CTHULHU TECH

QUICK-START RULES

CREDITS

DISCLAIMER

CthulhuTech is a game. It is a work of fiction intended as entertainment. Everything contained within is a product of imagination. None of it is real.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters, and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fictional and intended for entertainment purposes only.

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY
This book is intended for mature readers. It contains dark and disturbing content and images. Reader discretion is advised.

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CthulhuTech is a storytelling game about what could be our world after almost a hundred years of advancement, enlightenment, and bloodshed. It is the story of humanity's evolution, place in the universe, and fight for survival.

It all begins when a talented doctoral student named Teresa Ashcroft stumbles across a long-lost tome that delves into the world of non-Euclidean principles – mathematics in more than three dimensions. By 2019, she has pioneered a new field that will become known as arcanotechnology, merging science with what could only be considered magic, though at the cost of her mind. Through perilous research, others take up her mantle and, by 2030, one of the greatest inventions of all time is revealed. The D-engine is a clean inexhaustible fuel source based on arcanotechnology. It revolutionizes the world.

This forces people to accept that magic is real. However, magic is not parlor tricks or the flashy magic of fantasy tales. It is intense, dark, and ritual-based, designed to focus a person's will to manipulate the power of the cosmos. Magic is immediately regulated by the government and a law enforcement agency called the Office of Internal Security is created to police its misuse and the growing black magic black market. All sorcerers, as users of magic are called, are required to register with the government, and the penalties for violating these laws are severe.

These factors are responsible for two things that change the course of humanity forever. First, they start humanity out on a new level of existence, the first steps of higher evolution – a path we aren't even consciously aware we are on, but some suspect. Second, they attract the attention of things we would rather have not noticed, things spoken of only in forbidden tomes and the murmuring of madmen.

Under the surface of Pluto lives a race of alien creatures known as the Migou, who have dwelled there for millennia. They are a race of part-crustacean, part-insect, part-fungus beings of ancient tradition and great intellect. The Migou have always regarded the Earth as theirs and humanity as barely evolved primates, to be used and abused at will. Suddenly, without warning, we have become a threat to their place in the universe – a threat that must be put down.

Because of the way they breed, the Migou had no warriors at first. It would take at least a decade to produce an army and the Migou did not believe they had the luxury of time. They had, however, mastered the DNA of less complicated lifeforms – like that of the dominant species of Earth. Cloning an army based of Human genetics seemed easy, but there was no way the Migou could brainwash such a force with any expediency. To put their creations on the path of subjugating the Earth, the Migou implanted their creations with lies – a false home, a false culture, false memories, and a false crusade. With small modifications to instill fear, including jet black skin and red eyes that see at night, the Nazzadi were unleashed upon the solar system and nearly ground humanity beneath their heels.

However, blood calls to blood. Years after the war had begun, the Firstborn Nazzadi, those who knew the truth and were entrusted to perpetuate the lies, finally began to feel that the people they were killing were themselves. No longer could they be the tools of alien insects, murdering their forebears. They revealed the truth to their kin and the Nazzadi rebelled, joining forces with the denizens of Earth to finally create an identity that was truly theirs. Though rough going at first, the Nazzadi began to integrate and become valuable citizens of the New Earth Government.

The Rebellion of the Nazzadi did little to slow the progress of the Migou. Given decades to let their soldiers mature, the Migou have come to Earth in their gigantic moon-sized Hive Ship and their forces spread out across the world to enslave or destroy humanity once and for all. They make the threat of the Nazzadi seem like child's play.

As if the threat of the Migou weren't enough, the end times are here, what is known in forbidden occult lore as the Strange Aeon. It is a time when the celestial mechanics of the universe have aligned to awaken ancient dark gods who have long slept the sleep of death. Their freakish cults have grown into armies, each dedicated to serving an inhuman creature of immense power. The Disciples of the Rapine Storm, a horde of monsters under the control of the Dead God Hastur, roll across Asia, genocidally exterminating anything in their path. They serve the Ruined King, an avatar of Hastur that rules from his monolithic castle on the Plateau of Leng. The Esoteric Order of Dagon, the sea-cult of the cephalapoid god Cthulhu, hunts to find a lost city which houses their god who promises to expunge the world of the vermin that currently infest it. Their years of breeding with Humans have given them what few expected – an army that rules the oceans and all that is beneath.

In the face of such horror, the world has united under the New Earth Government. Old enmities have gone away, as the citizens of Earth have banded together to survive what clearly looks like extinction. Even the lingering animosities between Human and Nazzadi are gone, and the jet black-skinned race is hardly a minority – they are four out of every ten people.

While the forces of the New Earth Government fight to save the world from these threats, secret societies wage a Shadow War in the streets and alleys. The Chrysalis Corporation, a major multi-national company providing everything from consumer goods to military hardware, has been consumed from within by the insidious cult known only as the Children of Chaos. They abuse their power in an effort to bring about the awakening of more ancient gods, and ultimately the end of the world as we know it. This secret agenda is unknown to even the highest ranks of the New Earth Government, but there are those who understand the cancer eating at the heart of society. The Eldritch Society, is a secret society of holy warriors. Once mortal, these warriors have joined in symbiosis with things from beyond space and time to become something unique and incredibly deadly. Fearing the corruption of the NEG, the Eldritch Society fights on its own terms to stop the Chrysalis Corporation's heinous plans.

The Aeon War is a war of three fronts. The New Earth Government fights against the armies of the Migou and the threat of the cults. Though the NEG and the Migou share an enemy, the alien insects fight a similar war, refusing to accept humanity as allies. Billions of people have died in the wars of the last thirty years and the face of society has changed forever.

Fortunately, humanity has several advantages it did not have a hundred years ago. We have arcanotechnology, which has led to the development of giant battle-suits that turn soldiers into tanks known as mecha. We have the ability to manipulate magic and the psychic powers that branch off it. We have secret societies who have delved into the unknown to find whatever advantage they can, no matter the cost to themselves. Most importantly, we have humanity's indomitable will to survive.

It is 2085, and all mortal life on Earth faces extinction. It is the time of the Aeon War.

PLAYING THE GAME

CthulhuTech is a robust setting, designed to be a fully fleshed-out intellectual property. As a result, there is no one way to play it. It has been created in such a way that you can play games in many different places in the setting, with many different styles of characters and play. Whatever way you're used to playing, you can find an analogous style in the universe of the dark future that is *CthulhuTech*.

The *Core Book* includes two ready-to-play stories, as well as a handful of story hooks, to get you started right away. Most books in the *CthulhuTech* line have ready-to-run stories and story hooks included in them, so that you have examples of different ways to play. Combined with templates that provide for quick Character design, one can be up and running with CthulhuTech within a few days.

There are two main levels on which you can play *CthulhuTech*. The first is completely on the surface, in the world everyone knows is there. You can join the ranks of the New Earth Government armed forces and fight on the front line, taking on terrifying monsters with an assault rifle and a suit of combat armor or inside a humanoid machine of war. You can go even further and have a chip implanted in your brain that allows you to pilot an Engel, a cybernetic monster. You can dance in the intelligence game or you can be part of a covert operations team.

The second level is in the shadows. Corruption lurks underneath the surface of the New Earth Government. Police crimes of a mystical nature as part of the draconian Office of Internal Security. Walk in the dark end of the street in the black magic black market as part of the arcane underground. Or dig even deeper and become part of the mysterious Eldritch Society as a Tager – a monster with the heart of a man.

In addition to the many options of ways to play, there are several other interesting parts of the setting that bear particular mention.

The first are mecha, humanoid machines that are the primary tools of war. There are, between the *Core Book* and *Vade Mecum*, more than 50 unique mecha, each with their own feel. There are the slow yet tough New Earth Government Sword-class, the fast and agile Nazzadi mecha, the semi-organic insect-like Migou mecha, and the amphibious mecha of the Esoteric Order. Most notable are the Engels. Take a gigantic genetically-engineered monster, graft a cybernetic shell onto it along with weapons, and add a semi-organic uterine control capsule in which a pilot "communes" and you've got an Engel – and they're the good guys. Those who pilot them often seem a little off.

The second is cosmic power. Magic is an accepted part of society in the Strange Aeon, though not one most people trust, and it is, for the most part, out in the open. The use of magic is heavily regulated by the New Earth Government and penalties for violating arcane law are severe. Magic in *CthulhuTech* is not flashy and fun – it is dark robes, a consecrated space, crystals and blood sacrifice ritual magic capable of bending the power of the cosmos to a user's will. The flip side of magic are those who wield para-psychic powers, an intuitive manipulation of cosmic power. Their power may be more limited in scope than magic, but it is at your fingertips at any time.

The third are Tagers. The Eldritch Society is a secret cult that fights against the corruption of the monstrous servants of the Chrysalis Corporation, a tool of Nyarlathotep. Their holy warriors are those who have dared to join in union with something from beyond space and time. This union creates a person who can instantly shift into a monstrous form, capable of amazing

feats, a creature of death. There are four different and distinct types in the *Core Book*, with another four in *Vade Mecum*. Again, they are the good guys.

The fourth are races. Good old humanity is still the dominant mortal life form on the planet, but coming up a close second at 40% of the population are the Nazzadi. Beings designed from our own DNA, the Nazzadi were an army sent to subjugate us by the Migou. They rebelled and are now our brothers in arms. With red eyes that see in the dark, jet-black skin, and white-work tattoos, the Nazzadi present an interesting roleplaying experience as they try to find their own identity now that the lies of the Migou have been lifted.

In these *Quick-Start Rules*, you'll get to experience several of these interest pieces. The story included here follows several days in the life of the Eldritch Society where the Characters are all symbiotic Tager warriors.

THE CTHULHUTECH STORYLINE

The overarcing storyline of *CthulhuTech* is referred to as the metaplot – in other words, the way the setting evolves in a large sense.

You will create and play many plots as part of your own personal stories, but the setting will grow and change independent of them to simulate how things happen in the real world. Those things are the metaplot.

There are some game enthusiasts who do not like metaplot as a part of their games. They do not like a setting that evolves outside of their control. If you are one of these people, that does not mean that the *CthulhuTech* story books cannot be of use to you. They each delve further into different aspects of the setting that may not be explored elsewhere and provide new technology, monsters, and character options. You can use these to enhance your own game and you may well be inspired to write stories of your own design based on some of the stories presented as part of the metaplot.

While we have no intention of telling you how to run your game, we will be taking a stand on how sections of the metaplot turn out and will be developing further story material based on that.

In the end, it's your game and your gaming experience. Use what you want, modify what you want, and throw away the rest.
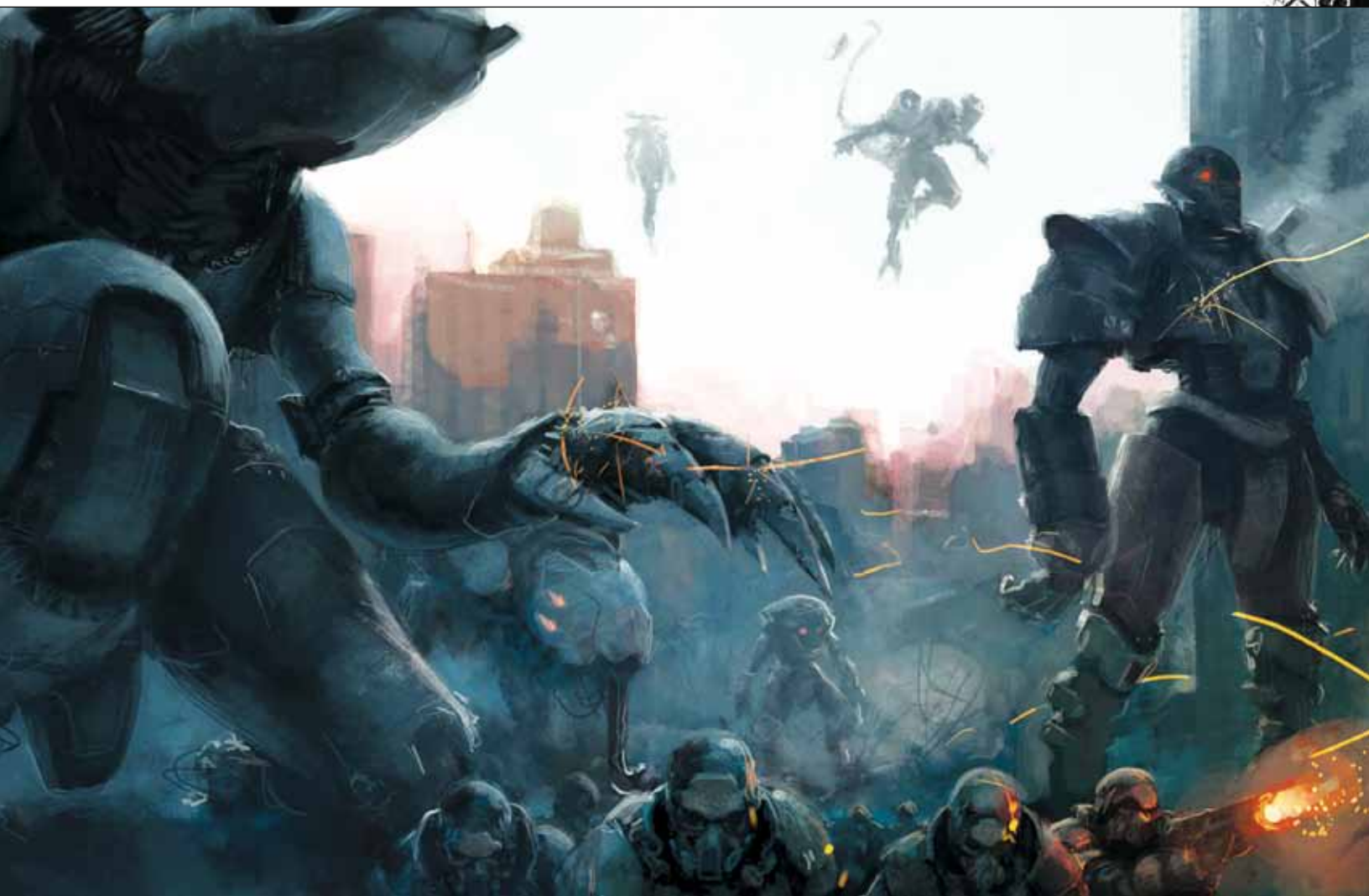
Simply put, *Framewerk* is the storytelling rules engine used by *CthulhuTech*. Every storytelling game has a rules engine, which is just a bunch of numerical measurements that have been created to balance things against each other and to simulate dramatic chance in your story – it's an abstraction of reality. *Framewerk* is an additive rules engine, which means that higher numbers are almost always better. To simulate chance, it utilizes ten-sided polyhedral dice, simply referred to as Dice. Most importantly, *Framewerk* tries to keep things simple yet interesting. You may run into other storytelling games that simulate reality more accurately but our focus is on the story and the dramatic flow of events. *Framewerk* is cinematic in its philosophy.

One more thing before we begin. The rules of *Framewerk* are meant to be guidelines. If you find something you don't like, go ahead and change it. It's all about what works for you.

Now, let's teach you how this thing works.

TESTS

There are many everyday things that anyone can do without thinking – walking, making coffee, surfing the internet, or having a conversation. However, *CthulhuTech* is a setting filled with adventure and intrigue so you are going push your Character's abilities to the limit. Whenever it suits drama that there's a chance a Character could fail at what he's attempting to do, a Test is required. Making a Test means that you take the Character's innate abilities and put them to the test, adding the element of chance against the difficulty of the task. Sometimes you'll fail, but sometimes you'll succeed spectacularly. Let's find out how.

DEGREES & DIFFICULTIES

The first thing you'll need to understand is the Degree & Difficulty Scale. This scale simulates how complex or challenging a particular task might be. That's all. Whenever you try to do something, your Storyguide will tell you how hard it is by telling you the Degree and giving you a Difficulty. To succeed at your Test you must beat that Difficulty, but we're getting ahead of ourselves.

You'll notice that each Degree has a range of Difficulties associated with it. That's because the Degree is the ballpark and the

Difficulty narrows the Test down more accurately. Two Tests might be Easy but one may be easier than the other, for example. Most of the time, however, your Storyguide will use the Standard Difficulties. They create an easy default for Tests to avoid slowing down the drama of the game and create a level of consistency that lets you assess your Character's odds of success or failure.

	DEGREES & DIFFICULTIES	
DEGREE	**DIFFICULTIES**	**STANDARD**
Easy	7-9	8
Average	10-14	12
Challenging	15-19	16
Hard	0-25	22
Incredibly Hard	26-31	28
Legendary	32+	34

MAKING TESTS

As we've already established, a Test is required whenever there's a dramatic chance that a Character could fail at what he's attempting to do. Now that you understand what Degrees and Difficulties are, let's learn how to make Tests. There are four steps:

1. Determine your Base and Dice.
2. Determine Degree and Difficulty.
3. Roll and read your Dice.
4. Determine your Success or Failure.

Let's go through each of these step by step.

1. Determine your Base and Dice.

Every Character has skills, which represent things in which he has either trained or which he has studied. As the first part of any Test, your Storyguide will tell you which one of your Character's skills best applies. If your Character were trying to look for information you'd use his Research skill. If he were trying to remember chemical reactions you'd use his Physical Science skill. Most everything you want to try should have an obvious skill that covers it. In these *Quick Start Rules*, each Character's skills are explained with his Character description.

		SAMPLE DEGREES & DIFFICULTIES	
TEST	**SKILL**	**DEGREE**	**DIFFICULTY**
Fixing a cracked D-Engine	Arcanotechnician	Incr. Hard	28
Hacking a home computer	Computer	Average	12
Remembering battle movements	History	Challenging	16
Translating a very dead language	Languages	Legendary	34
Stitching a minor cut	Medicine	Easy	8
Lying to your superior	Misdirect	Average	12
Noticing a tiny blood spot	Observation	Hard	22
Recalling Yog-Sothoth's sigil	Occult	Average	12
Searching for cult historical practice	Research	Challenging	16
Behaving properly at a board meeting	Savoir-Faire	Challenging	16
Sneaking through a dark room	Stealth	Easy	8
Facing a Spawn without fear	Tenacity Feat	Hard	22

Now you need to determine your Base, which is the raw potential and ability that your Character throws at the Test – it's automatically applied towards his success. Every Character has six different Attributes that measure things like his strength, intelligence, or agility. Your Base is equal to the score of the Attribute associated with the skill. For example, if you were using you Character's Research skill you'd have a Base that equaled his Perception Attribute. If you were using his Physical Science skill you'd have a Base equal to his Intellect Attribute.

Then you need to determine your Dice, which simulate the random element of chance in the Test. The number of Dice you'll be rolling is equal to your Character's level of Expertise in the skill. For example, if he were an Expert researcher, the fourth level of expertise, then you'd roll 4 dice. If he were only a Novice scientist, the second level of expertise, you'd roll 2 dice. Levels of expertise are better explained in the Character section.

> TEST STEP ONE SUMMARY:
> · Determine which skill applies to the Test.
> · Determine your Base, which equals the skill's associated Attribute.
> · Determine your Dice, which equal the skill's level of Expertise, in addition to any bonus dice from Specializations.

2. Determine Degree and Difficulty.

So you already understand what Degrees and Difficulties are, but here's where we learn how to use them. Your Storyguide will tell you what he's determined as the Degree and Difficulty for the Test. The Difficulty – most often the Standard Difficulty – is the number that you have to beat on your Test to succeed by adding together your Base and the result of your dice roll.

> TEST STEP TWO SUMMARY:
> · Your Storyguide will determine what the Degree and Difficulty is for the Test.
> · The Difficulty is the number that you have to beat on your Test to succeed.

3. Roll and read your Dice.

Here's where the rubber meets the road. Take the number of dice that you figured out in Step One of this process. Roll them all. You want to get high results since you are trying to beat the Difficulty.

Here's where things get interesting. There are three ways that you can get a high result:
· You can take the *highest single roll*. For example, if you roll a 7, a 4, and a 3, you'd take the 7.
· You can take the *highest set of multiples and add them all together*. For example, if you'd rolled a 6 and two 4's, you could take and add the two 4's together for a result of 8, instead of just the 6.
· If you get to roll three or more dice, *you can take the largest straight and add those dice together*. A straight is three or more numbers in consecutive order. For example, if you rolled a 9, 4, 5, 6, you could add the last three together for a result of 15.

So, as you can see, there's a little poker built into it too. There's only one other thing you need to know: watch out for ones! They can make bad things happen, but we'll explain that in a bit.

> TEST STEP THREE SUMMARY:
> · Roll the dice you'd determined in Step One, trying to get a high roll.
> · You can take the highest single roll.
> · You can take the highest set of multiples and add them all together.
> · If you get to roll three or more dice, you can take the largest straight and add those dice together.
> · Watch out for ones, because they can make bad things happen.

4. Determine your Success or Failure.

Now's the moment of truth. First, add the result of your die roll to your Base. That's your Test Result. Now compare your Test Result to the Difficulty. Did you tie or beat it? If you did, you've succeeded! Whatever your Character was trying to do worked.

On the other hand, if your Test Result was lower than the Difficulty, your Character has failed. Nothing particularly bad happens – he just doesn't get to do what he was trying to do.

And that's how the game is played in a nutshell. Of course, there are ways in which this can get more complicated, which we'll discuss next. What we've just gone through here is all you need to remember to play the game – everything else is just here for reference when the time comes.

> TEST STEP FOUR SUMMARY:
> · Add the result of your die roll to your Base. This is your Test Result.
> · Compare your Test Result to the Difficulty.
> · If your result ties or beats the Difficulty your Character succeeds.
> · If your result is lower than the Difficulty your Character fails.

TEST MODIFIERS

There are a number of ways in which Tests can be modified – here's a list explaining a few of them. Remember that most of these modifiers won't come into play very often so it's not crucial to remember how they work. Go ahead and breeze through them now, paying special attention to Critical Success and Failure. Just remember to check here when you need to look something up. There is a more comprehensive list of ways Tests can be modified in the *CthulhuTech Core Book*.

Critical Success

After learning how to roll dice for Tests you may have discovered that it is possible to get a very high result, especially if you roll a straight. The good news is that all those extra points on those spectacular rolls don't need to go to waste. If you ever beat the Difficulty by 10 or more you've succeeded in a big way. This is

called a Critical Success and your success will be much better than you'd expected.

For example, if you got a Critical Success while trying to research a cult's history, maybe your Character stumbles across a lost text in the library that has coveted and secret information. Or if you got a Critical Success while trying to fix your Character's Broadsword mech it's finished in half the time. The results are always at least twice as good as you anticipated.

Critical Failure

On the other hand, just like unexpectedly good things can happen, sometimes very bad things also happen. Remember when we said to keep an eye out for ones on your die roll? That's because ones determine if your roll is truly cursed or what we call a Critical Failure. Critical Failures occur when half of your dice come up ones – round up to figure this out. For example, if you rolled five dice and three of them come up ones your Character has Critically Failed. If you roll a one when rolling only one die that's also a Critical Failure. When this happens something really bad goes down.

For example, if you got a Critical Failure while trying to research a cult's history, your Character might mistake incorrect information for the genuine article and waste time researching the wrong thing. Or if you got a Critical Failure while trying to fix a mech your Character not only didn't make the repairs, he damages something else in the process – it'll now take twice as long to fix. The results are at least twice as bad as you might have expected.

Unskilled Tests

Sometimes you'll come across a situation in which your Character will have to make a Test and try to do something for which he doesn't have the right skill. If your Storyguide determines that your Character doesn't have a complementary skill then you'll have to trust his intuition and a whole lot of blind luck. Make the Test, but you only get to roll one die and take half the result – round up for this. Your Character is not going to be making many amazing feats here and is going to be lucky to succeed at the most basic of tasks.

There are certain skills that are considered Professional and they are noted in the complete skill list in the *CthulhuTech Core Book*.

Professional skills are those that require a lot of special knowledge and training to learn. Unfortunately, you can't attempt to use Professional skills if your Character doesn't have them.

Attribute Feats

Occasionally your Character will need to make a Test for something to which no normal skill can be applied. What skill would you use to break down a locked door? That's something that your raw strength should handle. Or how about whether or not you fall when tripped? That's something your natural agility should cover.

Whenever you need to Test for something that's covered by an Attribute instead of a skill, your Character will use what is called his Feat skills. Feats are what the game rules use to determine your Character's natural ability. Every Character has a Feat skill for each of their Attributes. Otherwise, make the Test as usual.

So what about where Feats might cross over against Skills? Feats are last resorts and are used only when no skill would cover a Test. In all cases where a Test would require the use of a skill, the normal rules for use – skilled or unskilled – are used. The potential measured by Feats is no substitute for the special knowledge and training required by skills.

Contests

Contests occur when your Character competes against another person instead of just the normal difficulty of a Test. For example, a guard is watching to make sure that no one enters a building into which your Character is trying to sneak. In this case, your Character isn't just trying to sneak, he's trying not be seen by someone who's paying attention to these sorts of things.

To engage in a Contest each Character makes the appropriate Test. The one with the higher result wins. From the above example, you'd make your Character's Stealth Test and the guard would make his Observation Test. If your roll was higher your Character would win the Contest and sneak past. If you only tied or rolled lower than the guard, he'd see your Character trying to be stealthy.

Contest Modifiers

Sometimes conditions will make a Contest easier or more difficult for one side or the other. From the previous example, it might be raining heavily as your Character tries to sneak into the building giving him an advantage to staying hidden and quiet. Or the guard may be wearing night-vision goggles making it way more difficult for your Character to sneak by.

Contest Modifiers only give bonuses to the Character with the advantage – there are no penalties. Your Storyguide will let you know if any modifiers apply to your Contest. Use these guidelines to determine any Contest Modifiers:

CONTEST MODIFIERS	
ADVANTAGE	**CONTEST MODIFIER**
Slight	+1
Reasonable	+2
Considerable	+4
Outrageous	+8

DRAMA POINTS

Dramatic Characters, those Characters portrayed by the people playing the game, are the heroes of the story. They are simply a breed above the norm and are supposed to pull off amazing feats or survive the most dangerous situations. To help simulate this, Dramatic Characters get Drama Points.

Drama Points are used to manipulate a Character's dice – any Character's dice. For each Drama Point spent you can increase your Character's number of dice for a Test by one, increase an ally's dice by one, or rob an enemy of one of his Test dice. You can increase the total number of dice a Character gets to roll for a Test up to a maximum of 10 dice or you can reduce an antagonist's overall dice to zero so that he only gets to use his Base!

If you are using Drama Points to increase your Character's dice you can choose to spend the points before or after the roll – it doesn't matter. Even after you figure out your Test Result you can keep spending Drama Points until you are either satisfied or out of points. On the other hand, if you're using Drama Points to decrease your opponent's dice you will need to inform your Storyguide of this before he rolls.

You can even use Drama Points when you have to make Tests for skills your Characters don't have. The first Drama Point you spend converts the half die you normally get for Unskilled Tests into one full die and each point thereafter gives you more full dice for the Test. You can even attempt to use Professional skills this way – something you normally can't do!

THINGS DRAMA POINTS CAN'T AFFECT

Drama Points can only be used to affect the number of dice rolled for Tests. They cannot be used to affect any other type of die roll including Initiative, Armor Rolls, or Damage.

If you've decided that you don't want to be a Storyguide, you'll be taking on the role of a Dramatic Character. Dramatic Characters are the big time – they are the pivotal Characters of your story. If your story were a movie or television series, your Dramatic Character would be one of the heroes. They aren't the average citizen suffering through a day job only to be glued to the news at night – they are the ones making the news. Although they may come from humble beginnings, they have the potential to grow into something amazing. They are stars.

If you choose to purchase the *CthulhuTech Core Book*, you'll be designing your Dramatic Character from scratch. These Quick Start Rules include four pre-generated Characters and everything you'll need to know about them. This section will show you the different pieces that go into Characters, as well as some of the options that exist when you get to designing them on your own.

Characters are basically the different aspects of a person distilled into a couple quantitatively measurable areas. In short, we break a person into pieces and assign numbers to measure them. The two main areas that compose a *CthulhuTech* Character are Attributes, which measure a person's innate abilities, and Skills, which represent formal education, training, and other things a person learns to do in his life.

Characters in *CthulhuTech* are typically part of the New Earth Government, fighting to save the world from the horrors that face them. They can be from one of two races and one of many professions.

RACE

Humans are no longer the only sentient species on Earth. After the First Arcanotech War, the New Earth Government welcomed the Nazzadi into the fold. In *CthulhuTech*, you can choose to play either a Human or a Nazzadi (the race of the pre-generated Characters in this *Quick Start Guide* are already determined).

The former dominant species of Earth, *Humans* are much as they are in our modern world. Their world has gotten a lot bigger since the advent of

the Aeon War however and people don't live with the same prejudices and petty issues that they once did.

The *Nazzadi* are biogenetic creations of the Migou originally sent to destroy Humanity in the First Arcanotech War. Discovering that they were manufactured, they rebelled against their secret masters. They are creatures of darkest night but are similar to Humans in most respects. Their culture is in most ways ours, but they struggle to create their own racial identity.

PROFESSION

While the rules of *CthulhuTech* are flexible so that you can create almost any kind of Character you want. Starting Characters may fall into one of these professions.

There are those who make their living walking in the shadows others don't want to explore. *Arcane Investigators* are the brave souls who live in the world of the occult, searching after whatever it is that someone would pay them to find – especially those things that have been lost in the darkness.

Part-scientist and part-sorcerer, *Arcanotechnicians* understand the fundamental principles underlying D-Engines and mecha technology. Being an arcanotechnician is a dangerous job – with commensurately high pay – as arcanotechnology fits at least partially in the "things man was not meant to know" category.

Regarded as the New Earth Government's elite pilots, *Engel Pilots* "commune" with the strange and mysterious Engels. Their lives are stressful and maddening, and they see more regular combat than any other NEG force.

Whether it be against those who would explore the darkest magics and unleash horrors upon the world, or against those who would bring innocents together in the worship of ancient and terrible beings, *Federal Agents* are those that seek to keep the citizens of the New Earth Government safe from the things that threaten them in their own neighborhoods.

Mecha Pilots are the mainstay of the New Earth Government's army – soldiers in mechanized war machines as tall as buildings. They are anywhere and everywhere the NEG needs them, pulling guard duty at

bases and installations, performing special forces raids deep inside enemy territory, or fighting on the front lines.

With the advent of arcanotechnology and the Arcanotech Wars, a new class of scholar emerged – the *Occult Scholar*. Occult is the term broadly used to describe the otherworldly forces now ravaging the Earth and Occult Scholars are those who risk their soundness of mind to delve into the lost secrets surrounding them. Many times, their occult pursuits bring them to the practice of sorcery.

Those who have been born with the intuitive ability to manipulate cosmic powers are known as *Para-Psychics*. While capable of amazing feats, para-psychics, depending on ability, are often distrusted in society. They are also required to register their abilities with the government and are carefully watched. On the other hand, they often find their abilities in demand and find useful and well-paid positions in the military, law enforcement, or the corporate sector.

Soldiers are those warriors who fight outside of mecha. They are the brave infantry charging across the field of battle, the police keeping order in New Earth Government cities, and the special forces troops sneaking in behind enemy lines.

The Freak Show – that's what agents on the inside call it. *Special Services* is what the New Earth Government calls it. One of the most secret government agencies, Special Services deals with all the weirdest, most dangerous, and most mind-bending threats to society – and then quietly covers them up so that people can sleep soundly at night.

The holy warriors of the Eldritch Society, *Tagers* are those who have undergone the Rite of Sacred Union. They have become one with a Ta'ge symbiont, a thing from beyond space and time, which turns them into a powerful supernatural warrior.

These are just a few of the kinds of possible Characters found in the *CthulhuTech* line.

The Characters included in this *Quick Start Guide* are all Tagers.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Qualifying an individual's personality is difficult since people are inherently complex. To at least give a snapshot of every Character's behavior we use Defining Characteristics – two traits that help define the core of your Character's personality.

The first Defining Characteristic is the Virtue – the primary quality in your Character that is good. The other is the Flaw – the primary quality in your Character that is imperfect and seen as a shortcoming. These two Characteristics don't fully define your Character's personality, but they provide a view of what he's like by defining the polarities.

ATTRIBUTES

When you describe a person to someone else, what sort of things commonly come up? He's smart? She's pretty? He's strong? That's what Attributes are – the innate abilities and capabilities of a person. We use six Attributes to measure a Character in *CthulhuTech*.

Each of these Attributes is rated on a scale from one to ten. Think of this scale like you might in real life – we are often asked to rate people or things on just such a scale. A rating of one is considered severely challenged while a five is Human average and a ten is downright amazing. There is potential in *CthulhuTech* to reach an eleven or more on the scale – these people are paragons and off the normal charts, or possessed of supernatural faculties.

The six Attributes are Agility, Intellect, Perception, Presence, Strength, and Tenacity.

Agility is a measure of physical dexterity, grace, and finesse – the ability to make your Character's body move like he wants it to. Agility is used for any skill that requires bodily control and is used by your Character both to fight in close quarters and dodge in combat.

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Intellect is a measure of intelligence, education, the ability to learn, and memory – the way your Character's brain processes and recalls information. Intellect is used for any learned skill including many technical and scientific areas.

Perception is a measure of awareness and sense acuity – the way your Character's brain receives information. Perception is used for any skill requiring attentiveness and is also used for marksmanship.

Presence is a measure of charm, beauty, force of personality, and social ability – the way others react to your Character. A higher rating in Presence doesn't necessarily mean that he has to be beautiful. Instead he may be exotic, striking, have a magnetic personality, or have an inspiring bearing. Presence is used for any skill that involves influencing another person.

Strength is a measure of physical might – how heavily your Character's body can influence the world around it. Strength is used for lifting heavy things, restraining people, and anything else that requires raw power. It also affects how much damage your Character does in close quarters combat.

Tenacity is a measure of endurance, stamina, and willpower – how well your Character can make his body and mind function under adverse circumstances. Tenacity is used for taxing physical skills and to perform magic.

SKILLS & QUALITIES

While Attributes measure raw gifts and potential, Skills represent a Character's training and education. Each skill is body of knowledge or a type of physical training in which the Character has ability. Every Character starts with a certain number of different skills rated at different levels of expertise.

As you can see in the breakout, the different levels of expertise equate to a certain number of dice. This is the number of dice a Character with a skill at the level of expertise gets to roll for Tests.
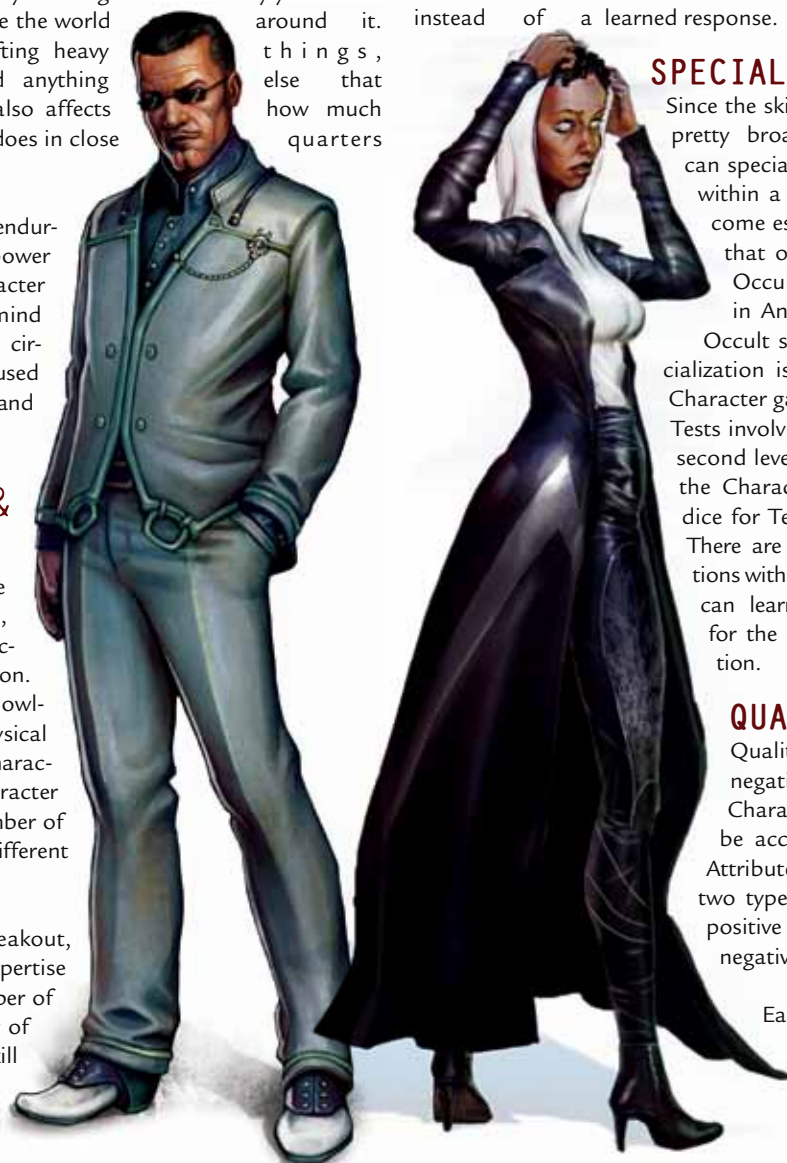
FEATS

To simulate a Character's proficiency with his natural abilities each Attribute has a paired Feat skill. These Feat skills are used for Tests when a natural ability is called into question instead of a learned response.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Since the skills used in *CthulhuTech* are pretty broadly defined, Characters can specialize in more specific areas within a given skill. They then become especially knowledgeable in that one area. For example, an Occult Scholar might specialize in Ancient Texts as part of his Occult skill. The first level of specialization is called Focused and the Character gains one additional die for Tests involving that specific area. The second level is called Specialized and the Character gains two additional dice for Tests for that specific area. There are many different specializations within each skill and Characters can learn different specializations for the same skill without restriction.

QUALITIES

Qualities are both positive and negative things that affect a Character's life but which can't be accounted for using normal Attributes and skills. There are two types of Qualities. Assets are positive traits while Drawbacks are negative traits.

Each Character's Qualities in this *Quick Start Guide* are explained with their Character descriptions.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Secondary Attributes are, for the most part, derivative of your normal Attributes. There are six of them and they help define a few more useful areas of your Character – things like reaction speed, magical capacity, and the like.

ACTIONS

Actions represent a combination of reaction, speed, and multitasking abilities. Normally a Character can perform one free action and one normal action every turn. Free actions are those that take little effort, such as speaking or walking a few steps, while normal actions are those that require real effort.

However, individuals who are more gifted may be able to perform additional normal actions in the same amount of time. Three Actions is the maximum number of actions a Character with only two natural limbs can take in one turn.

MOVEMENT

It can be important to know how fast your Character can move. Your Character's movement is listed at a couple of different rates. The first is your Character's running speed in miles per hour (mph). The second shows his running speed/cautious speed in yards per five-second combat turn (ypt). His running speed is his full bore maximum speed – a Character can do nothing else but run at this rate. His cautious speed is the speed most often using in intense conflict situations.

ORGONE

Every person has the capacity to use magic whether or not they actually understand how. Magic is powered not only by spell and ritual, but also by the magician's will and understanding. Dr. Wilhelm Reich, who discovered orgone long before the acceptance of sorcery, believed that this new energy was the cause of a number of phenomena that are "completely at variance with the theory of electromagnetic energies." Orgone represents that reservoir of cosmic power in your Character.

REFLEX

Reflex is a measure of your Character's reaction time – how quickly he can respond during intense situations. Most importantly, Reflex is used to determine when your Character gets to act in combat.

VITALITY

Characters in *CthulhuTech* live in a dangerous world. It's very likely they're going to get hurt. Vitality is what measures a Character's overall level of health and wellness. Every Character has six Wound Levels, from Unhurt to Death's Door, which are explained on p. 20. Each Wound Level is equal to your Character's Vitality, so his Vitality times five is how many points of damage he can take in total before dying.

As Characters take more damage, they are affected by their wounds. Those suffering from only Flesh Wounds are going to function without impairment, but those suffering from Serious Wounds are going to have difficulty doing much besides crawling and moaning in pain. Thus, Characters are often taken out of the action before they are pushed to Death's Door and beyond.

DRAMA POINTS

Drama Points are one of the things that define Dramatic Characters as heroes. They represent the fortunate things and circumstances that surround key characters, as well as fate just plain looking out for them. Lucky breaks, cheating death, daring-do – these are all Drama Points in action. Functionally, each point represents one die. Depending upon the situation, you can either use Drama points to add dice to a single Action (yours or an ally's) or you can rob an enemy of one of his dice for a single Action.

Drama Points are expended when they are used. Once you've used one, it's gone for now – you get a full pool to use each time you play. There is no need to keep track of when they regenerate. You simply have them all each session.

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Conflict is an important part of drama – without it, your story's about as interesting as watching the grass grow. Conflict comes in several varieties. Sometimes your Character is opposed by another living thing and sometimes by a hostile environment. You've already learned how Contests work, which are fine for normal circumstances. However, sometimes that thing your Character is trying to oppose is intent on causing him harm or ending his life. That's what this section is about – ways to deal with threats to body and mind.

BASIC COMBAT

Basic combat is broken up into a series of six steps, which are the same whether your Character is trying to shoot a target from a distance or if he's trying to lay the smack down up close and personal. It's all wrapped up in the combat turn. Of course, there are things that can modify some of the steps in the turn but we'll get into a few of those later. Let's first take a look at how it all works.

THE COMBAT TURN

A turn represents five seconds of high intensity dramatic action. During this turn, all sides are allowed to act in some way in some sort of sequential order. Each of the six steps are repeated separately for each person or thing involved.

1. Determine Initiative

Everything has a Reflex score, which represents how quick your Character reacts and is used to determine the order in which actions will occur in any given combat turn. This order is called Initiative. Initiative is determined at the beginning of each and every turn. To determine your Character's Initiative for the turn roll one die and add the result to his Reflex score. The combatant with the highest Initiative result goes first during the turn and then every other participant acts in descending order of Initiative results. Combatants with tied Initiatives act simultaneously.

2. Declare Number of Actions

Many Characters can take more than one Action in a turn if they so choose. While no one has to specifically declare what they intend to do yet, each Character who is able and who wishes to take two or three Actions must declare how many actions they want to take this turn. Any Character wishing to take two Actions suffers a Test Penalty of –2 to each one of his Actions during that turn; any Character taking three Actions suffers a Test Penalty of –4 to each one of his Actions during that turn. Characters choosing to take only one Action in a turn act without penalty.

3. Make Combat Contests

If you choose for your Character to attack an opponent, you'll resolve it through a Combat Contest with your target. The skill your Character uses for his attack dictates the type of defense skill your opponent can use. If more than one defense skill is listed for the type of attack, the defender can choose to use whichever one has the highest level of expertise – of those he knows, of course.

		DEFENSE SKILLS
ATTACK	**DEFENSE**	
Fighting	Armed Fighting, Dodge, or Fighting	
Armed Fighting	Armed Fighting or Dodge*	
All Others	Dodge	

*Fighting may be used as a defense against Armed Fighting if the defender has natural weapons.

Once you've determined which skills apply, both you and your target make the relevant Tests for the Contest. If your Test Result is higher than your opponent's, you have successfully attacked him and can go on to find out how badly he's hurt. If your result is equal to or lower than your opponent's, your attack has failed. All Characters can defend against any number of attacks in a given turn without penalty as many times as they need to. That is as long as they are not surprise attacks, but we'll get to that later.

Range plays a factor for projectile weapons and thrown weapons during combat. Every projectile and thrown weapon lists three range categories: short, mid, and long. Unlisted is extreme range which is double the long-range category and generally a lot farther than the weapon was designed to be effective. When firing at a target your range modifies your attacking skill Test – the closer your target is the easier it is to hit. The following table shows you the modifiers for range, which are added or subtracted from your attack Test.

	RANGE MODIFIERS
RANGE	**DIFFICULTY MODIFIER**
Short Range	+2
Mid Range	0
Long Range	-2
Extreme Range	-6

4. Roll Damage

If you won your Combat Contest, then you have hit your target and your attack will cause him harm. We refer to that harm as damage, which is represented by reducing your target's total Vitality – a thing's life force, health, and will to live. The amount of damage that you do with a single attack depends upon three factors: how successful your Combat Contest was, the type of weapon you are using, and your Strength if you attacked with a hand weapon, bare hands, or natural weapons. It breaks down like this:

Success

Compare your Combat Contest result to your opponent's defense result. For every five points that your result is higher you get to roll 1 die for damage – the minimum number of dice you can roll is one. You can also use the chart on the next page.

Weapons

Weapons do an additional fixed amount of damage. For example, a CS-40 Defender (a medium pistol) adds 1 die of damage, while a steel katana adds 2 dice.

	SUCCESS DAMAGE
RESULT GREATER BY	**DAMAGE**
1-5	1 die
6-10	2 dice
11-15	3 dice
16-20	4 dice

Strength

If you attacked using either the Armed Fighting or Fighting skills, meaning that you were using a close quarters weapon or your bare hands, your Strength may or may not affect your overall damage. This table shows you the damage modifications for high and low Strength ratings. Remember you always get to roll at least one die for damage.

	STRENGTH MODIFIERS
STRENGTH	**MODIFICATION**
1-3	-1 die
4-7	None
8-9	+1 die
10-11	+2 dice
12-13	+3 dice
14-15	+4 dice

Overall Damage

To determine your overall damage add up any of these three factors that apply – this the total number of dice of damage for your attack. Roll all these dice and add up all the results.

For example, a Character attacks an opponent with his steel combat knife. He succeeds at his Combat Contest and beats the guy's defense roll by six. Based on success he starts with two dice. The combat knife has a damage rating of +0 so it doesn't add any. He has a Strength of eight so he gets to add one more die from that. He rolls three dice total for the damage from this attack – rolling them all he gets 8, 7, 6. His total damage is 21.

5. Check Wounds

Now that you know how much damage your attack does, it needs to be applied to your opponent's Vitality and Wound Scheme. Every Character has six Wound Levels, from Unhurt to Death's Door. Five of the six levels are equal in points to your Character's Vitality – Unhurt only applies when your Character is completely unharmed. For example, if your Character has a Vitality of ten it would take 50 points of damage to kill him, but there are several levels of suffering in between. You begin by applying the damage at Unhurt promptly moving into Flesh Wounds. Once you've exhausted the Vitality in one Wound Level, continue applying points to the next more severe Wound Level and so on. For more information see Wound Levels later in this section.

Continuing with our example, our Character rolled 21 points for his total damage. His opponent has an average Vitality of ten so he has ten points of damage per Wound Level. He's currently Unhurt so that 21 points is first applied to the ten points of Flesh Wounds, then to the ten points of Light Wounds, and one point into Moderate Wounds. Our Character's opponent now suffers a –3 Test Penalty to his actions and is reduced to half his movement. That's a pretty solid hit.

Armor

Most Characters aren't going to intentionally engage in combat without some sort of protection. Armor reduces the amount of damage a Character suffers from an attack, depending upon the type of armor and the type of attack. Armor has two ratings – Trauma, which is used against physical attacks, and Projectile, which is used against any kind of projectile weapon. These ratings represent the number of dice that can be rolled to reduce damage of that type. Once you have determined how much damage you're going to take, roll all your armor dice, add them together, and reduce the amount of damage you suffer by that amount. Apply the remainder to your Wound Scheme.

Continuing with our example, let's say that our opponent was wearing Sentrytech Mk-V heavy concealed armor, which has a rating of one against both trauma and projectile attacks. So our target gets to roll one die to reduce the damage done to him – he gets a result of eight. He subtracts eight points from the total damage of 21 for a new total of thirteen. Instead of being reduced to Moderate Wounds he's now only three points into Light Wounds. Instead of suffering the effects of Moderate Wounds he now only suffers a –1 Test Penalty to his actions and no penalty to his movement.

6. Additional Actions

Now that you've completed this process for every Character's first action, go ahead and repeat it for any Characters that are taking second Actions, if any. Start back at the Character with the highest Initiative and go through each step again – do not recalculate Initiative. When those Actions are complete, repeat the process for any Characters taking third Actions. Remember to apply the appropriate penalties for taking multiple actions in one turn to all Tests.

When all Actions are complete start back over with Step One and determine the new Initiatives for the new turn. Continue with this overall process until combat ends – whether voluntarily or involuntarily.

DEFENSE SKILLS

The defense skills in *CthulhuTech* mean a whole lot of things – they're combat modifiers, skill, and dumb luck all rolled up into one. The ability of every Character in the game to have an unlimited opportunity to defend against most attacks is a simulation of all of these factors. The skills represent environment as much as everything else. Instead of giving you lists of modifiers for combat situations you just get to keep on making defense rolls. So remember, as cool as it might look your Character isn't actually dodging bullets when he uses his Dodge skill – he's minimizing the chance that he'll be shot by capitalizing on the environment and whatever luck the gods have given him today.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

There are certain situations that arise during combat which deserve special attention. Here are a few of them in alphabetical order (there is a more complete list in the *CthulhuTech Core Book*).

ACTIONS

During a given turn, each Character can perform a certain number of actions – most likely one but up to three. Normally during a turn each Character can perform one free Action and one normal Action without penalty, in addition to defending against any number of attacks.

Free Actions are simple and don't require much concerted effort on the part of the Character. Some examples of free Actions include:

· Ducking.
· Shouting at someone or speaking a short sentence.
· Taking a couple of steps.

Normal Actions are those that require concentration and sometimes a degree of skill. Some examples of normal Actions include:

· Attacking a foe.
· Diving prone.
· Drawing a gun.
· Moving in any variety of ways.
· Reloading a weapon.

Multiple Actions

Some Characters are able to take more normal Actions in a turn. When you choose to take additional normal Actions during one turn you are rushing things. You sacrifice care and diligence for speed; in short, you take penalties to your actions. If you choose to take two normal Actions in a turn both those actions suffer a –2 Test Penalty. If you choose to take three normal Actions in a turn all three suffer a –4 Test Penalty.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE

Some military weapons are designed to shoot at an incredible rate of fire, literally filling an area with projectiles. Weapons such as submachineguns and assault rifles fall into this category. If a weapon is capable of automatic fire you'll see two categories listed in the Shots (rate of fire) listing. The first is the normal number of single aimed shots of which the weapon is capable per turn. The second is the automatic fire profile.

The automatic fire profile is made up of three characteristics: targets, rate, and expenditure. The first number represents the targets – the number of individual targets at which a burst of automatic weapons fire can be aimed within a 180° arc in front of the user. Each target may only be targeted once per burst. The second number represents rate or the number of bullets that will strike a target that's been hit by automatic weapons fire. The third number represents the expenditure or the amount of ammunition the weapon uses while firing at this rate. If your Character doesn't have enough rounds left in his clip to match this number he can't fire on automatic until he reloads.

For example, an AR-25 light assault rifle has an automatic fire profile of 4/1-5/30. Firing on automatic the user can shoot at up to four separate targets, hitting each one of them with one to five rounds (half a die), and expending 30 of the rifle's 60 rounds or half of a full clip.

To fire on automatic, first make one attack Contest against which all targets will defend – with a –2 Test Penalty for the high rate of fire. An automatic fire attack uses all a Character's Actions for the turn – he may only perform one free Action besides. Each target then makes their defense rolls against the single attack roll. Damage is determined specially. First roll the amount listed by the weapon's rate, which is usually half a die. That indicates the number of projectiles he's been hit by. Take the normal damage from one round (success + weapon damage) and add the weapon's damage base for each round after the first. The target is only allowed one armor roll to defend against this even though he's hit by multiple rounds. Determine damage separately for each target that is hit.

For example, you hit a target with AR-25 automatic fire beating his defense roll by three. You roll half a die and find that he's been hit by four bullets. Calculating damage, you get one die for success, one die for the weapon's damage, and another three for the extra three rounds. You'll be rolling five dice of damage against which he'll only get one armor roll to reduce.

Three-Round Burst
Any weapon capable of automatic fire is also capable of three-round bursts – it's a free action to switch between fire modes. There is no Test Penalty for firing on three-round burst. If a burst is successful, use success plus one round from the weapon to determine damage against which a target is allowed only one armor roll.

Suppressive Fire
Autofire weapons can also be used to lay down suppressive fire. The goal of suppressive fire is not necessarily meant to hit opponents – instead it is used to keep enemies back or down. To do so make a normal attack roll for automatic fire, though you aren't targeting anyone with it. The first ten targets that want to move into the 180° arc in front of the firer within short range must defend against that total or be hit by a couple bullets. Treat any successful attack as if hit by a three-round burst.

BREAKING AWAY
Once you're engaged in close quarters combat, you can't just run away from it. You're embroiled in a mess with someone or something that doesn't want to let you get away. You have a 50/50 chance of breaking away from close quarters combat if you wish. Roll one die and a roll of six through ten means you can break free this turn. These chances decrease by one for each opponent beyond the first, so if you're fighting three guys at once you'll only break away on an eight through ten (3 out of 10 instead of 5 out of 10).

CRITICAL FAILURES
While Critical Successes don't apply to Combat Contests – the number of damage dice you get to roll for success already builds this in – Critical Failures certainly do. If a Character rolls a Critical Failure, treat his defense roll for the Contest as zero for purposes of determining the amount of damage done based on success. If a Character rolls a Critical Failure while attacking he loses his next two Actions or one full turn, whichever is greater.

OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS
Opportunity attacks happen when an opponent who is acting on a higher Initiative makes himself the perfect target. Maybe your Character has his gun out and the guy steps right out into plain sight. Maybe he's trying to run up into close quarters combat with your Character and there's no reason you can't get off a quick panicked shot before he gets there. If you have the ability to make an opportunity attack, you get to act on a higher Initiative than normal at a penalty. No matter how many Actions you declared that turn you now can only take one – the opportunity attack – because your intentions are now blown. If this would be a second Action, then the Multiple Action Penalty applies and it is your Characters last Action that turn. If the opportunity attack would be a third Action, you can't take it. Opportunity attacks are resolved as usual but with a –2 Test Penalty for the attacker, which increases to –4 if the opportunity attack was a second Action.

SURPRISE
Whenever a target is unaware of an attack we call it surprise. A target that is surprised by an attack cannot make a defense roll as usual. To determine the damage from this attack treat the target's defense roll as zero – like a critical failure. Attacks from surprise can be very deadly.

WOUND LEVELS
Every living thing in *CthulhuTech* has six Wound Levels that represent his overall life force and well-being, five of which are composed of a number of points equal to the being's Vitality – Unhurt only applies when the being is in his natural unadulterated state. These Wound Levels combined with the appropriate distribution of Vitality is called the Wound Scheme.

For an example, let's take a Character with an average Vitality of 10. He has 10 points of Vitality in each Wound Level but Unhurt and could take overall a total of 50 points of damage before he dies. This looks something like this:

WOUND LEVEL EXAMPLE	
Average Person: Vitality 10	
WOUND LEVEL	**VITALITY**
Unhurt	0
Flesh Wounds	1 to 10
Light Wounds	11 to 20
Moderate Wounds	21 to 30
Serious Wound	31 to 40
Death's Door	41 to 50
Dead	51+

Additionally, each Wound Level has a set of characteristics and penalties associated with it.

Unhurt – Unlike other Wound Levels, Unhurt does not equal the Character's Vitality. A Character is Unhurt only if he has suffered no damage to his Vitality – it's his natural state.

Flesh Wounds – The Character is only scratched up and suffers mostly from bruises and minor lacerations. He suffers no Test Penalty.

Light Wounds – The Character looks like he's been in a fight and suffers from deep cuts, sprained muscles, and the like. He suffers a -1 Test Penalty to all his Actions.

Moderate Wounds – The Character looks like he tackled something big and lost and suffers from deep cuts and bruises, burns, broken or fractured bones and the like. He suffers a -3 Test Penalty to all his Actions, he may take a maximum of two Actions per turn, and his maximum movement is reduced to half. His armor and rate of regeneration, if applicable, is likewise cut in half (round down). This can reduce either of these to zero.

Serious Wounds – The Character looks like he's crawling away from a bad car accident. He suffers from seriously broken bones, profusely bleeding wounds, and the like. Only capable of crawling, he suffers a -6 Test Penalty to all his Actions, may only take one Action per turn, and can only perform the simplest of Actions. His rate of regeneration, if applicable, is still cut in half, but his armor is now useless.

Death's Door – The Character looks like he's going to die and he just might. He's unconscious and is in danger of either slipping into a coma or bleeding to death. He can pretty much just lay there and bleed or whimper a little if he can somehow regain consciousness. A Character who does not regenerate will die within the hour without medial attention. His rate of regeneration, if applicable, is cut to a quarter. His armor remains useless.

Dead – The Character has been killed. It's time for a moment of silence.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Sometimes it will be important to know some of your Character's physical boundaries. Here are a few additional rules to help you determine them. There are more rules for physical feats in the *CthulhuTech Core Book*.

JUMPING

As an homage to the anime element of *CthulhuTech*, Characters can jump farther than they would in the real world. A Character begins with a base jumping distance of two yards across or one yard vertically. However, he can try for greater jumps – this requires an Athletics Test. The Degree is determined by the amount the Character wishes to increase his jump distance. Doubling it is Challenging, tripling it is Hard, quadrupling (4x) it is Incredibly Hard, and quintupling (5x) it is Legendary. However, speed can assist. If he's moving at more than half his top speed, reduce the Degree one category.

LIFTING

The amount a Character can deadlift is determined entirely by his Strength. The Lifting Capacity table gives the maximum amount of weight a Character can lift. Also, these weights can help give you an idea of what a Strength Feat is capable – tearing a normal door off its hinges when a Character can lift almost a ton shouldn't be terribly difficult.

A Character can increase his lifting capacity using a Strength Feat Test. To increase his capacity by one Strength point is a Challenging Test, by two points is a Hard Test, by three points is an Incredibly Hard Test, by four points is Legendary. If two or more Characters cooperate, their lifting capacity is pooled together.

Carrying heavy things is a different case. Characters can move at their full speed carrying a weight of up to half their total limit. From half to three-quarters his limit, the Character moves at half speed, and from three-quarters to his limit, the Character moves at quarter speed.

Of course, mass, size, grip, and other conditions affect how easily something can be lifted or carried, so use common sense with these rules as a guideline.

STRENGTH ATTRIBUTE	LIFTING CAPACITY WEIGHT
1	30 lbs.
2	40 lbs.
3	50 lbs.
4	75 lbs.
5	100 lbs.
6	150 lbs.
7	250 lbs.
8	400 lbs.
9	700 lbs.
10	1000 lbs.
11	1300 lbs.
12	1600 lbs.
13	2000 lbs.
14	2500 lbs.
15	3000 lbs.
16	2 tons
17	3 tons
18	4 tons
19	5 tons
20	6 tons

FEAR & INSANITY

The universe of *CthulhuTech* is a horrifying place. Your Dramatic Characters are bound to run afoul of things both terrifying and mind-bending, which is where fear and insanity come into play.

The difference between fear and insanity is this: fear is a reaction based on an immediate threat, bodily or worse, and insanity is a permanent distortion of a person's perception caused either by imbalanced brain chemistry or constant exposure to horrible or warping conditions. We will only explore the effects of fear in detail in this *Quick Start Guide*.

FEAR

Sometimes, Characters in *CthulhuTech* see things that are too frightening for their own peace of mind. Whenever a Character witnesses something terrifying, you will have to check to see if he freaks out and suffers Fear Effects. A Fear Test is a Tenacity Feat Test against a Difficulty determined by your Storyguide. Many creatures have a Fear Rating, which represents the Difficulty for Fear Tests when exposed to them. If you succeed you take the situation in stride with no further effect. On the other hand, if you fail a Fear Test you must roll once on the following table for a Fear Effect – twice if the failure was critical.

FEAR EFFECTS

2d10 result

2 – Physical Effect – The raw power of your fear manifests in some sort of permanent physical way. Perhaps your hair turns white, you gain an eye twitch, you shake sometimes for no reason, or you gain a speech impediment. This condition can be cured with therapy, with the exception of physical manifestations like white hair (see p. 139). You lose a turn as you process the fear.

3 – Lose Bodily Control – The sight startles and stuns you and you are unable to take action for one turn. You also temporarily lose control of your body functions with the ensuing discomfort and embarrassment.

4 – Forget – You'll forget most if not all of the experience – it's going to be a blank spot in your memory. While you continue to function for now, the scene will be gone from your mind as soon as it's over. However, nothing can be truly repressed so you may end up plagued with nightmares for a while. You suffer a – 1 Test Penalty to all Actions for the rest of the scene.

5-6 – Faint – The sight frightens or disturbs you so deeply that you simply can't take it. You faint dead away for at least one minute, or five minutes if no one attempts to revive you.

7-8 – Cower – You cower in fear and attempt pathetically to get away. You can't run – you'll trip all over yourself if you try – but you can crawl and whimper just fine. In fact, it's more than likely that you'll find yourself crying or sobbing. You suffer a –2 Test Penalty to all Actions for the rest of the scene and you must succeed at a Hard Tenacity Test to take any direct action against the object of fear.

9-10 – Scream – The sight startles and scares you and you cry out in terror. You lose your next Action.

11-12 – Stunned – The sight stuns you beyond the capacity for rational thought and you are unable to take action for one turn.

13-14 – Twitch – The sight shocks you out of your skin, causing you to temporarily retreat inside yourself. You can take no Actions as you twitch and drool for the next 1 to 5 minutes (half a die). You may or may not have memory of the experience afterwards.

15-16 – Terror – You are utterly and completely terrified beyond belief and run away screaming. You will do anything it takes to get away from the thing that scared you – once you are finally away from it and feel a little safer you suffer the effects of Cower above for the next 1 to 5 minutes (half a die). More than likely you sob or scream the entire time.

17-18 – Morbid Fascination – The sight frightens you but your terror becomes fascination. You find yourself drawn to whatever scared you and you want to obsessively study and learn more about it for the next 1 to 5 days (half a die).

19 – Temporary Disorder – The experience is so scarring that you develop some kind of permanent behavioral disorder of your Storyguide's determination. Appropriate disorders might include eating, sleeping, attention, or temper disorders – technically they're anxiety disorders, mood disorders, minor physical disorders, or a rage disorder. Otherwise, as Twitch, above.

20 – Phobia – You are so deeply affected by your terror that you are now permanently afraid of whatever scared you – you gain a permanent phobia anxiety disorder. Otherwise, as Terror, above.

adventure

HEAD CASE

Now that you've gotten a sense of both the setting and the rules of *CthulhuTech*, it's time to give it a shot. The rest of these *Quick-Start Rules* include a ready-to-play story, along with four Characters.

SETTING BACKGROUND

Unknown to most, there are two wars being waged for the survival of humanity. The Aeon War is the one reported on in the news, where the brave soldiers of the New Earth Government fight against the Migou and the Disciples of the Rapine Storm, and to contain the Esoteric Order of Dagon. In a lesser sense, it also encompasses the efforts of the Federal Security Bureau and the Office of Internal Security to fight against the cults that lurk underneath the surface of society.

On the other hand, there is a secret war, a Shadow War, being fought on a level hidden to the world. The cult-infiltrated Chrysalis Corporation, one of the most powerful companies in the world, threatens the New Earth Government in ways it can't even dream. There is only one group that can stop them – the mysterious secret society known as the Eldritch Society. They are outlaw heroes, operating beyond the confines of the law, distrusting a government they believe has been compromised. Their primary soldiers are men and women who have chosen to undergo the terrifying Rite of Sacred Union in order to join in symbiosis with a creature from beyond time and space. They become creatures known as Tagers, people who can instantly shift from their mortal form to a monstrous humanoid predator. The only problem is that the forces of the New Earth Government will shoot to kill a Tager on sight. It's not as if the NEG knows what Tagers are, but if they see a monster they will try to kill it. Fortunately, most of the time, Tagers can hide in plain sight.

The Eldritch Society maintains several important support networks to assist Tagers in their tasks. The two that will be most relevant for this particular story are the Operator Network and the Lorekeeper Network. Operators are those people assigned to help Tager packs on a moment's notice. They sit at terminals, finding information, making calls, hacking systems, and whatever else can be done from a computer and telecommunications console. Lorekeepers are those who are charged with maintaining the Eldritch Society's archives and are those Tagers seek when what they need to know is of an arcane or occult nature.

Since the First Arcanotech War, the New Earth Government has worked to convert cities into arcologies. Arcologies are cities in buildings. They are typically around fifty stories tall, with ten arcology "levels." Each level is five stories tall, typically filled with four-story buildings and a story of space before the ceiling. The ceilings are covered with liquid crystal so that a sky and sun can be simulated within the building. The designers try to do everything they can to make these structures livable. The streets look like normal city streets, though narrower as only emergency and utility vehicles are allowed inside arcologies. Plants and trees and parks are cultivated to keep a somewhat organic feel.

Even weather is simulated – fans in the walls generate breeze and sprinklers simulate rain showers. The temperature fluctuates depending upon the season, but always remains in a pleasant range. Everything – residences, shopping centers, parks, industrial areas – is inside and each neighborhood is mostly self-contained. They are places that are considered safe, as those coming into an arcology must pass through a security checkpoint that tests brainwaves and DNA before letting anything through. It is much harder for unspeakable horrors to find their way into arcologies. Most of what you'll be up to in this story will take place inside the Chicago arcology.

That doesn't mean that people don't live outside the arcology. Some people suffer from what is known as Sick Building Syndrome and cannot live most of their lives inside. Others don't like the eye of the government looking over their shoulder all the time. Regardless of the reason, there is nearly always a city surrounding the arcology, but such places are considered the suburbs at best.

If you intend to only play this story, it's in your best interests to stop reading now. However, go ahead on and check out the Characters, starting on p. 32. The general capabilities of Tagers can be found on p. 33.

STORY BACKGROUND

Ancient tellings of Irish folklore once whispered hints of a rare artifact known as the Orthanach Stone. It was said that the innate power of this stone channeled such awesome arcane energy that the people of the land would reap the benefits of druidic rituals for miles around. These rituals appeased the gods and the people enjoyed bountiful harvests across the land. It is also said that the origin of the Orthanach Stone could be traced back to a shard split from the famous Lia Fail (Stone of Destiny) by the sword of Cuchulainn, a very disappointed king-apparent. The Orthanach Stone remained an important focus of religious ceremony until the final fall of druidic traditions in Ireland. It soon disappeared from view and from memory for hundreds of years, never to be seen by the eyes of man again – until very recently.

The Eldritch Society in Ireland uncovered a plot by the Children of Chaos almost three weeks ago. Archeological teams employed by a subsidiary of the Chrysalis Corporation had been hard at work digging up excavation sites near Bantry Bay in southern Ireland for almost a year now. Intercepted communications revealed to the Eldritch Society that the hard-sought target of this archeological search might have actually been found. Further inquiries exposed a plot to use what the Children of Chaos thought was the actual and real Orthanach Stone to conduct an unknown, but likely devastating ritual. A plan was formulated and a Tager raid soon commenced to capture the stone. They were successful.

The Tagers of the local Eldritch Society in Ireland knew that their adversaries would soon scour the area in search of their lost

prize. The stone had to be taken to a safe place where experts capable of translating the runic markings that adorned its surface could examine it. The best man for the job was deemed to be a powerful Eldritch Society sorcerer by the name of Reece Abernethy. His exceptional occult knowledge and substantial background in Celtic folklore would make him a perfect candidate to study the stone. Abernethy, a resident professor at Northwestern University, was well-versed in the research of ancient artifacts and relics. Orders were received and the Orthanach Stone was soon dispatched via courier to Chicago and the safety of the powerful Eldritch Society presence there.

This was to be a simple, but top-secret mission. Only a handful of people would know the details of the courier's identity, route, and rendezvous points. Every precaution was made to prevent the chance of an information leak and a possible interception by Chrysalis Corporation agents. A Phantom by the name of Egan Walsh (callsign: Glass) was selected to carry the stone to Chicago. He was quietly smuggled via a small boat to a port facility in Bantry Bay. From there he stole aboard a trans-atlantic freighter via a shipping container with enough food and supplies to sustain him through the journey. It was thought that this would be the best way to get him into North America undetected and untraced. The plan was to have a team of Chicago-based Tagers meet Walsh at the Port of Chicago to escort both him and his valuable prize to safety.

The story opens with the Chicago-based pack of Tager Characters on their way to rendezvous with the courier. It is just about 10 pm and the dock areas of the Port are settled down for a quiet night. The Team must sneak into the Port of Chicago grounds, locate the courier and the planned rendezvous point, and get him out without detection.

ACT 1: RENDEZVOUS

Goals: To infiltrate the secure port facility without being detected. To find the shipping container in which the courier was transported. To survive the Dhohanoid attack and escape before authorities arrive.

Setting: The docks of Port Chicago on Lake Michigan, which lie south along the lake waterfront and outside the walls of the Chicago arcology.

Read the following to your players:

"The message came in early today. Your pack's Operator, a sharp and savvy woman by the name of Michelle who runs a nightclub, told you that the Eldritch Society needs you to undertake a critical mission tonight. The Society recently stole a powerful magical artifact from the Chrysalis Corporation in Ireland. The Orthanach Stone, as it is called, is arriving via shipping container in the care of a courier — a Phantom Tager known as Glass. You're to discreetly meet Glass at the Port of Chicago at 10:00 PM tonight and escort him and the Stone to an Eldritch Society safehouse near Northwestern University. If everything goes according to plan, it'll be an early night — but how often do things go according to plan."

Feel free to give the players a chance to talk among themselves, to get a sense of who each others' Characters are and their different capabilities. Since this is designed to be a short, targeted introductory game, going directly to the Port of Chicago to meet the courier is the best course of action.

The first challenge will be getting into the Port undetected. The facility is well-guarded with a high fence, security cameras, security dogs, and security guard patrols. Three ships are moored along the dock, one of them being the freighter from Ireland. Shipping containers are stacked in gigantic rows sparsely lit by street lamps. It's 10:00 pm and a light and chilly drizzle wets the entire area.

The instructions received by the Characters stated that the courier would be waiting within one of the shipping containers identified as TRLU4284746. There are seven major terminals, each filled with rows of stacked shipping containers. The pack may opt to randomly search for the container, but it will likely take hours and a certain measure of luck to succeed before the coming dawn.

As the team moves about the yard, they'll need to make Stealth and Observation Tests to find their target while avoiding detection from the Port Security. Have each player make a Stealth Test when they first attempt to enter the Port, against an Average Degree – success means they get in without complication. Have them make another as they move about the shipyard, against a Challenging Degree this time – success means they get to move about without triggering any one of the Port's security measures. Should they fail in their Stealth Tests and be seen as intruders, the security guards will attempt to apprehend them with tasers and guns. Should the Characters reveal themselves as otherworldly creatures, the guards will promptly notify the Chicago Police Department, and powered armor will be dispatched to deal with them. The Tagers cannot fight the powered armor – it most likely will kill them with a single shot. Fleeing is the best option.

Security Guards

Experience Level: Experienced
Attributes: Agility 7, Intellect 5, Perception 8, Presence 6, Strength 7, Tenacity 7
Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 13 mph (32/8 ypt), Orgone 11, Reflex 6, Vitality 12
General Skills: Communications: Novice, Intimidate: Novice, Language (English): Expert, Law Enforcement: Novice, Observation: Expert, Persuade: Adept, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Security: Expert, Stealth: Adept, Streetwise: Novice, Surveillance: Adept
Combat Skills: Armed Fighting: Expert, Dodge: Adept, Fighting: Novice, Marksman: Adept
Weapons & Armor: CS-44 Enforcer Hvy Pistol (Range 12/25/45, +2 Damage, 2 Shots, 15 Rounds), Snap Baton (0 Damage), Sentrytech Mk-IV Armor – Lt (0/1 Protection)
Gear: Belt Holster, Night Vision Goggles with IR Illuminator, Security Guard Uniform

The Characters, once they have evaded the Port's security, may search for the container. Doing this randomly will take hours and require success at an Observation Test against an Average Degree. However, there's a port office near Terminal 5. Sneaking into the office will give the pack access to shipping manifest records stored on one of the computers. Whoever wishes to try to bypass the simple security must succeed at a Computer Test, against a Challenging Degree. If he does, he will pull up the location of their target shipping container. TRLU4284746 is located in Terminal 2, row 7.

Have all the other Characters present make an Observation Test, against an Average Degree. Those who succeed will notice that something is amiss here – there is a smattering of blood around the computer console. If the pack takes a moment to look around the room, they will find the body of a dockworker in one of the storage closets. His guts will be hanging open in a bloody mess. The kill looks fresh.

Finding the dead dockworker should heighten the sense of urgency to find the shipping container. However, the pack must continue to stay in the shadows and avoid detection from local security. Once the Characters come into sight range of container TRLU4284746, they'll know they've found the right place. Signs of recent violence surround its entrance. Two Human bodies surrounded by explosive sprays of blood turn the scene into a strange piece of butcher's artwork. The door to the container hangs open and, with the exception of certain modest survival items, there is nothing of note inside. The courier is gone.

Have each of the Characters make another Observation Test, against an Average Degree. Anyone who succeeds will notice something important – that one of the corpses has an active portable computer (known as a peek) on his arm. It is vital that the Characters get a chance to grab this before the mayhem begins in earnest.

The pack will barely have time to digest everything before a group of Dhohanoids, waiting in ambush, springs their attack. It's as if they knew that the Tagers were coming and when. The Dhohanoid force will consist of two Dua-Sanari, four Ramachese, and an Elib – the statistics for these monsters are found on p. 45. The resulting ruckus will no doubt alert the Port Security detail to the fighting – and they will freak at the monstrous battle before them and run away as quickly as possible. It's only a matter of time before powered armor police units show up to deal with this public menace. The Tagers need to deal with this new threat and make a quick escape before the police show up. You should feel free to use the sounds of distant sirens and squealing tires at the appropriate times of the struggle to create the maximum level of tension.

ACT II: TURNCOAT

Goals: To crack the Dhohanoid peek and discover the tip-off message. To find the mole within the Eldritch Society. To discover where the courier and the Orthanach Stone have been taken.

Setting: Vision, a hot downtown Chicago dance club on Dearborn Street. The Tareda residence on the second level of Dickens Avenue, Lincoln Park, Chicago. Outside the Abernethy home in Evanston.

Read the following to your players:

"With your mission dashed, you are left with the question of what to do now. There's no doubt that you must pick up the trail of the missing courier and safely retrieve the Stone. All signs point to it once again being in the possession of the Chrysalis Corporation. Now that you have slipped the authorities, there's only one thing to do – examine the only piece of evidence you've got. That is, unless anyone has any other ideas."

Players, being who they are, may have other ideas. Feel free to indulge them in any way you see fit. However, there really is only one piece of evidence that will point them in the right direction – unless you choose to create another.

The Characters now have a chance to examine the confiscated peek. Have anyone who wants to play with it make a Computer Test, against an Average Degree. Success allows the Character to access the previous owner's message list – he fortunately wasn't very diligent in securing his data.

One of the recent messages hidden within the captured peek turns out to be an exact duplicate of the message sent to the pack to rendezvous with the courier. It contains the exact location and time of their rendezvous. The pack was clearly set-up from the inside.

To their knowledge, the Characters know of only three people who were aware of this mission and who would have had access to this message. These are the pack's Operator Michelle Gatien, Reece Abernethy, the Eldritch Society sorcerer who was going to take possession of the Orthanach Stone at Northwestern, and someone named Tareda. The pack knows that the origin of the message is with Michelle, and she is normally the Characters' first point of contact, so she is a logical place to start. With a mole inside the Society, the pack must move quickly in order to find a clue regarding the courier's whereabouts.

Michelle Gatien, the Pack's Operator

Michelle is a 34-year-old ex-model turned business owner. She is sharp, business savvy, and beautiful. She chose to take on the family business when her father died a few years ago in an accident. It turns out that the accident in question was an explosion rigged by the Children of Chaos as an assassination attempt – her father was collateral damage. The business she took on was owner and manager of one of the hottest nightclubs in Chicago – Vision. A surprising amount of information flows through her club and she tries to use it to the best advantage of the Eldritch Society. Her office at the club is filled with powerful computer and telecom equipment, all cleverly concealed.

Read this to your players:

"You've only started working with Michelle recently, so you haven't had a chance to develop a full rapport with her. You know from video conversations that she's a beautiful woman in her mid-thirties, but you've never actually met in person. You also know that she runs a happening nightclub in Chicago, where she uses the information that floats through to help the Society. At this point, she could very well be the person who set you up. Even if she isn't, she'll most likely be able to point you in another direction."

The Characters could legitimately just go check out several of the hottest nightclubs in the city and they'll probably be able to figure out which one is Michelle's. More likely, they'll simply call her to ask for a face-to-face meeting. She will seem surprised at the request and ask why they need to do such a thing so suddenly. If the Characters relay the details about what happened tonight, she will urge the pack to meet her at her club to discuss the next steps. She will also offer to contact the other people on the compromised message – Tareda and Abernethy – unless the pack tells her otherwise.

It is well after 11:00 pm once the Characters return to the Chicago arcology. When they head down to Vision, they find the nightclub in full swing – crowds, the latest dance music, cocktails (and more) running through libidos like a virus, and, of course, the wide spectrum of ever-shifting light displays that twist shadows like grotesque torture victims.

Michelle's office is on the top floor, where they have been most likely instructed to meet her. The club's security has been told to expect them, so the Characters have no trouble gaining access to her office. Have each of them make an Observation Test as they walk through the club, against a Challenging Degree. Those who succeed are left with the feeling of being intently watched, though it is hard to tell by whom with the throng of patrons dancing all around the group. This visit may be legit or it may be a trap – the pack will need to deal with that however they choose.

When the Characters get to Michelle's office, they find her a little manic. She seems to be packing documents and other items of importance, as well as backing up data drives and wiping information off others. When asked, read the following to your players:

"Listen, it's great to finally meet you in person and all, but I am getting out of here. If our communications really are compromised, then who's next? Me? You? The other guys?"

Somebody may ask her about Tareda, who is unfamiliar to the Characters, or why she sent the rendezvous message to Abernethy and Tareda.

"I needed Abernethy to know things were going down tonight, so he could be ready to get the Stone from Glass. Tareda is the Lorekeeper who got Abernethy involved in the first place. He wanted first crack at cataloging what they could discover about the artifact. He's legit, so I kept him in the loop."

The Characters may or may not trust Michelle at this point. They may have other questions, so give them the opportunity to ask at least one before having them make Observation Tests, against a Challenging Degree. Those who succeed will suddenly notice a small red dot painting the side of Michelle's head – the business end of a laser scope pointed through her office window from a terrace across the street from the club. Whoever notices the dot must then make an Initiative roll. The shooter has an Initiative of 12 – one of the Characters will have to beat that in order to push Michelle out of the way and save her life. Failure means that her brains will be splattered across the room by a high-velocity needle.

Once the needle has burst through the window, regardless of outcome, the Characters are likely to search for the shooter. Success at an Average Observation Test will reveal to the Characters a Human man of average build running back into the building across the street from the terrace. The shooter is a hired assassin contracted by the Chrysalis Corporation to silence links to their activity. He will run instead of staying to fight, trying desperately to get away from the Characters. However, the pack has the advantage of being Tagers and it will be difficult for him to evade for long.

The Shooter

Experience Level: Experienced
Attributes: Agility 7, Intellect 7, Perception 8, Presence 6, Strength 5, Tenacity 7
Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 11 mph (27/6 ypt), Orgone 12, Reflex 7, Vitality 11
General Skills: Athletics: Adept, Communications: Adept, Computer: Adept, Criminal: Adept, Culture: Novice, Language (English): Expert, Language (Nazzadi): Adept, Literacy: Adept, Misdirect: Expert, Observation: Adept, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Stealth: Adept, Surveillance: Adept
Combat Skills: Dodge: Novice, Fighting: Adept, Marksman: Adept
Weapons & Armor: CS-40 Defender Med. Pistol (Range 15/30/50, +1 Damage, 2 Shots, 15 Rounds), RG-21 Rail Sniper Rifle (Range 105/530/1030, +3 Damage, 2 Shots, 15 Rounds)
Sentrytech Mk-IV Armor – Lt (0/1 Protection)
Gear: Wireless Communication Earpiece, Digital Video Recorder, Concealable Holster, Night Vision Goggles w/ IR Illuminator, Silencer, Ordinary Clothing

The excitement of the ensuing chase scene is up to you. If you've got the time and your players are up for it, make it count. Catching up to the shooter in the first place requires success at both an Average Observation Test and an Athletics Contest, as the assassin heads out through the back alley. Chasing him through a labyrinth of back alleys requires both an Observation Contest (vs. the shooter's Stealth) and another Athletics Contest. If the Characters blew these rolls, give them one last chance at these same Contests. If the Characters succeed in catching up with him, or severely wounding him, the assassin's life expectancy will unfortunately be very short as he will swallow a poison pill. He will die within minutes, foaming at the mouth and convulsing. He has nothing to identify him.

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If Michelle survives the attempt on her life, read the following:

"Oh my god, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you! I don't even know what to say. You guys are permanently on the list here and you drink for free – forever. Listen, here are Tareda's and Abernethy's home addresses. Good luck. I'm getting out of here. Don't expect to see me again until this all blows over."

She then leaves in a rush, before the police can arrive and start asking inconvenient questions.

If Michelle does not survive, the Characters then must make Observation Tests to find the information they need. The Degree for this will be Challenging, as they need to get it done and be gone before the cops arrive.

They can now investigate either Tareda or Abernethy – the order does not matter.

Tareda, the Society Lorekeeper

The address Michelle gave the Characters pegs Tareda living in the Lincoln Park area of North Chicago. Lincoln Park sits on the northernmost edge of the Chicago arcology, back inside the arcology, so taking a mag-lift to their destination will not be difficult. If they attempt to contact Tareda via a voice, there will be no answer.

If the Characters saved Michelle, let them recollect this information, given by her just before she took off. Please read this to your players:

"Tareda's government job as a public records keeper gives him a great cover for his work as a Lorekeeper. He's pretty much a natural loner – which is a nice way of saying he's completely lacking in social graces. He sticks to his books and research and avoids people as much as he can. Personally, I don't think he's just weird. I think he's full-blown obsessive. Which is a bonus in his line of work, I guess."

Tareda's place might remind someone of the modern expression of old architecture – it looks similar to an old Brownstone-style building that would have been seen in major cities a hundred years ago. It's dark outside, with the street modestly lit by lamps. The front door is locked. If the Characters attempt to knock or ring the doorbell, there will be no answer. Shifting into Tager form and using brute strength to enter will likely be noticed by neighbors (your choice, based on how hard things have been for the Characters so far). There appears to be an open window on the third floor if the pack can't find any other way to enter.

The house is quiet inside with only a few lights burning. There seems to be no sign of life. It's only when the pack reaches the kitchen that they find Tareda – read this to your players:

"Finally, the kitchen yields some sign of life. Or at least, former life. A skinny Nazzadi male corpse hangs there, pinned to a cabinet by a large kitchen knife that's been driven through his forehead. His eyes bulge in a deathly echo of fear and surprise. Blood trails down from his head, over his

body, across the kitchen counter, to finally drip into a crimson pool on the tile floor. The blood is still wet – this kill is very recent."

You may have the Characters make Observation Tests to see if they can find anything. All they need to beat is an Average Degree, because there is no visible sign of forced entry into the building and no immediate clue pertaining to the killer.

The only information that the pack can find is a journal that he kept on his computer. Whoever wants to find something useful on the machine must succeed at a Computer Test, against an Average Degree. Anyone who succeeds finds Tareda's latest journal entries. Read the following to your players:

"Over several dates are Tareda's latest series of journal entries. It takes a while to go through all of them, but you find several important details in and among the musings and personal thoughts. It turns out that it was Tareda who recruited Abernethy to assist with the deciphering of the Orthanach Stone. The two had met in academic circles in and around Northwestern University and hit it off quickly. Tareda comments on how immediately comfortable he was with Abernethy and how the two seemed to connect on a deep level. Discovering Abernethy's natural talent for research and the practice of magic, Tareda believed that the man would make an excellent addition to the Eldritch Society. He began the recruitment process and ultimately brought Abernethy into the fold. It's been less than a year since this all began and Abernethy has barely been let into the Society, privy only to its most surface secrets for now. Tareda seems beside himself that his friend is now a true colleague.

Though it's written between the lines throughout, Tareda finally admits to his attraction to Abernethy. The Nazzadi seems surprised at his desire for a seemingly straight family man, as he's been pretty much asexual for a long time. Abernethy's dedication to his family is what prevented Tareda from saying anything. However, it turns out that Abernethy's wife went missing about a week ago and the police could find nothing that suggested foul play. Tareda did what he could to console his devastated, yet withdrawn and distant, friend.

The last journal entry states that Tareda had invited Abernethy over tonight. He was planning on sowing the seeds that he felt might lead to something more intimate in their relationship."

That was the last comment he would ever write in his journal and the only piece of information useful to the Characters in their investigation of his home.

If the Characters haven't visited Abernethy yet, the next stop is obvious. If they have, there's only one apparent option – going to see him again, because he is all that's left.

Reece Abernethy, the Society Sorcerer

Before visiting the first time, they may want to investigate first, since Abernethy is an above-board figure with ties to the community and the University. Success at an average Research Test, against an Average Degree will yield the following.

Read this to your players:

"Abernethy owns a single-family, middle-income home in Evanston, outside of the Chicago arcology — his wife suffers from Sick Building Syndrome. At the age of 40, he has accrued considerable seniority at the College of Arcane Arts at Northwestern University. His reputation is that of a great professor that achieves amazing results with his students. It appears that he is also a devoted husband and father of two girls. All reports seem to show a man of very high principles and standards, a model for the faculty of Northwestern University."

If the Characters visit Abernethy before the others, the pack will find him either at Northwestern University, or at home (once they've gotten the address). Regardless of what they ask him, this represents pretty much all the useful information he has to share.

If told about the attempted assassination attempt on Michelle, he'll be shocked, but know nothing about it at all. They never actually met and only had basic contact in terms of coordination. If told that Michelle has been assassinated, he will be truly sorry.

If told about Tareda's murder, he will shed tears. Apparently, they were true friends. However, he'll know nothing about who would want him dead.

He will not talk about his wife in any detail. He'll only confirm that she's been missing about a week and the police suspect she took off of her own volition. It is a very sore spot for him.

He has nothing further to offer the Tager pack, other than that he hopes they find the Orthanach Stone soon. If it's that important, he needs to begin translation as soon as possible.

However, the Characters have the opportunity to discover something is amiss. Anyone speaking with Abernethy may engage in a Contest with him, pitting the Character's Observation versus Abernethy's Misdirect (of Adept). Success will yield that the Professor is lying about something, but not specifically as to what. Any Characters who choose to observe the situation in their shifted form notice, through their Scan sense, that his body is under an unusual amount of stress during this conversation.

If this is the second time the Characters have come to see Abernethy, or if they have already visited both Michelle and Tareda, they should find Abernethy at his home.

As the pack approaches the Abernethy home, they see something suspicious. Read the following to your players:

"Two young men in expensive-looking suits escort a middle-aged man (name him as Abernethy if the Characters have met him) towards a waiting car. The man does not look willing — his head darts around frantically as if he is looking for some sort of help. He clutches a briefcase to his chest."

Given a minute, the Tagers can easily make out that the two escorts are Dhonanoids. The car's greasy-looking driver can also be made out as a Dhohanoid.

How this plays out from here is up to the pack. They have no car in which to follow the Dhohanoids, so choosing to do so would require stealing one. If they intercept the car, kill the Dhohanoids (two Elib and a Gelgore), and capture Abernethy, he will be so terrified that he will spill his guts about what he knows (see the Epilogue on the next page for details). He will also mention that he overheard one of his escorts saying that the others should be at the Arcane Institute building at the University by now. Knowing where to go, it will be up to the pack to decide what to do with Abernethy. Should they simply follow Abernethy and his guards, they will discover the location of the Institute building on their own – otherwise, he will direct them.

ACT 3: RESCUE

Goals: To stop the Chrysalis Corporation Ritual. To rescue Egan Walsh. To recover the Orthanach Stone.

Setting: The Arcane Institute Building at Northwestern University.

The Arcane Institute Building may not be the most clandestine choice for a major ritual, but it certainly provides the necessary consecrated arcane space and component material to generate a ritual in short order. The building is two stories tall and, though the casual observer might not see it, is well-guarded. Dhohanoids (mostly Dua-Sanaras and Ramachese) and human agents patrol the area, blending in as students making their way across campus, the homeless, or maintenance men. Given enough time and a way to maintain anonymity, the Tagers can identify enough Dhohanoids to know that being detected will bring an unmanageable level of attention down on their heads. Stealth might be the most prudent of tactics at this point.

Gaining access to the building will reveal that most lights are out. There's a reception desk near the front door of the building, upon which is a computer console. Accessing the computer and succeeding at a Computer Test against a Challenging Degree will allow one of the Tagers to hack the machine and upload a map of the building to their peek. The map will reveal a large lecture hall on the second floor of the building called Gray's Hall. The legend on the map shows a code associated with the hall that states "arcane space."

There is a lot of activity on the second floor – people moving about frantically as they carry in boxes of material to Gray's Hall from other rooms. One or two people at a time move quickly through the hallways. It is up to the pack to choose how they want to deal with this – whether sneaking in or taking these people out. The latter will create a confrontation with Dua-Sanaras and Ramachese Dhohanoids. Once they reach Gray's Hall they will be met with a shocking sight.

Read the following to your players:

"Gray's Hall is used to instruct students in the ways of the arcane arts. It is part lecture hall, part arcane space — a consecrated area in which certain

types of magic must be performed. The front of the hall is obviously such a space, complete with altar, mystical markings, candles, crystals, and other unrecognizable things. Set specially in the center of the altar, placed on a cushion of red velvet, is a very old-looking stone with runic markings.

However, the space itself pales in comparison to its bloody guest. Erected in the center of the arcane space is a steel cross that hangs from the ceiling by chains. The still form of a man is suspended helplessly on the cross, a steel pipe thrust into his side so blood can pour out of him onto the floor. Beneath him, someone has used his blood to craft a wicked-looking mystical circle."

This is Egan Walsh, Phantom Tager – he has been stuck with a device that prevents him from shifting (once removed, he can). The pack isn't sure if he is still alive at first glance, but any use of the Scan sense will confirm that he is.

If the Characters rescued Abernethy earlier, then the people within the auditorium are simply making hurried preparations. Read the following to your players:

"Beneath the dripping cross, more than a half dozen people wearing arcane robes scurry about the hall. They appear to be making final preparations, though no sorcerer has stepped into a position of authority."

If Abernethy was not rescued earlier, then he is beginning his sorcerous ritual. If the Characters have met him, they will recognize his voice as he chants. Read the following to your players:

"Positioned around the bloody circle are a half dozen people, their faces hidden deep within their black arcane-marked ritual robes. A man stands at the head of the circle, chanting and waving his arms above the altar. The runes on the stone begin to glow. There is an almost palpable electricity in the air."

The ritual participants, as well as those simply here to assist, are also Dhohanoids. The challenge will be to fight through the Dhohanoids, recover the stone, set Egan free, and escape before enemy reinforcements arrive. To begin with, there will be four more Dhohanoids than Tagers – two Elib, one Gelgore, and the rest a split of Dua-Sanaras and Ramachese. However, after ten combat turns, two more Dhohanoids show up (any mix of Dua-Sanaras and Ramachese you like) and two more four turns after that, so it is urgent that the Tagers get in, get what they need, and get out as fast as possible.

What started out as a simple courier rendezvous mission has now escalated into a fight to save the people of Chicago and the New Earth Government. It's been a long night.

EPILOGUE

Here's what was really going on, something the Tagers can find out from Abernethy if they rescue him or after the fact. About a week and half ago, Abernethy was approached by three businessmen with an offer to work for a large archeological research firm. They'd even hinted at an opportunity to delve into the secrets of an old relic from Ireland. However, Abernethy refused, stating that his preference was to stay where he was in order to be with his family. It was then that the offer from the businessmen became a veiled threat, stating that if he had no family here with him, then there wouldn't be anything to hold him back. Abernethy's wife disappeared two days later.

Abernethy's credentials drew the Chrysalis Corporation to him much in the same manner as it did the Eldritch Society. Except in this case, the agents of the Corporation were willing to use a far more forceful method of coercion to get their way. The deal was simply this – work under the company's direction and perform a certain ritual using the Orthanach Stone or never see his wife again. Abernethy was stunned. He was even more shocked to

discover what these strange people wanted – to perform a ritual of such massive potency that only the blood of a supernatural creature could be used as a component. With the living sacrifice of a Tager and the power of the Orthanach Stone to amplify the ritual, the Chrysalis Corporation planned to shut down the seat of New Earth Government by temporarily reducing the mental faculties of every resident of Chicago to that of a newborn child. The effect would only last a few days, but the damage to the wheels of government would be extraordinary. Also, the fear that would be generated over large-scale arcane terrorism would elicit such a massive response that the Chrysalis Corporation would find themselves in a favorable position to win new government security contracts to protect against such attacks. It would be an incredible power play to further seize influence over government resources.

Of course Abernethy had no clue about the Children of Chaos, but he could guess at the impact of the ritual he was being forced to cast. In the end he chose to favor the life of his wife and do as these strangers asked. When he got wind of the Eldritch Society directive from Tareda, he chose to alert his new, but undesirable partners in the hope of getting his wife back as soon as possible. He had no idea what the consequences of his action would be.

Using psychic probing to read Abernethy's mind, Chrysalis agents knew that they needed to move fast before the Eldritch Society could catch on to their plan. They needed to capture the Orthanach Stone and Egan Walsh to conduct the ritual. They also needed to silence anyone connected to Abernethy and the Eldritch Society. Thus, the hit on the Tager pack was ordered at the Port of Chicago, as were the hits on Tareda and Michelle Gatien – it was the best way to cover their tracks and buy time. Unfortunately, word had returned about the failure to eliminate the Tagers at the Port, so the timetable for the ritual needed to be moved up to begin tonight.

Even if the Tagers lose their fight, they will have disrupted the ritual – for now. However, the details of the Chrysalis Corporation plot will not reach the rest of the Eldritch Society until it is too late – until the highest wheels of government grind to a halt, because Chrysalis will most certainly try again.

Winning the fight will of course mean saving the life of Egan Walsh and recovering the stone. A senior Tager named Darrel McKnight (he is a Wraith, the evolved form of a Phantom) will catch up with them on their flight. He can even pick off straggler Dhohanoids, if need be. Once he introduces himself, read the following to your players:

"It wasn't too hard to find you once Michelle told me all the details. You guys have my thanks. This mission didn't turn out to be anything anyone expected and you guys still ran with it and took care of business. I think you've got a bright future around here."

If Abernethy is still alive, Darrel will take him to be dealt with. He is a proven liability and an appropriate level of psychic probing should eliminate enough of his memory so that he is no longer a danger to the rest of the Society.

Presented in the eleven pages that follow are four ready-to-play Characters to play with the Head Case story. Each of them includes a brief introduction to who they are, what kind of Tager they are and what abilities those manifestations have, and a two-page Character Sheet with all their relevant game data.

Here is a quick explanation of the particulars that pertain to these four Characters.

SKILLS

General Skills

· *Arcanotech Engineering* – You understand the fundamental melding of arcane sorcery and technical design.
· *Athletics* – Your increased physical prowess is the result of athletic training. This skill is based on Agility, Strength, or Tenacity, depending upon your attempted physical feat.
· *Bureaucracy* – You understand government, political, military, or other organizational structures.
· *Business* – You understand corporate structure, business practices, marketing strategy, and trade negotiations.
· *Computers* – Depending on your level of expertise, you can operate, administrate, configure, and program a computer.
· *Criminal* – You have a talent for shady activities, including lock picking, picking pockets, disabling alarms, stealing objects without being noticed, disabling bugging and surveillance equipment, and hot wiring vehicles.
· *Culture* – You have knowledge of a certain culture or typical characteristics common among cultures.
· *Education* – Education measures the extent of your formal academic learning.
· *Engineering* – You are skilled in the design, documentation, analysis, and deployment of one or more engineering fields through the application of scientific and mathematical principles, experience, common sense, and creativity.
· *Intimidate* – You can cow an individual into submission through subtle threats or through inflicting physical injury.
· *Language* – This skill allows you to speak individual languages or their specialized dialects.
· *Literacy* – Literacy measures the complexity of text you can understand, as well as the eloquence in the way you articulate your thoughts on paper.
· *Observation* – You know how to search for the hidden, spot the inobvious, and note the fine details of any object or situation you might observe.
· *Occult* – You understand the darker realities that no one else wants to acknowledge. You seek the hidden secrets of mysticism, curses, hauntings, ancient rituals, eldritch sorcery, and dark gods.
· *Performance* – You possess a musical, theatrical, oratory, dance, or other form of artistic performance talent that you can exhibit before an audience, typically for their entertainment.
· *Regional Knowledge* – You are acquainted with the characteristics of a certain regional area.
· *Science: Physical* – You understand the science of matter, energy, and their interactions.

· *Stealth* – You possess the ability to hide, move silently, or otherwise avoid detection.
· *Streetwise* – You understand how to operate and survive within the seedier side of civilization.
· *Survival* – You possess the necessary skill to live off the land.

Combat Skills

· *Armed Fighting* – You can fight effectively with any bashing, slashing, or stabbing weapon that you can hold in your hand.
· *Dodge* – Your body has been trained through extensive drill to respond to emergency situations.
· *Fighting* – You can fight effectively unarmed using your body as its own weapon.
· *Marksman* – You can effectively handle any firearm, energy weapon, or archaic projectile weapon in combat.

QUALITIES

Assets

· *Acute Sight* – Your Character has incredibly sharp vision and receives a +2 Test Bonus to all sight-based Observation Tests.
· *Alluring (2)* – Your Character has something captivating about him and gains a +2 Test Bonus using skills with Presence as the governing Attribute against members of the opposite sex.
· *Ally (1)* – Your Character has developed a close relationship with someone in a position to occasionally help him in times of need. An Ally (1) has average skills or some measure of influence.
· *Driven* – Your Character will not succumb to adversity; Each episode, he receives two free Drama Points that can be spent only to overcome desperately difficult situations or situations requiring severe concentration.
· *Fearless* – Your Character is virtually fearless and is undaunted in the face of great danger and the unknown. Each episode, your Character receives two free Drama Points that can be spent only in fearful situations, such as when outclassed in battle or attempting a dangerous stunt.
· *Tager* – Your Character has what it takes to be a Tager.
· *Tager: Exceptional* – Not only does your Character have what it takes to be a Tager, he's got that special something inside of him that calls to an exceptional Tager.
· *Wary* – Your Character has an intuitive sense for dangerous situations, which gives him a special chance to identify danger before it is encountered.

Drawbacks

· *Dark Secret (2)* – There is something from your Character's past that must not be discovered by others. Dark Secret (2) is hazardous; discovery might seriously affect his chances of promotion or advancement or could gain him a powerful enemy.
· *Debt (1)* – Your Character begins with less money and financial assets than normal and is considered lower class. He has a small residence, an older vehicle, and very little disposable income.
· *Depressive* – Your Character is prone to depressive mood swings. At the beginning of any episode, he must succeed at a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test or suffer a –1 Test Penalty to all Tests for the next one to five hours (half a die).

· *Duty (1 or 2)* – This Drawback represents your Character's responsibilities to his organization. (1) means your Character's duty demands only a portion of his time, while (2) means it demands most of his time.

· *Fanatical (2)* – Your Character is fanatically dedicated to some sort of ideal. Fanatical (2) means your Character will willingly place himself in great danger in defense of the ideal.

· *Impetuous* – Your Character prefers action – and not in a good way. He must succeed at a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test in order to not rush forward with the most obvious and least thought out course of action.

· *Mean* – Your Character derives great pleasure from the pain and suffering of others, physically or psychologically. Whenever your Character is in a position to inflict unnecessary pain upon a potential victim he must make a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test to resist the urge.

· *Repellent (1)* – Your Character is, to put it plain and simple, unattractive. He may be ugly, have unflattering facial scarring, poor personal hygiene, bad personal habits, or he could just plain be an asshole. He suffers a -1 Test Penalty when making Tests using Skills with Presence as the governing Attribute.

· *Rival* – Your Character has a rival of approximately equal ability who shares a similar goal, be it certain a role in his organization, a romantic interest, or the like.

· *Truly Honest* – Your Character cannot lie – he's just plain bad at it. He receives a –4 Test Penalty when he tries to lie as only the most unobservant can't catch it.

TAGER RULES

Attributes

Tager symbionts increase the Attributes of their hosts. Each Tager Character has two sets of Attributes – one set for their normal form and one for their shifted form. This also means that they have two sets of Secondary Attributes.

Abilities

· Tagers can shift instantly between their two forms. This ability cannot be constrained by restraints or physical objects. The symbiont will mystically destroy any such obstacles in order to manifest.

· Tagers have microhooks on their hands and feet which allow them to cling to and crawl on sheer surfaces like an insect.

· Tagers can perform super-human leaps and jump double normal distances, sometimes more.

· Tagers are considered sealed against gas or biological attacks and can produce their own air for short periods of time. This internal air supply lasts for two hours. They have full mystical life support and can even withstand the depths of the ocean or the vacuum of space.

· Characters receive a +4 bonus to Fear Tests when shifted into Tager form.

· Tagers, regardless of form, have the ability to detect Dhohanoids (and other Tagers) in their mortal guise. By spending one minute carefully observing a person, and succeeding at a Challenging Observation Test, a Tager can figure out whether or not he's watching a monster.

· Tagers within one mile of each other, when shifted, are mind-linked. This mindlink allows shifted Tagers to soundlessly communicate through a form of limited telepathy, as well as know what other Tagers are nearby and alive. This does not allow Tagers to know precisely where each other is, how far they are away from each other, or if they are hurt. It only senses whether they are nearby and alive or dead.

Tager Senses

· *Broadband Audio* – Hearing is twice as sensitive and can register super and subsonic ranges. Range: Hearing, 360°.

· *Long Range* – Doubles all sensor ranges.

· *Nightvision* – Used to see in very low light conditions, though not in complete darkness. Vision is green and white, not color. Range: Sight.

· *Scan* – Gathers vital statistics on living things, including whether or not something is alive or dead, its age, its gender, its level of health, and whether or not it is diseased. Range: 100 yards.

· *Sonar* – Only usable underwater; bounces sound waves to paint a picture of all objects within range, including terrain features. Range: 1 mile, 360°.

· *Thermal* – Registers heat signatures. Range: 100 yards.

· *X-Ray* – Uses X-rays to see through most materials, registering dense substances, including metals and bones. Range: 50 yards.

Combat

· Tagers use their Fighting skill instead of their Armed Fighting skill when wielding their natural non-projectile weaponry, such as blades or claws as these weapons are an extension of their body.

· Tagers regenerate Vitality, even in their natural mortal form. The number listed first represents the amount of Vitality they regenerate every hour in their natural form and the second number listed is the amount of Vitality they regenerate each turn in their shifted form.

· Each Tager has what is called a Limit Weapon which is very powerful. Limit Weapons can only be used once every 24 hours To activate the attack the Tager must first succeed at a Hard Tenacity Feat Test. Using a Limit Weapon requires all of a Tager's Actions for the turn and can be the only Action that turn.

· The hands of a shifted Tager are too large to use conventional weaponry. However, the Eldrith Society has modified some types of weapons, including assault rifles and man-portable anti-mech weaponry, with larger grips, triggers, and trigger guards for Tager use. The availability of these special weapons is up to your Storyguide.

· Tagers have a Fear Factor, which represents the Difficulty for Fear Tests for mortals who observe their monstrous forms.

GEAR

Since most of the Characters in CthulhuTech are middle-class, feel free to give them whatever normal kinds of possessions might apply. Assume they all have PCPU's (peeks) – portable computers with wireless access that are also phones and debit/credit cards. If you want to give them firearms, several are outlined in the Head Case adventure.

DADELKA

Dadelka is just plain single-minded and dangerous. He revels in opportunities to bring his own unique style of pain to others. For him the boundary between good-guy and bad-guy is very blurred. For someone who lives day-to-day just to get radical, it's certainly fortunate that he has developed an intense loyalty to the Society, meaning that he does what it takes to protect their secrets. He'll play it cool if he has to, but boiling endlessly underneath the surface is that vicious predator just waiting to strike out.

DADELKA'S SYMBIONT: NIGHTMARE

Looking down at you with its mass of uneven eyes, the Nightmare bristles like the machine of death that it is. If your feet weren't frozen in place, you'd run anywhere to get away from it. It has a dozen ways to kill you, but it can't seem to decide how...

The Nightmare lives its name. Uncommon and enormous, it stands more than a head taller than most other Tagers and strikes commensurately more fear. Despite its bulk, it is just as fast as other Tagers, though it hits much harder. While it's as heavily armored as the Phantom, what makes a Nightmare more deadly is its accelerated rate of regeneration. It might heal from almost dead to deadly in less than five minutes.

Combined with its significant strength, the claws of a Nightmare make it lethal up close. But it is best known for its deadly Shoulder Pods. These Pods ejaculate crimson force balls at targets within a 180° arc of the Tager's front, punching into them like the rounds of a large machinegun. They track and fire together like the eyes of some horrible beast and together they manifest the terrible Mystic Blast. The Pods condense energy into three triangular floating gravity points, finally firing a trigger blast through the center and releasing all the energy at once. It cuts an eight-foot tall, five-foot wide swathe of destruction in a straight line for 400 yards, happily punching through walls and other solid objects.

The Nightmare is a dangerous and bloodthirsty symbiont. Those who are bound with one develop a certain menace and predatory ease, combined with a cold temper and murderous streak.

Size: Medium (8 to 9 ft. tall)
Weapons:
   Talons (+2) – These vicious claws tip the Tager's fingers.
   Shoulder Pods – Range 25/60/170, Damage +3, Shots 1, Infinite Rounds
   Tentacle Sheathe (+1) – This tentacle sheath may be used to entangle foes.
Limit Weapon:
   Mystic Blast – Range 30/75/200, Damage +6; this blast is a five-foot wide swathe of eldritch destruction. It damages anything in its path, in a straight line. This attack does Hybrid Damage. This uses all Actions and can be the Tager's only Action that turn.

DAVID LEUNG

David is new to Chicago. He recently moved here from Hong Kong as a refugee seeking safety from the Rapine Storm's ravaging overrun of his homeland. He soon set up his own dojo and began teaching Kung Fu to prospective new students. Thus far, business has been relatively successful. However, today's business is all that he will talk about – he never discusses the past. He doesn't want anyone to know about his own shame – that he abandoned his Hong Kong pack to save his own hide. They opted to stay and fight for their city. He however thought such an act to be futile, so he left on his own, standing firmly on his own sense of self-righteousness. It wasn't until later that the guilt began to seep in. He is sure that his old pack is dead. Now he works to atone for his personal loss of honor by being the best he can be for the Chitown Kings.

DAVID'S SYMBIONT: PHANTOM

The Phantom, one of the two most common Tagers, is heavily armed, tough, and equipped with one of the most terrifying Limit Weapons of all the symbionts. A magical electrical blast that generates out of the Tager's forehead, the Arcane Blast fires the equivalent of a heavy round with deadly accuracy. The Phantom's exceptional strength combined with the sharp blades that extend out of its forearms make it a vicious killer up close. Not even aerial targets are safe, as its awful Howl brings fliers to the ground – and knocks other opponents off their feet.

However, it's the Limit Weapon of the Phantom that is most feared, and not coincidentally coveted by many other Tagers. A mass of black tentacles burst out of its chest, flaying the flesh off those unlucky enough to get in the way. Before they return, the symbiont chooses one of these victims as its meal. It drags the screaming victim back into the dimensional cavity from which it came and swallows him whole.

Phantoms are sleek and aggressive symbionts. Those who are bound with one develop an attunement with their body and a confident awareness, combined with a sense of freedom and a certain bloodlust.

Size: Medium (6 to 7 ft. tall)
Weapons:
  Arcane Blast – Range 30/75/200, Damage +2, Shots 3, Infinite Rounds
  Blades (+2) – These blades often extend from the forearms of the Tager.
  Howl (+0) – Range of 20 ft. Target must succeed at a Challenging Strength Feat Test or be knocked to the ground.
Limit Weapon:
  Tentacle Sheathe (+3) – A mass of tentacles bursts out of the Phantom's chest, covering a 30 ft. cone in front of him. Everything caught within the tentacles is attacked, at no Multiple Action Penalty. One of the targets, randomly selected, must also succeed at a Challenging Strength Test or the symbiont will drag him back and eat him. This takes one full turn and results in the death of the victim. This uses all Actions and can be the Tager's only Action that turn.

LISA GIBBONS

Lisa is the leader of the Chitown Kings. Her aggressive approach to her life has caused her several significant results. Her meteoric rise to the position of Marketing Director at a prestigious local firm, even at the age of twenty-nine, is certainly one of them. The other is the fact that she was recently commissioned to take charge of a new downtown Tager pack. She is a smart looking, well-dressed, professional businesswoman – an image that she maintains even to the detriment of deeper and more rewarding personal relationships.

LISA'S SYMBIONT: SHADOW

Something that can't be seen, the Shadow is the thing that moves in the corner of one's eye. Spy, ninja, ghost – it has been called all of these and none of them is incorrect, for the Shadow has the mystical ability to disappear at will. As long as it's alive, it can disappear from sight and sound in an instant. Not only is it invisible and inaudible, it leaves no heat signature either.

Its tools as an assassin are manifold. The needles growing on its chin can be fired as poisoned darts. This organic poison is a powerful, short-term paralytic, meant to disable a target just long enough for the Shadow to gain advantage. Once it is up close, thorns sprout out of almost every striking surface, making it capable of tearing chunks out of vulnerable flesh. Its ability to Multiport strikes a target from up to six different sides nearly simultaneously.

The Shadow is a deadly and careful symbiont. Those who are bound with one develop great patience and a cool temper, combined with a controlled nature and a callous attitude towards killing.

Special: Paralytic Poison – The needles fired by the Shadow are coated with an organic paralytic poison. This poison requires that the needle do at least one point of Vitality damage to be administered. Anyone affected by the poison must succeed at a Hard Tenacity Feat Test to resist. If this Test is failed, the victim loses 2 Actions per turn for one to ten minutes (roll one die), which can effectively reduce a character's Actions to zero. Only one Test needs to be made per turn when struck by the Shadow's needles and the effect of the needles is not cumulative. A target may again be affected on the turn following his recovery from the last dose.

Special: Stealth – The Shadow projects a mystical stealth field, which functions like a mecha stealth system except that all Degrees to spot it are increased one category. In addition to rapid, erratic movement, touching anything living (of dog-size or larger) will force the stealth to drop. This ability drains the Orgone of the Tager, at a rate of one point for every half hour invisible. The ability of a Shadow to use its stealth is not affected by this drain. A Shadow may even use this ability when its Orgone has been drained to zero, but Orgone will not regenerate while it is engaged.

Size: Medium (6 to 7 ft. tall)
Weapons:
  Thorns (+1) – These thorns grow out of the hands, forearms, shoulders, lower legs, and feet.
  Needle Pods – Range 25/60/170, Damage +1 (+ Poison), Shots 2, Infinite Rounds
Limit Weapon:
  Multiport – This attack can target anything within a range of twice the Shadow's average jumping distance. By rapidly teleporting around his target, the Shadow can take double his normal Actions – though no movement – with no Multiple Action Penalty, for one single turn. These attacks occur simultaneously. This uses all Actions and can be the Tager's only Action that turn.

PENDY

Pendy is cute. That is the first thing that strikes just about anyone that meats her – playful, loving, and cute. As a recent University graduate with a degree in Aracontech Engineering, she certainly seems to be at the top of her world. Anything is possible in her view, even the possibility of converting Dhohanoids over to their cause – a topic of much humor to the rest of her pack. Yes, she is a bit naïve, but also brings a sense of lightness and community to the group that nobody else seems to know how to generate. Nobody could ever suspect that under that sweet bubbly exterior lies a deadly killer ready to spring instinctively at the throat of anyone who threatens her pack.

PENDY'S SYMBIONT: WHISPER

Whispers have senses and speed of which other Tagers only dream. Simply put, they see everything – even through walls – and they move twice as fast as other Tagers. As if that wasn't enough, they have a set of foldable wings (a strange fusion of bat and insect) upon which they flit about even faster, using a second set of small arms to carry things as they fly.

A Whisper's weapons are designed for harry and retreat. The whips that extend from its forearms can be used to entangle, disarm, or drag an opponent from the air. Gossamer Bombs, plasmic balls that drop out its chest, burst with a blinding flash of light, stunning and blinding those for thirty feet around. Combined with its speed, a Whisper can create an effective distraction. Moreover, its Razor Wing limit weapon is a perfect exit strategy, carving its way through any obstacles for a speedy getaway.

The Whisper is a delicate but feisty symbiont. Those who are bound with one develop great patience and a cool temper, along with a dogged determination and an amazing eye for detail. They are often voyeurs.

Size: Medium (6 to 7 ft. tall)
Weapons:
  Whips (+1) – These whips most often extend from the forearms of the Tager and can be used to entangle opponents.
  Gossamer Bombs (Blinding) – These radiant balls are dropped from the air. Wherever they land, they burst in a blinding light and everything within a 15-foot radius must succeed at a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test or lose its next two Actions, which can reduce a character's Actions to zero for the turn. Only one gossamer bomb can be fired each turn, but each Whisper has an unlimited supply.
Limit Weapon:
  Razor Wing (+4) – The Tager's speed and armor doubles for the turn of this flying charge attack. This attack still requires the use of the Fighting skill and can be used to attack as many targets as are in a reasonably straight line, up to the Tager's maximum movement for that turn. This uses all Actions and can be the Tager's only Action that turn.

CHULHU TECH

CHARACTER SHEET

CONCEPT

Name	Dadelka	Callsign	Mayhem
Player		Allegiance	Eldritch Society
Storyguide		Profession	Tager
Story	Head Case	Race	Nazzadi
Virtue	Loyal	Flaw	Mean

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Rating	Feat Level
Agility	6	Adept (3)
Intellect	4	Novice (2)
Perception	6	Adept (3)
Presence	5	Novice (2)
Strength	9	Expert (4)
Tenacity	11	Master (6)

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Actions	1
Movement	13 mph (32/8)
Reflex	5
Orgone	6
Vitality	15
Drama Points	10

EXPERIENCE

Total	0
Unspent	0

SKILLS

Skill	Expertise	Attr. Base
Criminal	Novice (2)	Agility
Intimidate	Novice (2)	Presence
Language (English)	Adept (3)	Intellect
Language (Nazzadi)	Expert (4)	Intellect
Literacy	Novice (2)	Intellect
Observation	Novice (2)	Perception
Regional Knowledge	Novice (2)	Intellect
Stealth	Student (1)	Agility
Streetwise	Novice (2)	Intellect
Dodge	Novice (2)	Agility
Fighting	Adept (3)	Agility
Marksman	Adept (3)	Perception

Specializations	Expertise	Skill

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	Male
Age	28
Height	6' 1"
Weight	205 lbs.
Hair	White
Eyes	Red
Coloring	Nazzadi Black
Dist. Features	Cold Stare
Birthday	November 23, 2058
Place of Birth	Mexico City, Mexico

QUALITIES

Assets

Ally (1), Fearless (2), Tager (4), Tager: Exceptional (2)

Drawbacks

Debt (1), Duty (2), Fanatical (2), Mean (2), Repellent (1)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tager Senses: Nightvision, Scan

Tager Movement: Double Climbing Speed and Jumping

INSANITY

Points	1
Disorders	None

POSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

Gear (Owned)

SPELLS

First Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Second Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Third Order	Type	Effect	Cost

ARMOR

Type	Protection
Tager natural armor	2/2

TAGER

Manifestation	Nightmare	
Regeneration	1 per hour/1 per turn	
Fear Factor	16	

Shifted Attributes	Level	Feat
Agility	8	Expert (4)
Perception	9	Expert (4)
Strength	13	Master (6)
Tenacity	13	Master (6)
Actions	2	
Movement	19 mph (47/11)	
Reflex	7	
Vitality	18	

WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Shots/Rounds	Range
Talons	+2	n/a	n/a
Shoulder Pods	+3	1/Infinite	25/60/170
Tentacle Sheathe	+1 & Entangle	n/a	n/a
Mystic Blast	+6	Limit	30/75/200

WOUNDS

Level	Vitality	Current	Effect	Tager Vitality	Tager Current
Flesh	1 to 15		None	1 to 18	
Light	16 to 30		-1 Test Penalty	19 to 36	
Moderate	31 to 45		-3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half	37 to 54	
Serious	46 to 60		-6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone	55 to 72	
Death's Door	61 to 75		Unconcious & Dying	73 to 90	

C†HULHU TECH

CHARACTER SHEET

CONCEPT

Name	David Leung	Callsign	Shifu
Player		Allegiance	Eldritch Society
Storyguide		Profession	Martial Arts Instructor
Story	Head Case	Race	Human
Virtue	Honorable	Flaw	Impatient

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Rating	Feat Level
Agility	9	Expert (4)
Intellect	5	Novice (2)
Perception	5	Novice (2)
Presence	5	Novice (2)
Strength	7	Adept (3)
Tenacity	8	Expert (4)

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Actions	2
Movement	15 mph (37/9)
Reflex	6
Orgone	5
Vitality	12
Drama Points	10

EXPERIENCE

Total	0
Unspent	0

SKILLS

Skill	Expertise	Attr. Base
Athletics	Student (1)	Special
Culture (Chinese)	Novice (2)	Intellect
Language (English)	Expert (4)	Intellect
Language (Mandarin)	Adept (3)	Intellect
Literacy	Adept (3)	Intellect
Observation	Novice (2)	Perception
Performance (Kata)	Novice (2)	Presence
Regional Knowledge	Novice (2)	Intellect
Stealth	Adept (3)	Agility
Survival	Student (1)	Tenacity
Armed Fighting	Adept (3)	Agility
Dodge	Novice (2)	Agility
Fighting	Adept (3)	Agility
Marksman	Novice (2)	Perception

Specializations	Expertise	Skill
Tager Natural Weapons	Focus (+1)	Fighting
Martial Arts	Focus (+1)	Fighting

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	Male
Age	30
Height	5' 7"
Weight	165 lbs.
Hair	Black
Eyes	Brown
Coloring	Asian
Dist. Features	Excellent Posture
Birthday	March 19, 2056
Place of Birth	Hong Kong, China

QUALITIES

Assets

Ally (1), Driven (2), Tager (4), Wary (2)

Drawbacks

Dark Secret (2), Depressive (2), Duty (2), Impetuous (2)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tager Senses: Nightvision, Scan

Tager Movement: Double Climbing Speed and Jumping

Shadow Special Ability – Stealth

INSANITY

Points	1
Disorders	None

POSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

Gear (Owned)

SPELLS

First Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Second Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Third Order	Type	Effect	Cost

ARMOR

Type	Protection
Tager Armor	2/2

WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Shots/Rounds	Range
Arcane Blast	+2	3/Infinite	30/75/200
Blades	+2	n/a	n/a
Howl	+0 & Knockdown	n/a	20 ft
Tentacle Sheathe	+3 & Consume	Limit	30 ft, Mult Targets

TAGER

Manifestation	Phantom	
Regeneration	1 per hour/3 per turn	
Fear Factor	12	
Shifted Attributes	Level	Feat
Agility	11	Master (6)
Perception	7	Adept (3)
Strength	9	Expert (4)
Tenacity	10	Master (5)
Actions	3	
Movement	19 mph (47/11)	
Reflex	7	
Vitality	14	

WOUNDS

Level	Vitality	Current	Effect	Tager Vitality	Tager Current
Flesh	1 to 12		None	1 to 14	
Light	13 to 24		-1 Test Penalty	15 to 28	
Moderate	25 to 36		-3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half	29 to 42	
Serious	37 to 48		-6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone	43 to 56	
Death's Door	49 to 60		Unconcious & Dying	56 to 70	

CHARACTER SHEET

CONCEPT

Name	Lisa Gibbons	Callsign	Mamma Bear
Player		Allegiance	Eldritch Society
Storyguide		Profession	Marketing Director
Story	Head Case	Race	Human
Virtue	Confident	Flaw	Aggressive

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Rating	Feat Level
Agility	8	Expert (4)
Intellect	6	Adept (3)
Perception	7	Adept (3)
Presence	5	Novice (2)
Strength	5	Novice (2)
Tenacity	8	Expert (4)

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Actions	2
Movement	11 mph (27/6)
Reflex	7
Orgone	5
Vitality	11
Drama Points	10

EXPERIENCE

Total	0
Unspent	0

SKILLS

Skill	Expertise	Attr. Base
Bureaucracy	Novice (2)	Intellect
Business	Adept (3)	Intellect
Computers	Student (1)	Intellect
Education	Expert (4)	Intellect
Language (English)	Expert (4)	Intellect
Literacy	Novice (2)	Intellect
Observation	Adept (3)	Perception
Regional Knowledge	Novice (2)	Intellect
Stealth	Adept (3)	Agility
Dodge	Novice (2)	Agility
Fighting	Adept (3)	Agility
Marksman	Adept (3)	Perception

Specializations	Expertise	Skill
Tager Natural Weapons	Focus (+1)	Fighting
Tager Ranged Weapons	Focus (+1)	Marksman

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	Female
Age	29
Height	5' 9"
Weight	140 lbs.
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Blue
Coloring	Fair skinned Irish
Dist. Features	Eyes sparkle with energy
Birthday	February 16, 2057
Place of Birth	Minneapolis, MN

QUALITIES

Assets
Acute Sight (2), Alluring (2), Tager (4), Wealth (1)

Drawbacks
Duty: Job (1), Duty: Eldritch Society (2), Fanatical (2), Rival (2)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tager Senses: Nightvision, Scan

Tager Movement: Double Climbing Speed &

Triple Jumping Distance

INSANITY

Points	1
Disorders	None

POSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

Gear (Owned)

SPELLS

First Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Second Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Third Order	Type	Effect	Cost

TAGER

Manifestation	Shadow	
Regeneration	1 per hour/2 per turn	
Fear Factor	12	

Shifted Attributes	Level	Feat
Agility	10	Master (5)
Perception	8	Expert (4)
Strength	7	Expert (4)
Tenacity	10	Master (5)
Actions	3	
Movement	15 mph (37/9)	
Reflex	8	
Vitality	13	

ARMOR

Type	Protection
Tager Armor	1/1

WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Shots/Rounds	Range
Thorns	+2	n/a	n/a
Needle Pods	+1 + Poison	2/Infinite	25/60/170
Multiport	Double Actions	Limit Attack	Double Jump Distance

WOUNDS

Level	Vitality	Current	Effect	Tager Vitality	Tager Current
Flesh	1 to 11		None	1 to 13	
Light	12 to 22		-1 Test Penalty	14 to 26	
Moderate	23 to 33		-3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half	27 to 39	
Serious	34 to 44		-6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone	40 to 52	
Death's Door	45 to 55		Unconcious & Dying	53 to 65	

CHARACTER SHEET

CONCEPT

Name	Pendy	Callsign	Angel
Player		Allegiance	Eldritch Society
Storyguide		Profession	Arcanotech Engineer
Story	Head Case	Race	Nazzadi
Virtue	Loving	Flaw	Naive

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Rating	Feat Level
Agility	7	Adept (3)
Intellect	5	Novice (2)
Perception	10	Master (5)
Presence	5	Novice (2)
Strength	5	Novice (2)
Tenacity	7	Adept (3)

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Actions	2
Movement	11 mph (27/6)
Reflex	7
Orgone	5
Vitality	11
Drama Points	10

EXPERIENCE

Total	0
Unspent	0

SKILLS

Skill	Expertise	Attr. Base
Arcanotech Engineering	Student (1)	Intellect
Computers	Novice (2)	Intellect
Education	Adept (3)	Intellect
Engineering	Student (1)	Intellect
Language (English)	Expert (4)	Intellect
Language (Nazzadi)	Adept (3)	Intellect
Literacy	Adept (3)	Intellect
Observation	Adept (3)	Perception
Occult	Novice (2)	Intellect
Regional Knowledge	Novice (2)	Intellect
Science - Physical	Adept (3)	Intellect
Dodge	Novice (2)	Agility
Fighting	Adept (3)	Agility
Marksman	Adept (3)	Perception

Specializations	Expertise	Skill

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	Female
Age	26
Height	5' 8"
Weight	132 lbs.
Hair	White - Long
Eyes	Red
Coloring	Nazzadi Black
Dist. Features	White-work Tattoos
Birthday	September 22, 2060
Place of Birth	Toronto, Canada

QUALITIES

Assets

Acute Sight (2), Alluring (2), Tager (4)

Drawbacks

Debt (1), Duty (2), Fanatical (2), Truly Honest (2)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tager Senses: Broadband Audio, Long Range, Nightvision, Scan, Sonar, Thermal, X-ray

Tager Movement: Double Climbing Speed & Jumping, Flight

INSANITY

Points	1
Disorders	None

POSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

Gear (Owned)

SPELLS

First Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Second Order	Type	Effect	Cost

Third Order	Type	Effect	Cost

ARMOR

Type	Protection
Tager Armor	1/1

TAGER

Manifestation	Whisper
Regeneration	1 per hour/1 per turn
Fear Factor	12

Shifted Attributes	Level	Feat
Agility	10	Master (5)
Perception	12	Master (6)
Strength	6	Adept (3)
Tenacity	9	Expert (4)
Actions	3	
Movement	15 mph (37/9), Flight 45 mph (111/27)	
Reflex	9	
Vitality	12	

WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Shots/Rounds	Range
Whips	+1	n/a	n/a
Gossamer Bombs	Blinding	1/Infinite	Drop, 15 ft radius
Razor Wing	+4	Limit	Speed/Armor double

WOUNDS

Level	Vitality	Current	Effect	Tager Vitality	Tager Current
Flesh	1 to 11		None	1 to 12	
Light	12 to 22		-1 Test Penalty	13 to 24	
Moderate	23 to 33		-3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half	25 to 36	
Serious	34 to 44		-6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone	37 to 48	
Death's Door	45 to 55		Unconcious & Dying	49 to 60	

DUA-SANARAS

One of the most common Dhohanoids, the Dua-Sanari are amphibious humanoids of a cephalopod vein. Masses of tentacles topped with giant unblinking saucer eyes and serrated beak-mouths, these hideous creatures are rubbery, smooth, and hairless. Their sinewy bodies are as agile in the water as they are on land and Dua-Sanari are capable of diving to incredible depths. They are economical beings, moving only when and how is required.

Coldly malicious, they delight in the pain and suffering of others. They never miss a chance to bring darkness to another's life, even under the eye of the Chrysalis Corporation. Dua-Sanari are evil for evil's sake and they love it.

The very nature of a mortal is changed when he becomes a Dhohanoid. Even when he appears to be mortal there are things about him that give away his now otherworldly nature. Dua-Sanari are incredibly flexible to the point of being freakishly double-jointed. They also have little or no body-hair and men have difficulty growing facial hair.

Average Dua-Sanaras (Experienced)

Allegiance: Children of Chaos
Scale: Vitality
Size: Medium (6 to 7 ft. tall)
Attributes: Agility 9 (+2), Intellect 6 (+0), Perception 7 (+0), Presence 6 (+0), Strength 9 (+2), Tenacity 9 (+2)
Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Orgone 12, Reflex 7
General Skills: Athletics: Adept (3), Bureaucracy: Novice (2), Computers: Novice (2), Criminal: Adept (3), Education: Novice (2), Intimidate: Novice (2), Misdirect: Novice (2), Occult: Novice (2), Observation: Adept (3), Savoir-Faire: Novice (2), Security: Novice (2), Stealth: Adept (3), Surveillance: Novice (2), Survival: Novice (2)
Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept (3), Fighting: Adept (3), Marksman: Novice (2)
Weapons: Beak (+1), Tentacles (0 + entangle)
Damage Bonus: +1
Vitality: 14
Armor: 1/1
Regeneration: 1 Point
Fear Factor: 16
Temperament: Unfeeling & Malicious
Senses: Nightvision, Sonar
Movement & Speed: Land [17 mph (42/10 ypt)], Swim [34 mph (84/20 ypt)]

ELIB

Some sort of wicked cross of carnivorous amphibian and humanoid, Elib are fierce predators. Their smooth black bodies boast an impressive arsenal. Powerful legs propel them over and into victims with brutal force. Sharp, retractable talons and a fleshy sweeping tail lash out with amazing force. But perhaps most frightening are their fanged over-sized mouths that could easily swallow a child.

Elib are bloodthirsty and murderous – they know no greater joy than the destruction of life. Situations involving Elib usually end with a high body count. They are unruly and difficult to control, flying into nearly shark-like killing frenzies when given the chance.

In mortal form, Elib have powerful legs and a mouth that might seem a little too large – and a grin that could only be described as predatory. Like Dua-Sanari, their bodies are virtually or completely hairless and males have difficultly cultivating facial hair.

Special Rules: An Elib is capable of swallowing a target whole. If he beats an opponent by more than fifteen points when biting, he has swallowed the unfortunate soul – but only creatures under four feet in size or length. Swallowed victims suffer 4 dice of damage each turn that only supernatural forms of armor can counter, as a powerful digestive system tries to grind him up and reduce him to paste. The only way to save a swallowed victim is to kill the Elib or induce him to vomit – something easier said than done.

Average Elib (Experienced)

Allegiance: Children of Chaos
Scale: Vitality
Size: Medium (7 to 8 ft. tall)
Attributes: Agility 10 (+3), Intellect 5 (+0), Perception 7 (+1), Presence 7 (+0), Strength 11 (+3), Tenacity 10 (+3)
Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Orgone 12, Reflex 7
General Skills: Athletics: Expert (4), Bureaucracy: Novice (2), Computers: Novice (2), Criminal: Adept (3), Education: Novice (2), Intimidate: Adept (3), Misdirect: Novice (2), Occult: Novice (2), Observation: Expert (4), Savoir-Faire: Novice (2), Stealth: Adept (3), Survival: Novice (2)
Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept (3), Fighting: Expert (4), Marksman: Novice (2)
Weapons: Talons (+1), Mouth (+2, requires both Actions), Leaping Strike (+2, requires both Actions), Swallow, Tail Swipe (+1)
Damage Bonus: +2
Vitality: 15
Armor: 2/2
Regeneration: 2 Points
Fear Factor: 16
Temperament: Brutal & Murderous
Senses: Acute Smell & Taste, Nightvision
Movement & Speed: Land [19 mph (47/11 ypt)], Leaping (Double)

GELGORE

Monstrous reptilians, Gelgore are lithe, fast, and lethal. Their resemblance to snakes bears less in common with constrictors and more with cobras – they're venomous. The poison these creatures secrete is a powerful organic paralytic and bite is not the only way they deliver it. Fed by bulbous pods rising out of their backs, Gelgore "spit" poisonous needles. If fact, they can spit them so fast that they are walking machineguns. Legless, Gelgore slither on a long, ophidian tail up and over all but the slickest of obstacles. Their fanged jaws unhinge, allowing them to bite even the thickest opponents. To accommodate their needle spitting, Gelgore necks are unusually flexible – they can nearly turn their head all the way around. This combined with their snake-like speed allows them to make nearly anyone a target.

Gelgore are precise. They think and act quickly, moving and striking with surgical accuracy. As cold-blooded as they look, Gelgore leave their emotions out of their job. They are dispassionately efficient and waste no precious time.

In their mortal form, Gelgore are thin and graceful, though in a deadly kind of way. No matter what their natural eye color may be, there is always just a hint of red in them – enough to unnerve most people on an unconscious level.

Special Rules:
A Gelgore's Needle Pod contains an infinite supply of ammunition, as their body creates needles as quickly as they are spent. However, for every turn a Gelgore fires at an automatic rate of fire he must spend one turn firing only single-shot – up to a maximum of four turns in a row automatic followed by four turns in a row single-shot.

Furthermore, the needles fired by the Gelgore are coated with an organic paralytic poison. This poison requires that the needle do at least one point of Vitality damage to be administered. Anyone affected by the poison must succeed at a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test to resist. If this Test is failed, the victim loses 2 Actions per turn for one to ten minutes (roll one die) – which can effectively reduce a character's Actions to zero. Only one Test needs to be made per turn struck by the Gelgore's needles and the effect of the needles is not cumulative. A target may again be affected following his recovery from the last dose.

Average Gelgore (Experienced)

Allegiance: Children of Chaos
Scale: Vitality
Size: Medium (5 to 6 ft. tall)
Attributes: Agility 10 (+2), Intellect 7 (+0), Perception 12 (+4), Presence 6 (+0), Strength 5 (+0), Tenacity 8 (+2)
Secondary Attributes: Actions 3, Orgone 12, Reflex 9
General Skills: Athletics: Expert (4), Bureaucracy: Novice (2), Computers: Novice (2), Criminal: Adept (3), Education: Novice (2), Intimidate: Novice (2), Misdirect: Novice (2), Occult: Novice (2), Observation: Adept (3), Savoir-Faire: Novice (2), Stealth: Adept (3), Survival: Novice (2)
Combat Skills: Dodge: Expert (4), Fighting: Adept (3), Marksman: Expert (4)
Weapons: Claws (0), Bite (0 + Poison)

	Range	Damage	Shots
Needle Pods	25/60/170	+2 + Poison	3 or 4/1-5

Damage Bonus: 0
Vitality: 11
Armor: 0/0
Regeneration: 1 Point
Fear Factor: 16
Temperament: Efficient & Collected
Senses: Acute Smell & Taste, Nightvision, Thermal
Movement & Speed: Climbing [26 mph (64/16 ypt)], Land [45 mph (111/27 ypt)]

RAMACHESE

Dark fur covers their nimble bodies. Large red eyes and long tapered bat-like ears sit above a snout of needle-like fangs. They know right where to strike, as if they could see the blood coarsing through a victim's veins. These shadow-dwellers are the Ramachese, an unfortunately common manifestation of Dhohanoid.

Ramachese are unnaturally suited to the night. Darkness recognizes its own. The shadows in what's left of their souls calls to the shadows of the world and they respond. Ramachese find it easy to hide in shadows and are deadly anywhere the sun refuses to shine. Even in light, it's as if a Ramachese's shadow has a mind of its own.

Sinisterly clever, Ramachese live to create fear. They prefer to revel in a victim's terror (or to attack from surprise). Even in their mortal guises, they intimate, intimidate, and threaten to great effect. No mortal can ever be comfortable in their presence – there is simply something evil about them.

Even as mortals, Ramachese display enhanced hearing that makes them appear inhuman. They prefer nighttime and dim lighting indoors and often complain about uncomfortable glares in brightly lit rooms or sunlight. It isn't unusual to find them wearing sunglasses, even at twilight.

Special Rules: Shadows unnaturally respond to Ramachese. This gives them a +4 Test Bonus

to Stealth Tests involving shadows or darkness. They can consciously dampen this ability to conceal their true natures, but often don't.

Average Ramachese (Experienced)

Allegiance: Children of Chaos
Scale: Vitality
Size: Medium (6 to 7 ft. tall)

Attributes: Agility 11 (+2), Intellect 5, Perception 9 (+2), Presence 6, Strength 7 (+1), Tenacity 8 (+1)

Secondary Attributes: Actions 3, Orgone 11, Reflex 8

General Skills: Athletics: Adept (3), Bureaucracy: Novice (2), Computers: Novice (2), Criminal: Novice (2), Education: Novice (2), Intimidate: Adept (3), Misdirect: Novice (2), Occult: Novice (2), Observation: Adept (3), Savoir-Faire: Novice (2), Security: Novice (2), Stealth: Adept (3), Surveillance: Novice (2), Survival: Novice (2)

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept (3), Fighting: Adept (3), Marksman: Novice (2)

Weapons: Bite (0), Claws (+1)

Damage Bonus: 0

Vitality: 12

Armor: 1/1

Regeneration: 1 Point

Fear Factor: 16

Temperament: Clever & Sinister

Senses: Acute Hearing, Broadband Audio, Nightvision, Sonar, Thermal

Movement & Speed: Jumping (Quadruple), Land [17 mph (42/10 ypt)]

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CthulhuTech Core Book
The Last War

2085. Humanity faces extinction. Alien insects from the edge of our solar system, long hidden behind the façade of reality, descend to enslave us. Hordes of unspeakable horrors roll out from Central Asia, laying waste to anything in their path. The church of the fish-god scours the world for lost occult secrets to unleash terrible forces. Dead gods awaken and turn their dreadful eyes toward the Earth. And within hides a cancer, eating away at the very heart of the New Earth Government.

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Climb inside a thirty-foot tall war machine and rain down hell on the unwavering Migou. Fight tooth and nail on the front lines against the horrific beasts of the Rapine Storm. Seek out the disgusting corruption of the insidious Esoteric Order of Dagon. Explore the dark world of the malignant Chrysalis Corporation and their unseen monstrous agents. Sift through secrets long thought lost and bend the power of the cosmos to your will. Join in symbiosis with something beyond time and space and become a shape-shifting bringer of wrath.

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Explore society as one of the forbidden Human-Nazzadi xenomixed lovechildren. Be a stranger in your own land as an otherworldly White. Fight the hidden enemies within society as an agent of the Federal Security Bureau. Abuse shocking power policing arcane crimes as an agent of the Office of Internal Security. Bring the power of the cosmos to bear with just the power of your own mind – or lose yourself to it.

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It's a Question of Perspective

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Discover new breakthroughs that might give humanity a much needed edge – but at what cost? Suffer a plague of street crime, eroding the places where people once felt safe. Watch in shock at the lengths the Nazzadi are willing to go to police their own kind. And quietly, something new is born within the darkest pits of the Chrysalis Corporation. Explore a year in the Strange Aeon or lose yourself in the lies and pretend it isn't happening.

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Enemies bound to the mortal coil, perhaps soon to be consumed by it – and each other.

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Ancient Enemies
Thicker Than Blood

Underneath the carefully crafted world of the new Earth Government, a sickness festers. The Children of Chaos hide within the mighty Chrysalis Corporation, agents of the end. Intent on bringing back the lost days of terrible old gods, they are a hidden tumor that soon will be too malignant to excise. Only one force has the power and the secrets to fight the enemy within. Legacy of the Forgotten Ones, the Eldritch Society secretly hunts the Children of Chaos. Holy warriors, monsters with the hearts of men, struggle desperately to save humanity. And to the New Earth Government, its saviors are monsters and its destroyers heroes.

This is the Shadow War – so few know the truth.

Peel back the layers of secrecy to explore the mysterious Eldritch Society. Discover what joining in symbiosis with a thing from beyond space and time really means. Undergo mystical metamorphosis to join more deeply with your otherworldly symbiont and feel the pull of its wild power. Pull back the veil to stare into the dark eyes of the true Chrysalis Corporation. Give yourself over to the power of the Old Ones and endure the infamous Rite of Transfiguration, sacrificing your humanity for something greater.

160 pages, $39.99. Coming Soon!

The Last War

2085. Humanity faces extinction. Alien insects from the edge of our solar system, long hidden behind the façade of reality, descend to enslave us. Hordes of unspeakable horrors roll out from Central Asia, laying waste to anything in their path. The church of the fish-god scours the world for lost occult secrets to unleash terrible forces. Dead gods awaken and turn their dreadful eyes toward the Earth. And within hides a cancer, eating away at the very heart of the New Earth Government.

This is the Aeon War. This is the time of *CthulhuTech.*

Climb inside a thirty-foot tall war machine and rain down hell on the unwavering Migou. Fight tooth and nail on the front lines against the horrific beasts of the Rapine Storm. Seek out the disgusting corruption of the insidious Esoteric Order of Dagon. Explore the dark world of the malignant Chrysalis Corporation and their unseen monstrous agents. Sift through secrets long thought lost and bend the power of the cosmos to your will. Join in symbiosis with something beyond time and space and become a shape-shifting bringer of wrath.

Nowhere else will you find a setting like this.

Inside these Quick-Start Rules you will find:
· an overview of the rich world of the Aeon War.
· an overview of the innovative *Framewerk* system. Not only cinematic, *Framewerk* puts control back where it belongs – in your hands.
· the option to play a hardy and resourceful 21st century Human or join the fight as a night-skinned genetically-engineered Nazzadi.
· the option to play as one of four fully-generated Characters, who are mysterious alien shape-shifting Tagers.
· the Orthanach Stone, a fully fleshed-out, ready-to-run story, to get you into a game now.
· details on four of the monstrous Dhohanoid servants of the Chrysalis Corporation.

The *CthulhuTech* Quick-Start Rules are a complete, self-contained storytelling game, for up to four players and a Storyguide. All you need besides this book are five to ten 10-sided dice.

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY
This book is intended for mature readers. It contains dark and disturbing content and images. Reader discretion is advised.

FRAMEWERK