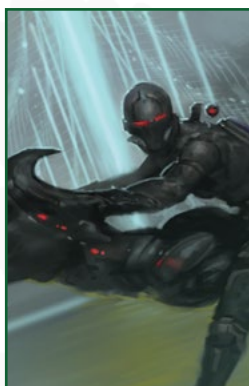


THE STRANGE™



IMPOSSIBLE VEHICLES

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL



IMPOSSIBLE VEHICLES

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Stories seed recursions into the Strange. Good stories focus on characters, setting, and plot, and those elements are usually reflected, at least in some form, in a related recursion. Sometimes a recursion includes vehicles, like flying carpets or starfighters, for the characters to use for travel. Other times, those vehicles are so central to the story that they almost become characters themselves. That's especially true if the vehicles are large enough to host the PCs through the bulk of their adventures. Those sorts of vehicles are especially likely to be seeded into the Strange.

This fractal brings you a small sampling of vehicles presented as artifacts, both minor and major. In no way is this resource meant to be comprehensive. There are literally hundreds of famous fictional starships, dragon mounts, magic beds, and other kinds of impossible craft. We won't attempt to give Cypher System game mechanics to all of them. Instead, we've provided representative vehicles that PCs might encounter and, better yet, get a chance to ride in or even pilot themselves.

Of course, any time characters ride in vehicles, there's a chance for a chase or a fight, so we've also included rules for vehicle combat.

VEHICULAR COMBAT

Much of the time, a fight between foes in cars, boats, or other vehicles is just like any other combat situation. The combatants probably have **cover** and are moving fast. Attacks to disable a vehicle or a portion of it are based on the level of the vehicle. If the vehicle is an armored car or a tank, all attacks are likely aimed at the vehicle, which has a level and probably an appropriate Armor rating, not unlike a creature. The only time this isn't true is with battles where only vehicles and not characters are involved. Thus, if the PCs are in a firefight with Imperium troopers and both groups are on hover bikes, use the standard rules. If the PCs are in a starfighter, a missile strider, or some other kind of enclosing vehicle and they are fighting opponents who are likewise in a vehicle, special rules are needed.

Battles between starships of various kinds—from gigantic capital ships to single-pilot fighters—are a frequent occurrence in far-future science fiction settings. A submarine battle between two deep sea craft could be quite exciting. Characters in a modern-day game might find themselves in a tank fight. If PCs are involved in combat in which they are entirely enclosed in vehicles (so that it's not really the characters fighting, but the vehicles), use the following quick and easy guidelines.

On this scale, combat between vehicles isn't like traditional combat. Don't worry about health, Armor, or anything like that. Instead, just compare the levels of the vehicles involved. If the PCs' vehicle has the higher level, the difference in levels becomes a reduction in the difficulty of attack and defense rolls involved. If the PCs' vehicle has the lower level, the difference is an increase in difficulty. If the levels are the same, there is no modification.



Cover, page 110



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Throughout this book, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to *The Strange* corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook; it's an optional way to learn more about the game and provide additional information to your players.



These attack and defense rolls are modified by skill and Effort, as usual. Some vehicles also have superior weapons, which reduce the difficulty of the attack (since there is no “damage” amount to worry about), but this circumstance is probably uncommon in this abstract system and should not affect the difficulty by more than one or maybe two steps. Further, if two vehicles coordinate their attack against one vehicle, the difficulty of the attack is reduced by one step. If three or more vehicles coordinate, the difficulty is reduced by two steps.

The attacker must try to target a specific system on or portion of an enemy vehicle. This **modifies the attack** in the defender’s favor based on the system or portion targeted:



Targeting Task	Modification	Effect
Disable weapons	Two steps	One or more of the vehicle’s weapons no longer function
Disable defenses (if applicable)	Two steps	Difficulty of attacks against the vehicle are reduced by one step
Disable engine/drive	Three steps	Vehicle cannot move, or movement is hampered
Disable maneuverability	Two steps	Vehicle cannot alter its present course
Strike power core or vital spot	Five steps	Vehicle is completely destroyed

That’s a lot of modifications. But it’s not really that hard. Let’s look at an example. A PC in a small level 2 starfighter attacks a level 4 transport ship. Since the transport ship is level 4, the difficulty of the attack starts at 4. But the attacking craft is weaker than the defender, so the difference in their levels (2) is added to the difficulty. The starfighter pilot must make a difficulty 6 attack on the transport ship. However, the starfighter is trying to swoop in and damage the transport ship’s drive, which modifies the attack by another three steps, for a total difficulty of 9. If the starfighter pilot is trained in space combat, she reduces the difficulty to 8, but it’s still impossible without help. So let’s say that two other PCs—also in level 2 starfighters—join in and coordinate their attack. Three ships coordinating an attack on one target reduces the difficulty by two steps, resulting in a final difficulty of 6. Still, the attacking PC would be wise to use Effort.

Then the transport ship (which had lasers installed, unlike the base model) retaliates and the PC in the starfighter needs to make a

defense roll. The level difference between the ships is a two-step modification in the transport ship’s favor, so the difficulty of the defense roll starts out at 6. But the transport ship tries to take out the starfighter’s weapons, reducing the difficulty of the defense roll by two steps. Thus, the PC needs to succeed at a difficulty 4 task or lose her main weapons systems.

It’s important to remember that a failed attack doesn’t always mean a miss. The target ship might rock and reel from the hit, but the bulk of the damage was absorbed by the shields, so there’s no significant damage.

This bare-bones system should allow the GM and players to flesh out exciting encounters involving the whole group. For example, perhaps while one PC pilots a ship, another mans the guns, and another frantically attempts to repair damage to the maneuvering thrusters before they crash into the space station they’re trying to defend.

Movement combat modifiers, page 112

In some cases, the GM may wish to use the level of an NPC pilot or driver rather than the level of the vehicle, but this is only for special circumstances, such as a very skilled or very inept pilot.



Fictional artifacts are those that were seeded directly by a movie, story, novel, comic, game, or similar medium.

Emergent artifacts arise independently within a recursion and do not come from fiction or mythology.

Mythological artifacts arise from ancient legends and myths and perhaps even the collective unconscious of human imagination.

Athena: level 8; Armor 5; attacks and defends as level 10

Legendary Greece is a recursion seeded by myths and legends from ancient Greece.

Kaijutoopia is a recursion seeded by decades of stories about larger-than-life monsters and the larger-than-life robotic defenders that sometimes rise to fight them.

VEHICLES

This resource contains the following vehicles.

Argo
Colossal battle robot
Dragonfly-class transport ship
Estate surveillance van Model 11
Flying carpet
Flying throne
Golden skiff
Hover bike
Imperium strider
Missile strider
Resolution
Starfighter
Timecraft



ARGO

Level: 1d6 + 3

Origin: Legendary Greece (mythological)

Law: Magic

Form: Galley (Greek warship)

Effect: This vehicle can cut through the sea under its own power at speeds of up to 100 miles per hour (160 kph) in calm or stormy weather without risk of capsizing. Once per day, the Argo will provide the answer to one question to whoever stands in the prow and asks. If the Argo is threatened with destruction, the goddess **Athena** might appear and offer protection to those who travel within the craft, though she probably does so only once.

Finally, the Argo can sail between recursions, but only those that operate under the law of Magic. It might be able to sail into the Strange.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (Check per day of sailing; if depleted, the ship continues to function as a normal galley until the next time it is blessed by Athena.)

COLOSSAL BATTLE ROBOT

Level: 1d6 + 4

Origin: Kaijutoopia (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: 255-foot (78 m) tall metallic battle robot armed with a variety of weapons

Effect: Most classes of colossal battle robots require a crew and one or two pilots to operate. A crew of up to six people (including pilots) is protected in an extended internal cockpit (Armor 6). When one or more trained pilots are in position, the robot can move over all kinds of terrain, including through water, at a long distance each round. The pilot(s) can use the integrated weaponry, but stations for up to five different weapons can be independently operated simultaneously. The weapon stations include lasers, missiles, grenades, a plasma sword, and a robo-punch. The weapons generally inflict damage equal to the colossal battle robot's level.

Depletion: 1-2 in 1d100 (Check each day and each time the artifact takes at least 10 points of damage; if depleted, the robot topples, inflicting 15 points of damage on all crew.)



DRAGONFLY CLASS TRANSPORT SHIP

Level: 1d6 + 2

Origin: Rebel Galaxy (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: Wing-mounted and rear engines, central cargo area, and raised forward section housing bridge and quarters

Effect: A trained pilot can fly a Dragonfly-class transport ship at a rate of up to 400 miles per hour (640 kph) through atmosphere and achieve much higher rates in vacuum through continuous acceleration. The ship can carry a crew of a few dozen people on trips lasting no more than a few months before refueling and reprovisioning is required. The ship includes a bridge, crew quarters, engineering, an impressively large cargo bay, and docking ports for two much smaller shuttles, as well as all related pertinent equipment (such as spare space suits, repair equipment, astrogation computers, and so on). Most Dragonfly-class ships do not come standard with mounted weapons.

Depletion: 1 in 1d100 (check each day and each time the artifact takes at least 5 points of damage)

ESTATE SURVEILLANCE VAN MODEL 11

Level: 1d6 + 1

Origin: The Strange (emergent)

Law: Any

Form: White electrician's van exterior with tinted windows

Effect: The cabin of the vehicle is a separate pocket dimension larger on the inside than the outside. Interior windows seem like regular glass, but they are projections of what sensors on the van's exterior detect, filtered so that attacks that use lasers and other light-based attacks are not replicated inside. Indeed, the exterior of the van could be destroyed, and as long as the inapposite doors remain internally sealed, the van's passengers are safe. The interior contains a driver and passenger seating area with controls for operating the van, a conference area immediately behind the passenger seats, storage lockers, and a bathroom.

The driver can coax the same speed and performance from the van as she might from a regular van. (But see flight mode below.)

In addition, a selector on the control panel allows the driver to choose from different "hulls," including the regular van hull that is appropriate when on Earth, a carriage hull for use in Ardeyn, and a giant chrysalid hull for use in Ruk; the selector has room for three more hulls that the user can program. The driver can flip between projections shown on the windows and reassign the inapposite rear door so it leads to the selected recursion. (Leaving the vehicle after moving to an alternate recursion is similar to stepping through an inapposite gate.)

No matter which hull is used, the van has a flight mode that lets it fly up to 550 miles per hour (885 kph) when traveling overland for up to ten hours per use. When this function is used, the control panel reconfigures for flight, and the van's exterior (or chosen hull) takes on a form appropriate to the context of the recursion (such as a small jet on Earth).

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check per hull switch or use of flight function)

FLYING CARPET

Level: 1d6 + 1

Origin: Legendary Arabia (mythological)

Law: Magic

Form: Silken rug with repeating arabesque designs bordered with a pattern that suggests scudding clouds

Effect: Carpet flies a long distance each round, carrying up to five passengers for up to ten hours per activation. When traveling overland, the artifact can achieve a rate of 60 miles per hour (97 kph).

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

FLYING THRONE

Level: 1d6 + 1

Origin: Sword Realms (fictional)

Law: Magic

Form: Splendid stone throne with ring roost

Effect: This massive throne is normally as immovable as its bulky stone and iron form would suggest. However, if whoever sits upon the throne depresses an eagle icon on the armrest, a colossal eagle swoops into the area, grasps the throne by the ring roost, and flies off with it. Once airborne, whoever sits on the throne can direct the flight. It can fly a long distance each round, or travel overland

Rebel Galaxy is a recursion seeded by movies and television shows about humans in interplanetary (and perhaps interstellar) space who fight against the injustices of those who have assumed control.

While a hull for an Estate surveillance van Model 11 is unconnected, it is a powerless hollow shell and should be parked securely to prevent vandalism or other damage.

Legendary Arabia is a recursion seeded from the myths and legends of the historical lands of western Asia and Egypt.

The Sword Realms are a series of linked recursions seeded by the glut of fantasy movies and, more significantly, fantasy roleplaying games over the last several decades.



Atlantis is a recursion that was initially seeded by legends of its own existence, though its ruler now uses that quality to manipulate fictions on Earth to further enhance Atlantis's reach and power.

up to 60 miles per hour (97 kph) for up to ten hours per use. The throne can accommodate up to three people if they squeeze in.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (upon depletion, the eagle makes off with the throne after its final flight)

GOLDEN SKIFF

Level: 1d6 + 3

Origin: Atlantis (mythological)

Law: Magic or Mad Science

Form: An open-top vehicle of gold and glass, 12 feet long and 5 feet wide (4 m by 2 m)

Effect: This vehicle can fly through the air at up to 200 miles per hour (322 kph). It obeys the thoughts of a pilot who must concentrate each round to make it fly. The skiff can carry up to five other passengers or an equal amount of cargo.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check each day)

HOVER BIKE

Level: 1d6 + 2

Origin: Rebel Galaxy (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: Motorcycle-like chassis with hover-spheres instead of wheels

Effect: The driver and up to one passenger can fly a long distance each round in an atmosphere, but on extended trips, the hover bike can move up to 100 miles per hour (160 kph). Owing to the relatively small profile and light frame of the hover bike, the driver has an asset to riding tricks and special maneuvers while on the bike.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check each day of use)

IMPERIUM STRIDER

Level: 1d6 + 4

Origin: Rebel Galaxy (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: 65-foot (20 m) tall metallic cockpit supported by four massive robot legs and surmounted by a metallic head studded with laser barrels

Effect: This land vehicle protects a crew of up to six in a cockpit (Armor 5). It can move over all kinds of terrain at a long distance each round on its tall robotic legs. Up to four gunnery stations in the cockpit can be simultaneously used by crew to fire lasers at targets within 2,000 feet (600 m), each inflicting damage equal to the artifact level.

Depletion: 1-2 in 1d100 (Check each day and each time the artifact takes at least 10 points of damage; if depleted, the strider topples, inflicting 15 points of damage on all crew.)

MISSILE STRIDER

Level: 1d6 + 2

Origin: Rebel Galaxy (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: 17-foot (5 m) tall metallic vehicle with twin missile launchers on robotic legs

Effect: This land vehicle protects a crew of four in a cockpit (Armor 3). It can move over all kinds of terrain at a short distance each round. Two missile stations in the cockpit can be simultaneously used by crew to fire missiles at targets within 1,000 feet (300 m), inflicting damage equal to the artifact level on the target and all creatures within immediate range of it.

Depletion: 1 in 1d100 (Check each day and each time the artifact takes at least 5 points of damage; if depleted because of damage, the missile strider explodes, inflicting 10 points of damage on all crew in the cockpit.)

RESOLUTION

Level: 8

Origin: Ruk (emergent)

Law: Mad Science or Standard Physics

Form: Series of NASA-like modules extending 1,000 feet (300 m), complete with arrays similar to solar panels

Effect: The *Resolution* is a craft capable of flying in the Strange or in interplanetary space in the universe of normal matter. It can carry a crew of several hundred people on expeditions lasting months or longer. The ship includes a bridge, quarters, engineering, stasis chambers, a power core, and engines operated with antimatter (which was collected and concentrated in Ruk). The engines provide propulsion via beamed core antimatter, allowing the *Resolution* to thrust rapidly through the universe of normal matter as well as the chaotic surge of the Strange, and, should it ever prove necessary, above the disc of Ruk. The engines also possess a method of transitioning between the universe of normal matter and Ruk as if through a massive inapposite gate, though the *Resolution* usually relies on special





gantries in Ruk to first launch the craft into Earth orbital space or, alternatively, into the Strange itself.

Depletion: 1 in 1d100 (check each day and each time the artifact takes at least 10 points of damage)

STARFIGHTER

Level: 1d6 + 1

Origin: Rebel Galaxy (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: One-person space fighter with flat wings that can expand into a double-wing attack position

Effect: This space vehicle protects a crew of one person, plus an optional repair and astrogation robot, in a cockpit (Armor 3). A trained pilot can fly the starfighter at a rate of up to 650 miles per hour (1,050 kph) through atmosphere, and achieve much higher rates in vacuum through continuous acceleration. If an astrogation robot is present, the pilot can travel to distant locations via jumps through hyperspace.

The pilot can control a bank of four linked laser cannons and a pair of two linked torpedo launchers. The lasers can fire at targets during ship-to-ship space combat, inflicting damage equal to the artifact level + 4 (1 point per laser). The dual torpedoes can be fired during ship-to-ship space combat as well, inflicting 20 points of damage on the target and all creatures and objects within long range of it. Most starfighters carry four dual torpedoes.

Depletion: 1 in 1d100 (Check each day, each time the starfighter makes a jump through hyperspace, and each time it takes at least 5 points of damage; if depleted because of damage, the starfighter explodes, inflicting 15 points of damage on the pilot and astrogation robot.)

TIMECRAFT

Level: 10

Origin: Urban Temporal (fictional)

Law: Mad Science

Form: Exterior blends to take on the context of the recursion, usually seeming no larger than a phone booth; interior is a much larger, many-chambered cabin (which is actually a unique recursion itself)

Effect: The timecraft can be piloted between linked Urban Temporal recursions by opening temporary inapposite gates and falling through. A pilot who is **quickened** or has the **spark** can attempt to pilot the timecraft in a similar way to recursions that she has previously visited. To do so, she must make an Intellect roll with a difficulty equal to the level of the recursion desired. Because the interior of the timecraft is its own recursion, it's possible to travel to places that operate under laws other than Mad Science without the vehicle's interior or its workings coming to harm. The timecraft can also move through normal space at up to 450 miles per hour (720 kph) through atmosphere, and achieve much higher rates in vacuum through continuous acceleration. Despite its name, the timecraft probably doesn't travel through time—most likely, it travels to Urban Temporal recursions that are set in different historical periods.

Depletion: 1 in d20 (on depletion, the timecraft travels onward to a new, random recursion without its previous pilot and occupants)

Quickened, page 22

Spark, page 22

A handful of Urban Temporal recursions are known, seeded by decades of movies, comics, and especially TV series about time travelers.



THE STRANGE™



WORLDS NUMBERLESS AND STRANGE

In *The Strange*, recursions—limited pocket dimensions with their own laws of reality—are seeded from human fiction and mythology. A recursor might discover Atlantis, Oz, the Victorian London of Sherlock Holmes, or places even more bizarre and perilous. *Worlds Numberless and Strange* takes you to dozens of new recursions, where supervillains, dinosaurs, space troopers, killer robots, gods, and other dangers guard wonders and treasures few people on Earth have ever seen!

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