor 206
 melee weapons 219–220
 Fight (skill) 84
 Mental Blueprint (skill stunt) 113
 mental combat 229
 Merchant Prince (skill stunt) 112
 Mighty Leap (skill stunt) 101
 milestones 193–195
 minions 190–191
 Miracle Worker (skill stunt) 110
 Mister Fix-It (skill stunt) 105
 modifiers, order of 228
 Motorized Joints (upgrade) 208
 movement 180
 See also conflicts: special actions
- N**
 Natural Biotic (stunt) 33
 See also Asari
 negotiating a compel 163
 Non-Lethal (improvement) 201, 218, 220
 Non-Linear (stunt) 58
 See also Salarian
 non-player characters (NPCs) 230
 basic NPCs 230–231
 Competent NPC 231
 main NPCs 232
 Mundane NPC 231
 Qualified NPC 231
 supporting NPCs 231
 templates 232–242
 Not as Bad as It Looks (skill stunt) 110
 Nova (biotic power) 127
 Now You've Made Me Mad (skill stunt) 104
 Nuke the Site from Orbit (skill stunt) 101
- O**
 omni-tools 213–217
 One Hand on the Stick (skill stunt) 110
 One Step Ahead (skill stunt) 100
 One With the Wilderness (skill stunt) 114
 On Top of It (skill stunt) 100
 Overload (tech power) 147
- P**
 Patch 'Em Up (skill stunt) 110
 penetration 200
 Penetration (improvement) 201, 214, 220
 Persistent Effect (improvement) 201, 218, 220
 personal defense 205–210
 armor & shield upgrades 208
 heavy armor 206
 heavy kinetic shield generator 208
 kinetic shields 207
 light armor 206
 light kinetic shield generator 208
 medium armor 206
 medium kinetic shield generator 208
 personal items 210–224
 Archaic & Melee Weapons 220
 Bio-Amps 211
 Explosives 217
 Omni-Tools 215
 Pilot (skill) 88–89
 Pin the Tail (skill stunt) 108
 Powerful Empath (skill stunt) 102
 power level 22
 Hardcore 22
 Insane 22
 Normal 22
 Veteran 22
 powers 118–154
 Precision Targeting (skill stunt) 101
 Predatory Reflexes (stunt) 39
 See also Drell
 Preemptive Grace (skill stunt) 104
 Promise of Pain, The (skill stunt) 108
 Prothean Vanguard (template) 240
 Pull (biotic power) 128
 pushing 186
- Q**
 Quarian 51–57
 biology 51–52
 culture 54–56
 government 56–57
 history 53–54
 military 57–58
 Quarian Tech Training (stunt) 52
 See also Quarian
 Quick Draw (skill stunt) 107
 Quick Exit (skill stunt) 114
 Quick Eye (skill stunt) 108
- R**
 Rage (combat power) 154
 Rain of Lead (skill stunt) 107
 Ralya, Martin *See* indexing guru
 range 200
 Range (improvement) 201, 210, 214, 220
 Rapport (skill) 89–90
 buying things 198–199
 Ready Cash (skill stunt) 112
 Ready for Anything (skill stunt) 100
 Reaper Brute (template) 241
 Reaper Cannibal (template) 241
 Reaper Husk (template) 240
 Reaper Marauder (template) 242
 Reave (biotic power) 129
 Recharge (improvement) 210, 214
 Recharge & Reuse (improvement) 218
 recover shields 180, 207

recovery	183–185	Shockwave (biotic power)	130
refresh		Shot on the Run (skill stunt)	107
recovering fate points	20	simple actions	174
spending	22	Singularity (biotic power)	132
starting	22	Skeptic's Ear, The (skill stunt)	104
<i>See also</i> power level		skill cap	
Remote Detonator (improvement)	219	starting	22, 29
removing consequences	183–184	<i>See also</i> power level	
removing stress	183–184	skill columns	27
Reroute the Systems (skill stunt)	105	skill list	72
Resolve (skill)	90–91	skill packages	27–28
resolving actions	181–185	skill points	
resource aspect	198–199	buying skill packages	27–28
resources	21	starting	22, 29
Resources (skill)	91	<i>See also</i> power level	
buying things	198–199	skills	18, 72
result	17	assessment	72–73
Right Place, Right Time (skill stunt)	112	attack	73
Riposte (skill stunt)	106	block	74
Roboticist (skill stunt)	115	declaration	73
		defend	73
		difficulties	227
		list	72
		overcome obstacles	72
		place maneuver	73
		special	74
S		skill stunts	
Sabotage (tech power)	148	creating	98–99
Safe Fall (skill stunt)	101	free	22, 29
Salarian	58–62	samples	99–115
biology	58–59	starting	22, 29
culture	60–61	<i>See also</i> power level	
government	61	skill tree	27
history	59	Slam (biotic power)	131
military	61–62	Smell Fear (skill stunt)	113
Scary (skill stunt)	108	Smooth Operator (skill stunt)	111
Scattershot (improvement)	201	Smooth Over (skill stunt)	111
Scavenger (skill stunt)	115	Smooth Recovery (skill stunt)	112
scene aspects	166	social combat	229
Scene of the Crime (skill stunt)	109	Specialized (improvement)	201, 211, 214, 219, 220
Scientific Expert (skill stunt)	100	Species	32
Scoped (improvement)	202	species abilities	18, 32
Security Expert (skill stunt)	115	Speed of Thought (stunt)	58
Security (skill)	91–92	<i>See also</i> Salarian	
buying things	198–199	spin	17, 174
selling things	199	using spin	228
Sentry Turret (tech power)	149	sprinting	180
Shadowed Strike (skill stunt)	114	<i>See also</i> conflicts: special actions	
Sharp Eyes (skill stunt)	100	Starfarer (skill stunt)	111
shattershot	136	starship combat	229–230
Shield Battery (upgrade)	209	Stasis (biotic power)	133
shield generator	205	Stay on Target (skill stunt)	107
Shield Modulator (upgrade)	210	Stealth Field (improvement)	207
Shield Regenerator (upgrade)	210	Stealth (skill)	92
shields	207–208	Stellar Cartographer (skill stunt)	100
Shields (improvement)	214	Stick to Their Six (skill stunt)	111
shifts	17, 173–174		
degrees of success	227		
generating spin	174		
reduce time	173–174		
Shock Absorbers (upgrade)	209		

sticky aspects	171	Fight (skill)	84
Still Standing (skill stunt)	112	Thump of Restoration (skill stunt)	105
Stimulant Pack (upgrade)	209	time increments	174
stress	21, 181	<i>See also</i> shifts	
bonus stress from Endurance (skill)	83	Tireless (skill stunt)	104
bonus stress from Resolve (skill)	91	To Serve the Hierarchy (stunt)	63
concessions	183	<i>See also</i> Turian	
removing	183–184	Toxic Seals (upgrade)	209
taken out	182	Tracker (skill stunt)	115
Strike to the Heart (skill stunt)	107	Track the Soul (skill stunt)	104
stunts	18, 98–115	Tripwire Sensibilities (skill stunt)	113
creating	98–99	trouble	23
free	22, 29	Turian	62–68
starting	22, 29	biology	62–64
<i>See also</i> power level		culture	66–67
Subtle Menace (skill stunt)	108	government	67
Sucker Punch (skill stunt)	114	history	64–66
supplemental actions	176, 179–180	military	67–68
<i>See also</i> conflicts: special actions		Turian Might (Species Aspect)	63
Survival (skill)	93	<i>See also</i> Turian	
Systems (improvement)	214	Turian Toughness (stunt)	63
Systems (skill)	93–98	<i>See also</i> Turian	
T		Two Fisted Shooter (skill stunt)	107
Tactical Cloak (tech power)	150	U	
tagging aspects	158, 165–166	Unapproachable (skill stunt)	108
taken out	182–183	Unbound (skill stunt)	101
Takes One to Know One (skill stunt)	103	Unflappable (skill stunt)	112
Talk the Talk (skill stunt)	102	Unity (combat power)	154
Tamper-Proof (improvement)	219	Unstoppable (skill stunt)	105
Targeting Visor (upgrade)	208	Upstart Species (Species Aspect)	41
Target Their Systems (skill stunt)	101	<i>See also</i> Humans	
teamwork	180–181	V	
Tech Armor (tech power)	151	vehicle combat	229–230
tech bursts	137–138	Vorcha Enforcer (template)	242
tech cryo explosions	136	W	
tech fire explosions	137	Walk Away From It (skill stunt)	111
Tech Mastery	136–151	Warp Ammo (combat power)	153
refresh cost	136	Warp (biotic power)	135
tech powers	138	weapons	199–205
Aspects	138	Archaic & Melee Weapons	220
buying	136	bulk rating	199
Duration	138	damage	199
Range	138	Explosives	217
Recharge	138	guns	200–205
Type	138	penetration	200
Telepathic Link (skill stunt)	102	range	200
temporary aspects	171–172	Ranged Weapons	203
Thick Skinned (skill stunt)	104	Weapon Training (combat power)	154
Those Damn, Thieving Quarians! (Species Aspect)	52	Well-Known (skill stunt)	103
<i>See also</i> Quarian		Z	
threats		zero gravity	187
<i>See</i> non-player characters (NPCs)		zones	176
Three Adventures, The	24–27		
Throw (biotic power)	134		
throwing	187		
thrown weapons	219–220		

The Adventure Continues...

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Illustration by Benjamin Huen

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