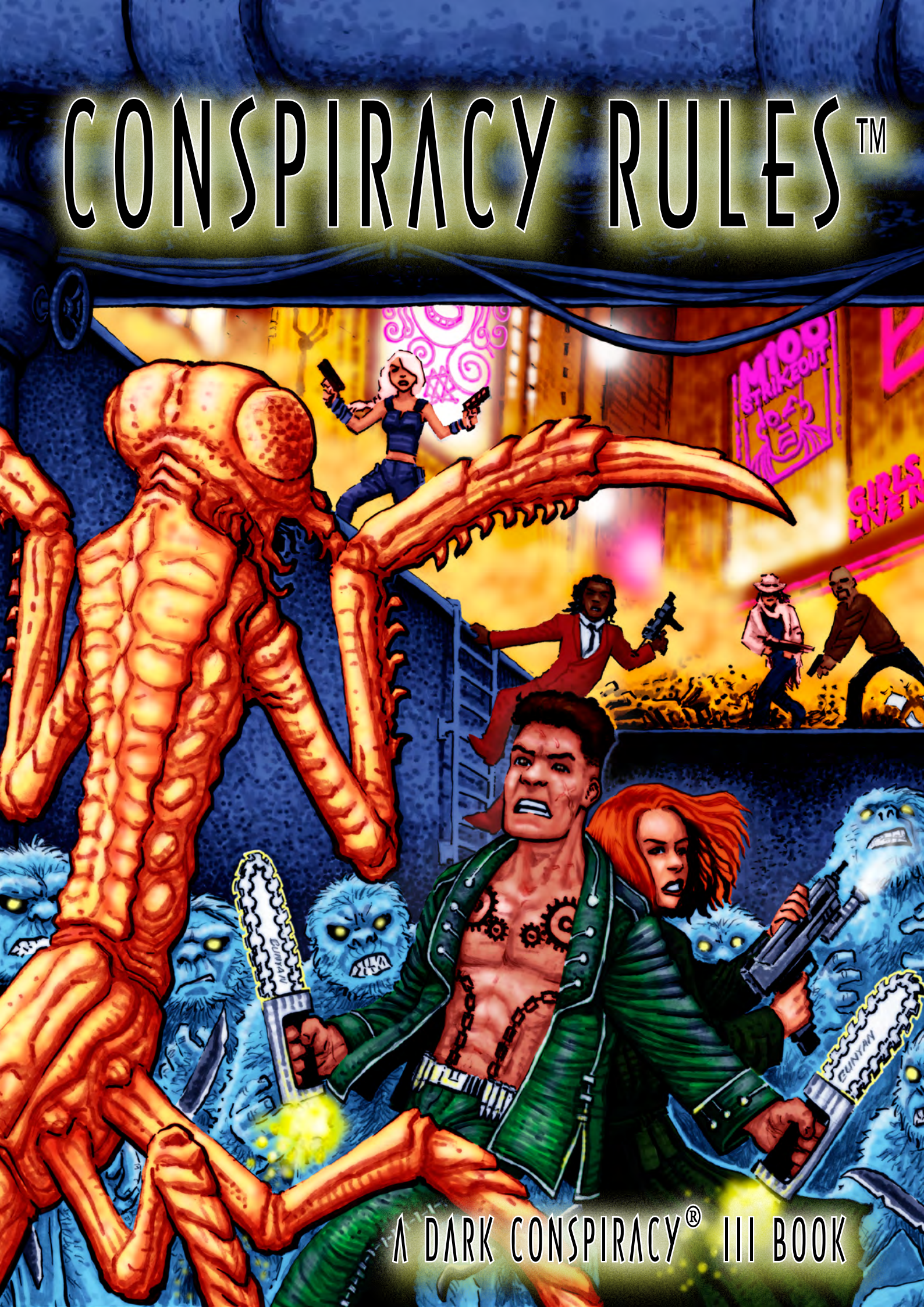
CONSPIRACY RULES™



A DARK CONSPIRACY® III BOOK

CONSPIRACY RULES™

DARK CONSPIRACY III



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DARK CONSPIRACY III





INTRODUCTION

Dark Conspiracy, the role playing game was first published in 1991 by **Game Designers Workshop (GDW).** That version was based on a then still-developing house core rules that culminated in ***Traveller: The New Era*** and in ***Twilight 2000***, version 2.2. The second edition of ***Dark Conspiracy*** was a reorganization of the basic first edition rules with some small tweaks to fix a few things. No update to the ***Dark Conspiracy*** core rules has been done since DPI's second edition.

The **GDW** house rules system is considered to be "rules heavy" and very structured. This structure is in itself a significant part of the house rules role playing experience. Players of modern, lighter systems may not like the extended character generation as it is more limiting than current be-anything-you-want-to-be systems. The original rules were firmly based in the science of physics (as much as possible) and the desire to realistically account for the range of outcomes of modern weapons made the rules more complex than the average player feels necessary. The rules for fire combat, as complex as they are, are extremely consistent across the range of results they intend to model. You pay for what you get.

Conspiracy Rules, as part of the edition of ***Dark Conspiracy III***, reflects a separation of the house rules into two core books: this one representing character generation sufficient for any modern conspiracy horror genre and another setting book, entitled ***Conspiracy Lives***, detailing the ***Dark Conspiracy*** reality of an alternate history. Together these editions comprise the ***Dark Conspiracy III*** role play setting.

Players that find the rules too intensive can play a rules system of their choice and enjoy playing in the ***Dark Conspiracy*** universe using the ***Conspiracy Lives*** setting.

How to Use This Book

This book provides you with all the information you will need to play a role in the adventures of a handful of courageous characters working to uncover hidden nests of evil and eradicate them, thereby battling dark conspiracies to conquer the world and the universe. Because ***Conspiracy Rules*** is a role-playing game, it requires a number of people to play in a group of at least two. In each group, one person will be the game master (called *referee)*, and the rest will be players, called player characters (PCs) or just characters.

This book contains material for players and the referee on how-to create characters, move around in the setting, test for task completion or effectiveness, conduct combat (an important element in adventure fiction, including horror adventures). These rules can be used with any setting, but are particularly suited for the ***Dark Conspiracy*** setting described in ***Conspiracy Lives***.

Players should read through this section, paying particular attention to the Character Generation, and

Careers chapters. Once you have a feel for the game, generate several sample characters. This will get you familiar with the mechanics of character generation as well as the sorts of characters you are likely to meet and encounter. When you feel ready, generate the character you will use in the game or, if you prefer, pick one of the sample characters that you have already generated.

A Character Generation worksheet has been guiding you in building your characters.

The last few sections of this book list statistics for mundane animals and creatures, equipment, weapons available through normal channels, and vehicles that characters might own. Also included there are some handy charts and tables used frequently during play, as well as an index to aid easy reference to the rules.

If you are to be a referee, you will want to read through ***Conspiracy Rules*** carefully for the basic rules. One of the referee's jobs is to be the local expert of the rules and their final arbiter. Familiarity with the basic rules will also make refereeing adventures easier. After you have read through them, you are ready to proceed to the deeper secrets of this book's companion, ***Conspiarcy Lives***.

Most importantly, ***Conspiracy Lives*** explains in greater detail the logic and background of the world of ***Dark Conspiracy***. However, that setting is not necessary to play ***Conspiracy Rules***. Players are encouraged to develop their own modern conspiracy horror settings using these rules.



Dice in Conspiracy Rules

Throughout this book (and indeed, most role-playing books), you will see references to the referee and players making dice rolls. During a game session, many conflicts and obstacles will be placed before the players. It is the job of the referee to describe these events and situations for the players, and the job of the players to listen, react, and in turn, describe their responses. Where responses involve an element of chance, dice are rolled. As with real life, players don't always succeed at the tasks they attempt to perform. Neither do their opponents.

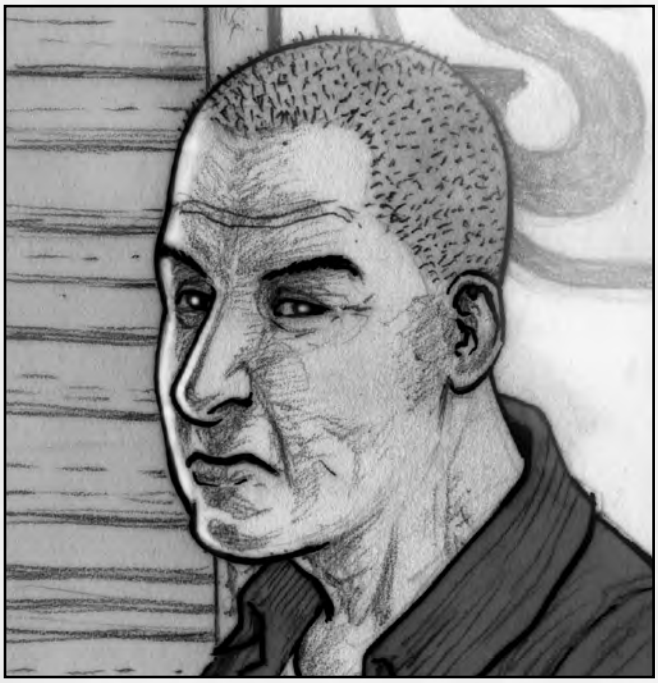
Rolling dice is a way to insert a degree of uncertainty into the gaming process. The roll of a die may not only determine whether a given character succeeds or fails, but the degree of success or failure they achieve. (This subject is covered in greater detail in the Task Resolution chapter.)

Dice: To play the game you will need the standard role-playing set of dice: at least one each of 4-sided (D4), 6-sided (D6), 8-sided (D8), 10-sided (D10), 12-sided (D12), and 20-sided (D20) dice. Most non-combat activities involve the use of D6 and D20 dice. A 1 before the die notation (1D6, 1D10) means roll one die of that type, a 2 (2D6, 2D10) means roll two of that type and add them, and so on. Sometimes roll results must be modified. For example, 2D6-2 means roll two six-sided dice and add the numbers together, then subtract 2. Conversely, 3D6+2 means roll three six-sided dice, add them together, then add 2. (For example, a 3D6-1 roll that resulted in rolls of 3, 5, and 2 would total 9: 3+5+2-1.)

Dice Modifiers: Modifiers to dice rolls can also be given by themselves. These are usually prefixed with "DM" to indicate it is a die modifier. For example, DM+1 gives the designated roll a modifier of 1 that is added to the rolled result; while DM–2 means that 2 is subtracted from the rolled result. Note that the plus and minus signs are before the number, but are not always prefixed with "DM".

Required Results: Where a minimum or maximum value must be attained, the notation will indicate it. A result that must be under a number is given with a minus sign following it. A result greater than the number is given by a plus sign after it. For example, the roll that must be less than or equal to 4 is represented as "4–". A roll that must be seven or greater is indicated as "7+". Note that the plus and minus signs are after the number indicating that this is a range of values. A hyphen between two numbers indicates a range of numbers including the numbers themselves. For example, "4–7" indicates any result, 4, 5, 6, or 7 is required.

Dice are fundamental to role playing in a way few really contemplate. For a wonderful collection of essays about role (roll?) players and their dice, see ***The Bones: Us and Our Dice*** edited by Will Hindmarch of **GamePlaywright** (www.gameplaywright.net).



The Bones

Most important actions in ***Conspiracy Rules*** are resolved using the roll of a die.

100-sided die (D100): Also called percentile dice, when a percentage result is needed, the referee will ask for a this roll. Percentile can be rolled using two ten-sided dice. One is used as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit.

20-sided die (D20): Used primarily in task resolution. All skill and attribute tests are made using a single D20. If the result is less than or equal to the target number, the task succeeds.

10-sided die (D10): used for determining hit location, power levels of empathic tasks, and in conjunction with another D10 to create a percentile value (where one die represents the 10's digit, and the other the 1's digit. The result of the roll ranges from 01 through 99 with 00 representing the value 100).

8-sided die (D8): used when dealing automatic weapon damage.

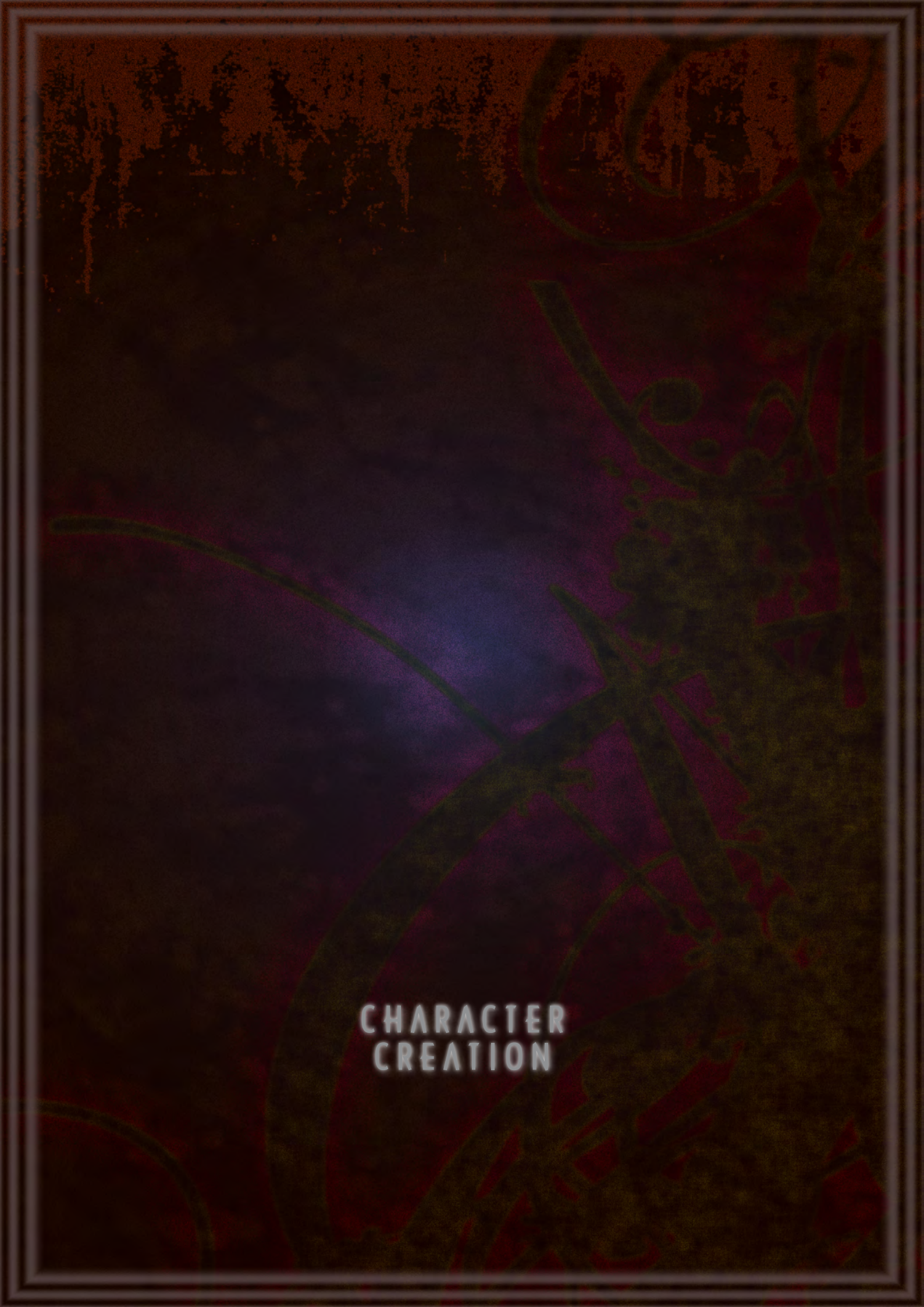
6-sided die (D6): used when generating attributes during character generation, when making initiative rolls, and when dealing weapon damage.

5-sided die (D5): roll a D10, divide by two, and round the result up.

3-sided die (D3): roll a D6, divide by two, and round the result up.

3-Sided Average Die: roll a D6, divide by two, and round the result down. Treat 0 as a 1. Results look like 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3. Not used very often, it is a nice tool for the referee.

2-sided die (D2): used in a few special instances, D2 rolls are simulated by rolling D6's, and treating rolls of 1,2, or 3 as a 1; and 4,5, or 6 as a 2. Or you could flip a coin.


CHARACTER
CREATION



CHARACTER CREATION

Each character is described in two distinct matters. Firstly, in terms of their innate attributes, aptitudes, skills, and characteristics, which are determined during the character creation process; and secondly, through their personal history and trigger events which will lead to a wild life of adventure. For the most part, character creation is a process to determine a character's strengths and weakness, as well as the skills and resources they can bring to bear on the fight.

Creating a character should be more than simply determining a number of statistics and rolling a few dice. The character creation process is about defining a background through a character concept and selecting occupations your character will serve in up to being tapped to go adventuring.

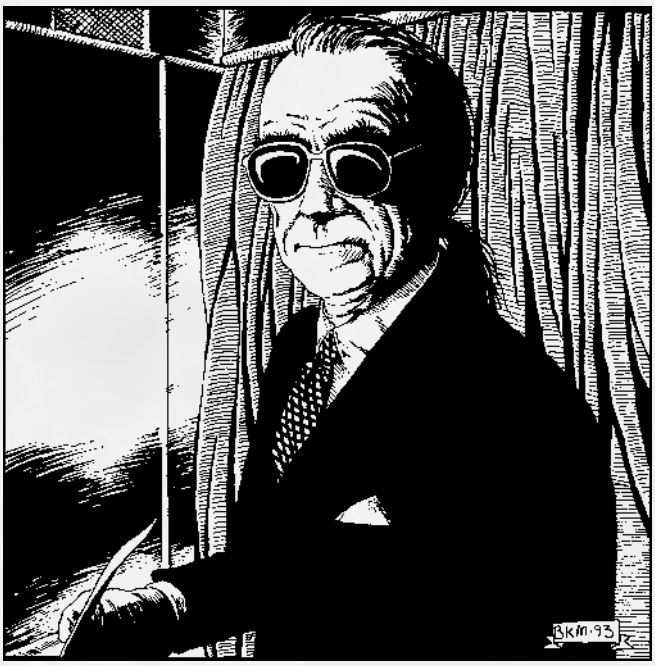
Character Concept: The first thing a player should do before they pick up their dice is to visualize and discuss the 'type' of character they wish to play. This visualization can focus on the career or skill set (i.e. they would like to play a doctor or be well-trained as a marksman) or could be more of an idea about what motivates or

drives their character (i.e. vampires killed my family and I'm out for revenge). This sort of visualization is important as it not only allows the players to create a collaborative, like-minded group, but also guides the player in setting their character's motivations and goals during play. A number of ways to detail your character's personality through previous events have been detailed. Players do not need to complete all of these, but each of these descriptions, or motivations, adds something more to the development of their character.

Attributes: Once a player has determined what they want from their Minion Hunter they will have a chance to define the character's statistics. These numbers determine initial strengths and weaknesses and serve as the basis for the character's derived abilities.

The Early Years: With the basic statistics of your character in hand, the next step in character generation is to decide the character's upbringing. You do this through gender, nationality, languages, and background skill selection. Player should take note that the Social Standing attribute is an important driver in pursuing certain careers and will impact your character's future development.

Careers: Prior to embarking on a life of adventure, characters spend a number of years in relatively mundane drudgery beginning at the age of 17. Your character will spend a number of career terms spent in occupations. In each occupation the your character will receive benefits, including skills, contacts, and cash. Players can choose to spend several terms of 4 year durations, but must consider that the character will age and suffer its adverse effects. Several options are available to the character in education, military service, law enforcement, etc. Your character continues serving in career terms until it is time to leap into the world of modern adventure.



Derived Stats: Once you have decided that your character is ready to face the evils that threaten humanity, you determine your character's final attributes, skills and abilities in the form of asset levels (numbers).

The Character Creation Worksheet

The rules and guidelines in this chapter explain the process of creating a character and in order to make the process of character generation easier, a character Creation Worksheet is included with this game. The Worksheet is largely self-explanatory, but occasional reference to the rules will be necessary, at least for your first few characters. You should read the rules as you generate your character, filling in the appropriate blanks of the Worksheet as you go. Once a character is completely generated, you will transfer the information from the worksheet to a Character Sheet (also included). After that, the worksheet may be discarded or archived, if you wish, as only the Character Sheet is necessary for play.

Character Concept

The first step in creating a character is to imagine the sort of character you wish to play. This may seem a simple task, but the decisions you are about to make will guide your character's entire generation. Creating a character in Conspiracy Rules is more than just selecting or a rolling a number of attributes and picking a set of skills. To create a character is to build a personality from childhood to the point where play begins, typically adulthood, exploring the aspects of nature and nurture that both define and limit all human beings.

Character Background

The depth to which a player wishes to imagine their character is a personal preference. You can use the following concepts to assist the character generation process. Feel free to use as many or as few of these as they wish. Although each distinct concept adds a little more depth to the character, it will also bring the character to life during game play by adding motivations, inspiration, and cause to their adventures.

Physical Descriptions

One of the first activities a player can take in imagining their character is to note the more physical aspects of the character. These include such things as name, gender, general physique, and even nationality.

By doing so, you give yourself, the referee, and fellow players an understanding of who and what role your character is going to take. Often, at least in role-playing, a character's name can be an indication of their personality

and background (i.e. a character called Algernon conjures a different mental image than say Steve; or a character named Savannah implies a personality much removed from Carol). Nationality is also a good indicator of character with globalism in the modern world.

Beyond the basics, you may also wish to note further details about your character, be they physical (i.e. height, weight or eye color, etc.), spiritual (i.e. their faith or lack of one, etc.), or even a bit quirky (i.e. their shoe size or nose shape). Again, while none of this is hard and fast, thinking about such labeling can allow a player to visual the type of Minion they are trying to generate before the actual mechanics of dice rolling and choosing options.

But then, a character drawing or illustration is always good. There are several artists to be found online that you can commission for a character drawing. By documenting your character concept, you can give such an artist just the right information for him or her to add that finishing touch.

Motivational Descriptions

One of the final steps in imagining your character is to list events, items or traits that were important in the life of the character up to the point where they are called to adventuring. These are called a character's motivational descriptions and should be used to bring the character to life during actual game play.

It is not necessary to create descriptions for all of the possible motivations driving your character, in fact it is often more interesting to create some parts of your character's personality during game play. Furthermore, some of a character's concepts and background can emerge from the various decisions the player makes during the rest of the generation process.

Major Events: Often a human being is defined by one or more events that occurred earlier in their life. These events can be either positive or negative and shape not only the character's personality, but also their general outlook on life. Descriptions of Major Events can be as long or short as the you think appropriate, but should briefly detail the actions surrounding the event and the effects it had on your character.

Vignettes: Short stories about your character written in the character's own voice and point of view allow the player to describe a defining situation, and thus, giving some insight as to how the character sees the world and interacts with it.

Interesting Items: We all have objects that mean something special to us. Be they the blanket we slept on as a baby, or our first car. Describing interesting items that your character has (or once had) in their possession is a good way of describing values and memories they hold dear.

Character Talents: Everybody everywhere has something that makes them stand out from the 'norm'. This motivational description allows you to note any special talent (or lack of talent) that your character might display or hold. While these should not impart any overt advantage in regards to the task resolution mechanics (without the referee's agreement, of course), they can be used to identify the little things that make your character an individual (i.e. double joints, ability to complete the perfect card shuffle by hand, play spoons, or rub your stomach and pat your head at the same time).

Personality Traits: The world is full of personalities, some we adore, others we love to hate. Personality Traits are an opportunity for you to further describe the persona of your character, his or her reactions to various situations, people and environments. Of course, characters in Conspiracy Rules can be visualized as different and changeable in behavior as real-life human beings, and often these fluctuations in attitude and manner says more about the nature of the character than any other aspect of their personality.

Attributes

Attributes define the most important statistics of a character, and are the building blocks upon which all other aspects are determined. Used to describe the tangible characteristic of the your character's body, mind and soul, character attributes are: Strength, Constitution, Agility, Intelligence, Education, Charisma, Psionics, and Social Standing.

Allocating Points to Attributes

All human attributes can be rated with a number between 1 and 15 (although some beings the characters may encounter in their adventures can exceed this maximum). Most capable adults have each attribute rated somewhere between 3 and 6 (inclusive), while anything below this usually represents either a child or adult with an infirmity. An attribute rated at 10 represents the statistical maximum for non-augmented human capability. In later stages of career growth or as a result of game play, characters may be augmented for attributes up to and including 15. As the characters at this point in generation represent typical young adults about to embark on life's great journey, most will have a minimum on any attribute of 3 (although the player and referee might decide to lower any given attribute as required).

Allocating Attribute Points

Attributes are determined by a point allocation method, allowing you to shape your character's strengths and weaknesses. It should be noted that the attributes generated in this step will be modified as the Character Creation process advances.

Allocating Points: You allocate points to each Attribute according to one of the four options given in the Attribute Allocation table. A list of attribute values is given based on the selected option, which is driven by the desired maximum attribute value. The player

Attribute Allocation

	Maximum Attribute	*Total Points*	*Attribute Values*[1]
Option 1	10	35	10, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3,3
Option 2	9	37	9, 6, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3
Option 3	8	38	8, 7, 6, 6, 4, 4, 4, 3
Option 4	7	40	7, 7, 7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4

[1] Each value can be allocated to any of (STR, CON, AGL, INT, EDU, CHR, PSI, SOC).

can allocate these values to any Attribute desired, but note that these values can be altered in later phases of character generation.

Adjustments: You can now trade points in one Attribute for another. For each two (2) points by which your character reduces an Attribute, another Attribute can be increased by one (1) point. No attribute can be lowered below two (2), which represents the infirmity or extreme youth, and no attribute can be raised above ten (10) at this point in character generation.

The Early Years

Your character begins the game with more than just a background narrative. Your character also has knowledge of a number of different skills reflecting training and experience that he or she acquired before adventuring. By the age of 17, at which point your character's career determination begins, the character will have had a lifetime of education and experiences that guide to assist in making decisions about your character's future.

Background Skills

To reflect those abilities resulting from your character's early years, you now select a number of skills as shown on the Social Backgrounds table for your character's current Social Standing. Your character receives the listed skills and a number of skill points to spend on skills you select. Annotate your selections in the character worksheet Background Skills block.

Cultural Background

In addition to their social background, the cultural upbringing your character receives also plays a key role in how he or she sees the world. In Conspiracy Rules, your character has no restrictions on nationality beyond those established by the referee. Further, your character may receive skills at the zero (0) level as a result of the character's starting Social Standing. Such default skills are directly the result of the culture in which the character was raised. See Task Resolution on "Task Resolution" on page 95 for more details.

Selecting a cultural background, however, will dictate available native languages (and all of the related understanding of the people and culture that comes with it).

Native Language: Your character automatically receives skill points in his or her selected native language, without any additional penalties or costs. This skill level is based on the character's Intelligence attribute and represents not only the ability to speak the language, but also an implied level of reading, writing and, most importantly, comprehension of the native tongue. The predominant language should be based on the referee's setting, but can be defended through the Character Concept.

Other Languages: As the players see fit, additional languages can be selected (although these should be

Character Attributes

Attribute	*Description*
Strength (STR)	The numerical quantification of a your character's muscular power, Strength is used to determine the amount of weight a character can carry, etc.
Constitution (CON)	A measure of the your character's physical health and endurance, Constitution is used to determine how the character endures pain and effort, etc.
Agility (AGL)	A measure of a your character's coordination and flexibility, Agility is used when determining how quickly a character reacts, etc.
Intelligence (INT)	The ability of a character to perform logical reasoning, Intelligence is used to determine the best and easiest course of action in any given situation.
Education (EDU)	Education is the measure of a character's participation in a formal academic setting, and determines how far, and well, a character can advance in certain forms of higher education-based skills.
Charisma (CHR)	A quantification of personality and personableness, Charisma reflects how others react to your character. While this does reflect some measure of physical appearance, it is more an indication of one's natural charm and character than just good looks
Psionics (PSI)	Psionics is the measure of a character's sensitivity to and attunement with the natural forces of the universe and its creatures (including other humans). Psionics reflects a character's ability to sense and influence things beyond the normal five human senses.
Social Standing (SOC)	Social Standing is the measure of a character's current social status in their society. Characters represent adventurers drawn from low economic Drifters to Idle Rich debutantes. This attribute can change more readily than the other attributes since it is a result of a current standing within society versus a physical or mental characteristic.

Social Backgrounds

Social Class	*Default Skills*	*Skill Points*
Nome (SOC 6+)	Business 0 Computer Use 1 Persuasion 0 Ground Vehicle (Wheeled) 0	2
Mike (SOC 3 to 7)	Bargain 0 Carousing 1 Computer Use 0 Scrounging 0	4
Prole (SOC 4–)	Act/Bluff 0 Admin/Legal 0 Luck 1 Streetwise 1	6

appropriate to the Native Language selected and the character's background, subject to negotiation with the referee). The number of languages acquired at this point is limited by the intelligence attribute. See the Known Languages Table on page 25. Additional languages can always be received as a result of later character growth. A list of languages can be found online and at the end of this book.

Careers

Each character begins his or her adult life at age 17, with certain minimum skills (these are picked up in the process of growing up, as noted above). Players may then choose to have their characters further their education or enter an occupation. (For purposes of character generation, the terms "occupation" and "career" are defined fairly loosely, including even such things as unemployment and gang membership.)

A character's work defines who they were before exposure to the Darkness and its Minions. For this reason, the player's selection of consistent careers for their character is critical to good role playing. Selection of a career should be based on the player's character concept rather than the package of skills it will bring. When reviewing the careers to grow their character, the players are recommended to negotiate with the referee and other party members to resolve differences between the player's character concept and the needs of the setting and the group.

Selecting Careers

Careers are the heart of character development. As in reality, the types of education and employment (however loosely termed) define the skills and abilities of an individual and for the potential adventurer equip them for their new life. To help the player grow their character, the further portions of development are divided into 'terms' (or 'career terms') which equate to a number of four (4) years of their life. As a result, very skilled characters will be older, having seen enough of life to acquire those skills. So as your character progresses through these terms, not only will he or she build their skills and abilities, but will also create a history or background, one which further fleshes out the reasons why the character is to become an adventurer.

Career Listings

Once a Career has been selected, the Minion Hunter will complete, at a minimum, one term in it. During this term, they will gain a number of benefits, each of which increases the character's skills, abilities and resources. The career listing contains descriptions, mostly in game terms, of the benefits received while serving in the career. The career's term length is the minimum amount of time the character must spend to receive the skill levels the career term confers. The career listing (see Careers on "Careers" on page 33) includes the term length expressed in years served. The career listing also specifies the skills that can be gained during a term, as well as additional benefits such as career bonuses, important contacts and resources gained.

Education Careers: Education careers often serve as a prerequisite for other career terms, for example, Medical School prior to being a Doctor.

Military Careers: Players should also note that Military Careers are completed slightly differently from the usual education or civilian careers and have unique prerequisites and benefits. These are detailed in the Military Careers section below.

Career Prerequisites

Not all men and women are made equal. As such, one's social status, level of education, and previous work experience count strongly towards finding gainful employment.

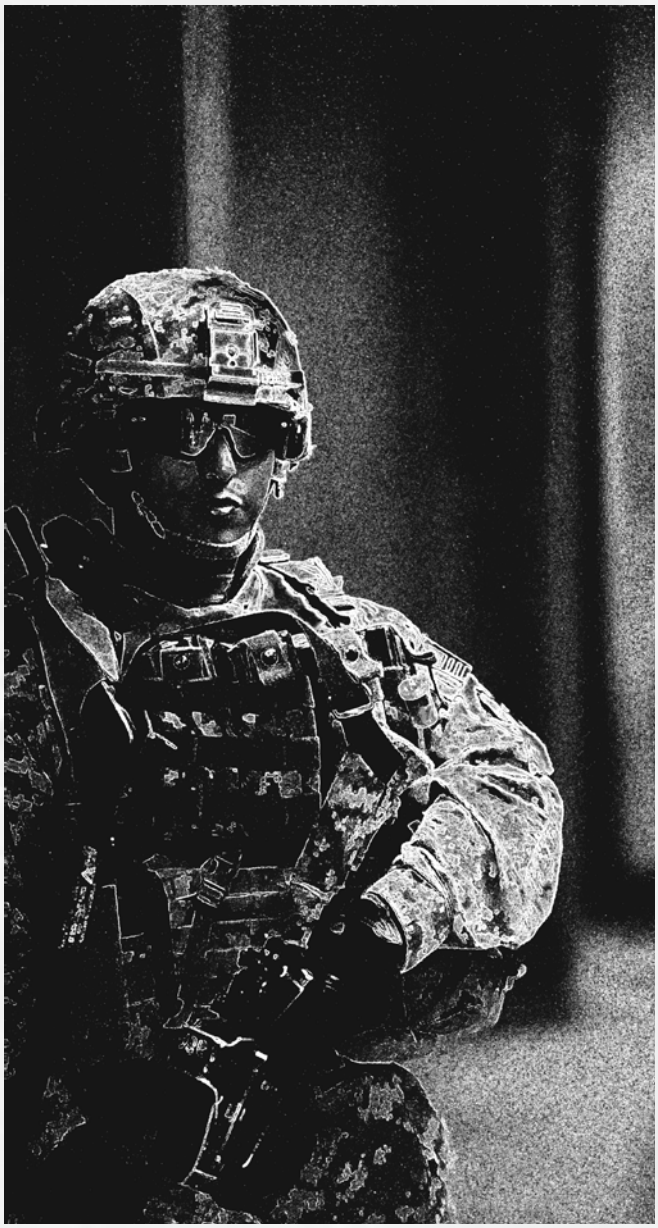
As a result, most careers choices have restrictions that are based on one or more of the following requirements. To select or 'enter' a career, all of the prerequisites listed must be met. Note, the following restrictions should be enforced, although, at the referee's discretion such limitations can be lifted (especially if a logical or entertaining character background should dictate such).

Social Background Restrictions: Entry limits are expressed in terms of your character's Social Standing or SOC attribute. Only a character whose current social standing matches that listed may enter that career. A character can spend a term in a career with a low-class requirement, but will take a penalty to their SOC attribute for doing so. See Changing Social Class below for more information.

Previous Career Experience: Some careers require the character to have completed at least one term in another, related, career prior to entry. In most cases this will be an Educational career requirement, although some highly technical careers also have other career term prerequisites. If you wish to enter your character into this type of career path, you should work

'backwards' through the prerequisite careers to ensure that all requirements are met. This also ensures consistent skill sets.

Minimum Attributes or Skills: A number of Careers require your character to have knowledge, skill or ability in a role, before entry is allowed. For the most part, these ensure the character has competency in the career they are entering and allow the career benefit to better reflect some advanced development. Again, if you wish your character to enter a career with such restrictions, you should identify other careers that will allow your character to collect such attribute bonuses and/or skills.



Skills

The first benefit of a career is the receipt and allocation of skill points and skills. Each career allows your character to select skills and to allocate a specified number of skill points to their selection. These skill points represent the advancement of the character in their on-the-job experience, as well as additional training they might receive via educational institutes or instructors. For further information on skills and their detailed description, "Skills" on page 59.

Limits of Controlling Attributes

During play, your character's practical ability in any one task is represented by a combination of experience using the relevant skill (represented by its allocated number of skill points) and the character's natural aptitude (represented by the skill's controlling Attribute). To reflect the weighing of skill versus natural ability, once the number of points in a skill equals the current value of the skill's controlling Attribute, all additionally allocated skill points count only as half a level. That is, to increase by one point, the character must allocate two skill points. Note, all half levels are retained for long-term improvement purposes, but they are rounded down for the purposes of actual skill use. Cascade skills have special limits; see Task Resolution on for more information.

Gaining Term Skills

When the character selects and allocates skills and skill point, certain restrictions apply. Depending on the term's sequence in the character's career, the selection for promotion/commissioning, and assignment to a special adventure during the career all impact the types and numbers of skills and skill points available in a single term.

Age-Based Learning Limits: The character's age effects the number of skill points received for the Subsequent Terms and Special Assignment skill packages (see the Age-Based Learning table, below).

Clusters, Skills, and Cascades

In all of the lists that follow, clusters of skills are printed in **bold** *while individual skills are printed in normal type. Individual skills that are printed in italics are cascade skills. When players select a cluster for their characters, they must then go to the Skills by Skill Clusters table to pick a specific skill from that cluster. Players who select cascade skills must choose the cascade specialty. A skill level number listed after the skill, cluster, or cascade indicates a number of levels that the player must allocate immediately to the skill.*

For example, if the character received Melee 2, the player must immediately allocate two skill levels to skills. The players picks Unarmed Martial Arts 1 and Armed Martial Arts (Small Blade) 1, which is a cascade skill specialty.

For a listing of all skills, clusters, and cascades, see the Skills by Cluster table on see page 289.

Age-Based Learning

Age When Entering the Career	*Subsequent Term Skill Levels*	*Special Assignment / Adventure Skill Levels*
17	6[1]	6
21	5	5
25	5	5
29	4	4
33	4	4
37	3	3
41	3	3
45	2	2
49	2	2
53+	1	1

[1] Character receives the First Term skill package.

First Term Skills: When your character enters a career for the first time, he or she receives a First Term Skills package. This package is a special selection of skills at specified levels which the Minion Hunter receives or selects. First Term Skill packages typically specify a set of skills with skill levels already allocated to them; the player does not select nor allocate these skills and skill levels. Age-Based learning limits do not apply to acquisition of First Term Skills.

Subsequent Term Skills: The player uses the Subsequent Term Skill package for any additional terms beyond the first that the character spends in the career. Typically, the Minion Hunter will allocate a number of points to skills selected from the Subsequent Term Skills list for terms after their first. The number of skill levels the character receives in Subsequent Terms is subject to the limits of Age-Based Learning.

Special Assignment Skills: In addition, your character may qualify for a Special Assignment in the career, yielding another skill package drawn from different skills listed. The number of skill levels the character receives in the Special Assignment package is subject to the limits of Age-Based Learning.

Commissioning/Promotion Skills: Skills and skill levels received as a result of your character being commissioned or promoted are constrained by the controlling attribute, but are not subject to the limits of Age-Based Learning.

Term Learning Limits: Development of a specific skill is limited by specialization and expertise gained through training and job experience. Unless otherwise indicated (for example, First Term skill packages), no single skill can be increased by more than three (3) points in a single term from all sources of skill points.

First Term

All careers have a set of skills and level of competency required to perform in the occupation. The First Term section defines this minimum skill set and competency level. The character receives the First Term Skill package during their first term in the occupation, even if this is your character's very first term or if this is the first time in this career after serving in other career terms. Returning to this career after serving in intervening careers does not qualify the character for another First Term package.

Commissioning and promotions can also be listed in the First Term section when the chances or modifiers to the checks are different from Subsequent Terms (see Commissioning and Promotions, below). In some cases, there is no First Term section in the career listing. In this case, the character receives six (6) skill levels to select from the list skills.

Subsequent Term

When serving in a career term for a second or more number of times, the character may receive a different set of skills than the First Term Skill package. The character receives a number of skill levels based on the character's age. (See "Age-Based Learning" on page 19.) You then select your character's skills from the Subsequent Term Skill package, allocate the new skill levels, and record the new values on your character's worksheet.

Similarly to the First Term section, commissioning and promotions may also appear in the Subsequent Terms section (see Commissioning and Promotions, below). If a commission or promotion section appears in both First and Subsequent (or All Terms), each entry represents an opportunity for commissioning or promotion.

Special Assignment

Within an occupation there is always the possibility of a special adventure arising from some circumstance or another. Adventures in Babysitting, anyone? The Special Assignment represents theses excursions from the normal.

In game terms these excursions represent the opportunity to receive skills that are not normally available to the character in the occupation. In the All Terms section of the career listing, the Special Assignment entry lists the number on 2D6 that the player must roll to qualify. The career listing also shows any modifiers to the dice roll that may apply. Your character receives an automatic DM +1 applied for each term already served in the career. For example, a character in the first term of a career has no DM; in the second consecutive term of that career she has a DM +1, and so on. Each career switch causes the DM to reset to 0, even if switching back after serving in an intervening career term.

Each term, the you may roll 2D6, apply any applicable modifiers, and check the result. On a success (that is, greater than or equal to the listed number) your character receives a number of skill levels based on the his or her age. (See the "Age-Based Learning" on page 19.) You then select the skills from the Special Assignment list, allocate the new

skill levels, and record the new values on your character's worksheet. There is no effect if the Special Assignment roll is failed.

Players and referee are encouraged to work up a story consistent with the game world for this Special Assignment. If there is sufficient time and inclination, the referee and the player can role play out this story to determine the skills acquired, with the other players taking on the non-player characters involved. The player in the Special Assignment should use the cumulative career stats derived from the term just prior to the current one.

Commissioning and Promotion

Not every civilian career has a rank list to go with the chances for promotion, but when the career listing indicates a promotion is possible, the section will list the required result on 2D6 along with any modifiers to the dice roll that may apply. The character will also get a bonus skill and one (1) skill level from the Subsequent Terms list for each successful promotion.

In many careers there is a significant distinction between the 'officers' and the 'ratings'—the occupation's rank-and-file. For example a significant difference exists between emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and doctors; mailroom clerks and executives, and so forth. The career listing may include a Rank Table that includes commissioned ranks—if the occupation has them—along with a Commission check entry with the requirements and modifiers to the check. Workers having distinct capabilities or knowledge and a bit of luck can jump the gap between the officers and the ratings

The commissioning check represents the special circumstances where the character has been selected for an increase in responsibility. While used mostly in the Military Careers, any career listing may include a commissioning check. The career listing indicates the required number that the player must make on a roll of 2D6. Also indicated are any modifiers to the dice roll that apply based on the character's capabilities. On a successful commissioning check, your character receives a promotion to the lowest officer rank for that career, as listed in the career's Rank Table. If the career has no commission check entry, the career has no commissioned ranks. For civilian careers a successful commissioning check results in a skill point that can be allocated to a skill selected from the Subsequent Term skill list. For military careers, commissioning leads to additional training that is indicated for your character's grade and circumstance.

Players should note that their character can only receive a commission once within a given career (unless otherwise indicated for Military careers), even if the character leaves the career and returns later.

Contacts

During the course of our lives, we all meet a great number of people, many of whom become important contacts. For a role-playing game to mirror reality, then, it should take into account the network of important contacts that characters make during the course of their pre-adventuring careers. Contacts are integral to Conspiracy Rules and if used effectively can add significant flavor and depth to the game.

Contacts are categorized into two broad group: generic and solid. All contacts begin as generic which reflects the peripheral connections and relationships your character has developed, the old: "I know a guy who…". Generic contacts serve well as a resource for the referee to use to help spur the adventure plot along or drop an unexpected ally into the story. Solid contacts, on the other hand are intended as resources for your character to use during the course of an adventure, as people who can provide information, special equipment, or some other source of needed aid (see "Contacts" on page 20 for more information on using Contacts). The contact's ability to respond to your character's request is dependent on the amount of influence that the character exerts on them.

The All Terms section of each career lists the contacts available to your character from time spent in the career term. If more than one of a type is indicated, or if more than one contact type is listed, the character may choose which contact type they receive. Sometimes the player must make a 2D6 roll at the time the contact is selected to see if the contact has special qualities, for example, if the contact is foreign. The player rolls 2D6 and checks if it is greater than or equal to the listed number.

Influence

To get things done, you need to know the right people—sure—who are you going to call, right? But in addition to knowing them, you need to influence them into actually doing things for you. Influence is a result of stature, wealth, and the network of affiliates within the segment of society in which your character operates. A character with a large amount of influence will be able to convince his or her

Influence Accumulation Table

Starting Influence Points	
SOC > 8	8
SOC = 5-8	4
SOC < 5	6
Generic Contact	1 each
Solid Contact	+2 each
Accumulated Influence Points	
Commission	1 each
Promotion	1 each
Years of Experience	1 per year
Purchased Influence [1]	
SOC > 8	$2,000 per point
SOC = 5-8	$1,000 per point
SOC < 5	$500 per point

[1] Costs of purchased influence should be adjusted for the referee's setting.

contacts into providing assistance when needed. The ability to manipulate contacts into assistance is a function of accumulated influence as represented through the use of influence points.

Social Background Influence: Your character accumulates influence through their Social Standing. See the Influence Accumulation table, below.

Rank Has Its Privilege: Whenever your character receives a commission, they receive two (2) influence points. For each promotion the character receives another influence point (1). These are cumulative so that if the character receives a commission in one career and again in another different one, he or she will receive two (2) points, one for each commissioning.

Years of Experience: Life presents its own opportunity to network. For each year spent in a career term (Education, Military, and Civilian), your character receives one (1) influence point. Note that this is years, so your character will receive four (4) Influence Points per career term.

Cash on the Barrel: Talking or walking, money as a source of influence almost always works. At any time a character can use available cash to 'purchase' influence points. This reflects spending money or time with the contact to butter him up. The exchange rate is up to the referee, but the Influence Accumulation table provides a good starting basis for each social class.

Generic Contacts

Generic contacts are received as a result of the career terms completed during character generation. Normally these can be left as faceless contacts that can be turned into more definite connections at a later date. However, if you so desire, you may generate the names and their relationship to your character, and then if needed, the referee can generate the contact's details. In this way, you can determine what sorts of people have become important to your character's lives, but some mystery remains as to the contact's exact abilities—fostering a sense of contacts being personalities rather than merely lists of statistics.

A basic description of each of the contact types that your character can acquire during the various career terms is given below. It should be noted that, just as a character may have changed careers since the time the contact was originally made, so may have their contact. The final determination of what has happened to a contact in the intervening years (including what new abilities the contact may have gained) is left to you and the referee to negotiate. As a guide to referees, the technology level to which the contact normally has access is indicated in parentheses at the end of the description. (See "Gear" on page 267.)

Academic: The contact was a member of the intellectual community, meaning she or he could have been a professor, a writer, or a member of a social sciences think tank. Most of these sorts will still be working at the same career when a character later meets them again. Academics cover all fields as distinct from Specialists. (HiTek, BioTek)

Business: The contact was a member of the business community, perhaps a corporate executive, or maybe a powerful figure in banking or investments. On the other hand, the contact may have been the owner of some smaller business that was important to your character. In either case, such contacts may have made or lost a fortune since the time the character last saw them. (ConTek, HiTek)

Criminal: This contact was making a career of illegal activities or serving time for the same when first met by your character. Since that time, the contact may have gone straight, been imprisoned, or even killed. In the last case, someone close to the original contact, perhaps a partner or a henchman might remember the character and becomes the new contact. (All *Tek)

Empathic: The contact was part of the little-known empathic network that has been springing up around the world of late. It is extremely likely that the contact is still involved in that network, although his or her knowledge and skills will likely have improved in the interim.

Entertainment: The contact was involved in the entertainment industry, whether as an actor, director, writer, or technician. In all likelihood, she or he still is, although perhaps with more or less popularity than before, particularly considering changes in programming due to increased and often cut-throat corporate competition.

Government: Such contacts were some form of government official when your character last knew them. Chances are they remain so when the character meets them again, although likely not in the exact same capacity. (All *Tek)

Intelligence Community: An intelligence community contact worked in espionage when your character first met him or her, either as a field operative, a controller, or an intelligence analyst. In all probability, such contacts, when the character meets them again, will still be involved in espionage, although they will likely have risen in authority. (MilTek)

Journalist: The contact may have worked with your character on a newspaper, magazine, or television news staff before the major media services drove virtually everyone else out of business. Now, the journalist will either be a member of one of those mega-media services, or scraping by as a 'yellow journalist' for a street corner press or local access program.

Law Enforcement: The contact was a policeman or investigator of some sort, and is probably doing the same thing now (most likely either for a small community or having moved into bigger more important areas). (HiTek)

Medical: The contact was a medical doctor or administrator when your character last knew him or her. It is extremely likely that such contacts will still be involved in that business. (BioTek)

Military: Military contacts were soldiers when your character first made their acquaintance. Although there is a

chance that these contacts will have since left the military, it is likely that they have moved on to a civilian career closely associated with their military specialty. As such, this type of contact is invaluable when trying to acquire rare or restricted equipment or information (see "Gear" on page 267). (HiTek, MilTek)

Specialist: When your character last knew him or her, this contact was a specialist, brought in to supervise or advise on special or important projects. This type of contact could be a construction engineer, laboratory/medical technician, or one of the other specialties mentioned in the career lists. It is the nature of such specialists to continue in their specialty, although they will undoubtedly have increased their expertise since the Minion Hunter last met them. (Tek depends on specialty)

Wealthy: The contact was wealthy when he or she originally became friends with your character. With the economic ups and downs, however, there is no guarantee that the contact still has the same wherewithal; and any wealthy contacts that have actually grown wealthier will be more difficult to contact again, due to increased security, higher mobility, etc. Nonetheless, it can be very handy to have a wealthy friend. (HiTek)



Solid Contacts

Solid contacts are those whose present whereabouts your character knows, and with whom the PC has fairly regular dealings. Solid contacts can make good non-player characters. Whereas a generic contact has generalized stats, solid contacts are often completely fleshed out with stats, motivations, so forth. Solid contacts include three different types of characters.

Other Adventurers: When a group is first put together, or whenever a new character joins an existing group, the players and referee should work together to determine how the group members know one another. The contacts mechanic can be used to create links between prospective adventurers and, if a group creation type adventure is not run by the referee, can explain how the characters all came to be associating together.

Initial Contacts: An initial contact is a contact that your character has asked to have as a regular source of aid, even before the campaign begins. The player and referee negotiate stats and background information as needed for initial contacts. A quick diversion through character generation can be used to provide such details. Motivations should always be included in solid contact generation, particularly as they pertain to your character.

In-game Contacts: An in-game contact is one which is converted from generic to solid during an adventure or is the acquisition of a generic contact that the player wants to make. This could be done at either the referee's instigation (i.e. an important clue or lead is needed by the group and an old friend can provide it, or perhaps when motivation is needed to start an investigation), or at the player's request (i.e. some adventurers need some extra muscle on the job, but for a situation where any old thug won't do).

Note that while solid contacts cannot be turned back into generic ones, they can turn up again in a different place if the referee desires. In general, though, once a generic contact is turned into a solid one, the referee must pay a little closer attention to that contact's destiny, in order to remain true to the character's desires and unfolding history.

Secondary Activities

Just as in real life, the various careers your character may select do not occupy 100% of his or her life and as such leaves plenty of time for your character to pursue their other hobbies and pastimes. In game-terms Secondary Activities allow your character to either collect skills he or she normally wouldn't be able to select or to increase the number of points they have in one or other important skill.

Selecting Secondary Activities: For each career term completed (unless otherwise indicated in the career listing) your character receives two (2) additional skill points to allocate to any skill or skills they wish to select as Secondary Activities. This selection is limited to those skills a character could reasonability be expected to learn and should be limited to skills that can be learned in one's spare time. For each selected skill, you should describe how your character acquires that skill: self-study, hobby, etc.

Civilian and Education Careers

In this economy just to have a job is something. Working a career is some kind of wonderful. When first entering the workforce, the world is your oyster, but looking for a pearl is rough on the hands. The choices you have to can make decisions difficult.

Educational terms are listed as careers, but have a slightly different way of presenting the benefits. Conspiracy Rules has undergraduate university, graduate university, law and medical schools, technical school, and a civilian flight academy. After education its off to vocation land to select a civilian or military careers: soldier, sailor, tinker, spy? Which will it be?

Navigating a Civilian Career

Selecting careers should be consistent with the character concept and not chosen just for the skills received. The skills should be considered, just not the only reason for the career. Players are encouraged to avoid the min-maxing that results in an Entertainer/Priest/SpecOps combat specialist fighting in white collar, tutu, and face paint. Moving through the career terms is simpler than the military careers.

Entrance: Once your character has selected a civilian occupation, the player reviews the entrance requirements. The character must meet all the entrance requirements listed and once met can enter the career term. Entrance requirements include minimum or maximum attribute values, minimum or maximum skill levels, previous occupations (such as educational terms), or there may be no prerequisites listed. The referee can intervene if the player can make a case for waiving the prerequisites. Upon entering the term the character receives the career benefits identified in the career listing.

Changing Careers: Disaffected workers tend to change their careers often (more often when players are min-maxing their character). If your character succeeds the continuation check (see below), he or she can change to a new career prior to adventuring. Players should note that the continuation check is optionally required by the referee. As long as your character has the prerequisites for the new career and passes any continuation checks, he or she may change careers at will.

Specialties: In some of the civilian careers, players will note a distinction on the type of career within the occupation. Either based on entrance requirements, player choices, or the results of resolving benefits (for example, promotions), the benefits available from the experiences of the term may be different. For example Medicine occupations have Doctors, Nurses, and EMTs each having different benefits listed. Once the requirements for Doctor or Nurse are met, your character will get different benefits.

Continuation: After receiving the career term's benefits, the players check if continuation in character generation is possible prior to being thrust into adventuring. The referee can waive this check to allow characters to continue serving in career terms well into old age. If passed or otherwise



waived, the character can remain in their current career or enter another career for which they qualify. Players should note that re-entering a career term does not confer an additional First Term skill package. That package is only available the first time entering the term, even if the specialty within the term has been changed…old dogs, new tricks.

Military Careers

Joining the military is the one way young people can secure themselves a future beyond wage slavery or disenfranchisement. With the rise of social strife worldwide, and America's focus on an interventionist foreign policy, the various military branches clamber for as many hale and hearty bodies as are willing to commit to service. Details for selecting, entering, and continuing in military careers are given on page 50.

Continuing in Careers

Players have two methods for determining when to end the career phase of character generation. Random, where a roll is made to check if continuation is possible; and self-determined where the player keeps moving through new terms until their character is complete. The first method assists the referee in preventing the skill set optimization called min-maxing. The second is useful for creating purposeful characters aligned to character concepts. The method is up to the referee with agreement of the players.

Self-Determination Method: If using this method, players choose when their careers are finished and their character is ready to start adventuring.

Random Method: If using the random method for finishing character generation, the player rolls 2D6 at the end of each term. If the result is greater than or equal to the total number of terms served so far, the character may continue on to another term. If the result is less than or equal to the number of terms served, career terms is over and the character Musters Out. Military careers handle continuation in the military with bonuses for being in the service. Upon leaving the military, the player must make a continuation roll to enter civilian careers.

Changing Careers

A character who intends to change careers on the next term subtracts 1 from the continuation roll. Coming from an education term does not count as a career change. However, going to an education term does.

Attribute Increases

In navigating through the career terms, the Minion Hunter will have opportunities to improve his attributes as a result of serving in a career. Some of the career descriptions that follow provide for an increase in attributes. Attribute improvements are limited:

Physical Attribute Limits: Physical attributes of Strength, Agility, and Constitution can only be increased by two levels as a result of career term skill selection. This value is an increase above the original values the character had when they entered the Navigating Careers and Personal Growth phase of character generation. So if a character lost attribute values due to aging, the increase to bring the attribute back to the original level does not count against the two-level limit.

Mental Attribute Limits: The two-level limit of the Physical Attributes applies to the Intelligence attribute. There is no practical limit to the Education and the Charisma attributes' increase as a result of the Navigating Careers and Personal Growth phase.

Psionic Limits: There is no practical limit to the powers of the mind.

Social Standing: The SOC attribute can fluctuate as needed by the dictates of the career term and Minion Hunter choices.

Effects of Age

Start Age	*End Age*	*Losses / (Gains)*					
		STR	*AGL*	*CON*	*INT*	*CHR*	*PSI*
17	21	—	—	—	—	—	—
21	25	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	29	—	—	—	—	—	—
29	33	—	Y	—	—	—	—
33	37	—	Y	—	—	—	—
37	41	Y	Y	—	—	—	—
41	45	Y	Y	—	—	—	—
45	49	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
49	53	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
53	57	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
57	61	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
61	65	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—
65	69	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—
69	73	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—
73	77	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
77	81	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
81	85	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
85	89+	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)

Y indicates that rolling greater than the attribute results in a decrease in the attribute.
(Y) Indicates that rolling greater than the attribute results in an increase in the attribute.

Additional Career Rules

In addition to the benefits and resources allocated by career terms, a number of other requirements need to be considered.

Aging

Just as in the real world, all characters age. While such effects of aging are not usually felt while adventuring, during the career portion of character creation, where the time scale could last a couple of decades, a character's their physical and mental abilities may fade with time.

Once your character reaches the age of 32 the effects of aging can start to be felt. For the most part, this aging process can be inhibited with exercise and training while in a career through Secondary Activities.

Checking for Attribute loss

At the end of each career term the character's current age is referenced in the Effects of Age table. If an attribute check is indicated (i.e. a 'Y' in the column), the character must roll a D20 for each Attribute listed, for example, STR, AGL.

Losing Attribute Points: If the resulting roll is less than the current number of points in that Attribute then one (1) point is lost (i.e. characters with higher attributes are more likely to be effected by aging). Any result equal to or higher than the character's current attribute means that aging has no effects this term.

Gaining Attribute Points: For the Psionics (PSI) attribute, the indication in the table is that the attribute may be increased. If the resulting roll is less than the current PSI Attribute then one (1) point is gained. Any result equal to or higher than the character's current PSI attribute means that aging has no effect on Psionics this term.

Modifiers to Attribute Checks: Once a Minion Hunter reaches 60, they must subtract five (5) from the number rolled on the D20 for each attribute. Characters over 70 must subtract ten (10) for physical Attribute checks only.

Derived Stats

At this point in character generation the character is about to discover the true nature of their world. However, before the veil of conspiracy and lies is pulled aside, the character needs to determine a few more capabilities as well as some strengths and limitations.

The following statistics are all derived from attributes and help describe how your character affects or is affected by the world he or she interacts with. In the following the character will determine his or her aptitude with languages, various physical statistics as well as an ability to act in combat and withstand physical damage. The character finally will determine how much cash and influence has been accumulated in order to outfit for their impending battles with the encroaching darkness.

Known Languages

Intelligence Attribute	*# Languages at Skill Level*	*Notes†*
1-2	1 x 5	Native language must be taken at level 5 (cannot read or write).
3-4	1 x 10	Native language must be taken at level 10.
5-6	1 x 10 1 x 5	Native language must be taken at level 10. Other languages should be drawn from the native country's list of languages.
7-8	1 x 10 2 x 7 2 x 3	Native language must be taken at level 10. Other languages should come from the home nation's region.
9-10	2 x 10 2 x 7 4 x 3	Native language must be taken at level 10. Other languages can be drawn from anywhere.
11-13	3 x 10 4 x 7 4 x 5 4 x 3	Native language must be taken at level 10. Other languages can be drawn from anywhere.
14+	6 x 10 4 x 7 6 x 5 9 x 3	Native language must be taken at level 10. Other languages can be drawn from anywhere.

† Guidance for the selection of languages is subject to player-referee negotiation.

Languages

The character's nationality has to this point been assumed to be American from the 'US of A'. However this does not have to be the case. As a result of the increasingly global nature of world commerce, a polyglot of languages is available to the character. Using the Intelligence Attribute as a guide, the player records their character's skill levels in languages according to the Known Languages table. For each language selected, the player must make a justification to the referee for why that particular language would be known to their character.

Physical Statistics

Your character has a number of basic physical statistics, including current age, load capacity and throwing range.

Determine Current Age

Obviously, there are practical limits to what age a Minion Hunter can be. However, as the growth of a character was determined by the number and type of career terms the player decided to take, a simple calculation can be used to discover their current age.

Current Age: A character's initial age is equal to 17 (the age when they embarked on their careers) plus the number of years spent in career terms completed.

Load

A character can lug a considerable weight of equipment, even cross-country, and this is called a character's normal load. A character can carry up to twice this amount, but

is considered to be burdened (and will have modifiers placed on any combat or task resolution they may attempt). Particularly hardy, or more likely, desperate characters may also lift loads up to four times this amount, but can only carry them short distances (50 to 100 meters at most).

Determining Load: A character's normal load capacity is equal to three times their Strength and Constitution combined in kilograms, or in other words **(STR + CON) x 3**.

Throwing Range

The distance in meters that a character can throw a one-kilogram (1 kg) weight accurately is called the character's throw range. To establish the throwing range for lighter or heavier objects, multiply or divide this range by the weight of the object, appropriately. Note, while this number denotes the maximum range of a character's throw, it does not determine accuracy, see page 73 for details on the Throwing skill.

Determining Throwing Range: A character's one-kilogram throwing range in meters is equal to four times the character's Strength (**STR x 4)**.

Combat Statistics

During the course of an adventure or campaign, characters are bound to encounter situations, such as combat, which will cause physical injury. The combat statistic of Initiative is calculated based on experiences received during participation in career terms. A character's damage uses statistics to quantify wounds received in combat and other dangerous situations. The damage a character can take is quantified using hit points assigned to locations—hit locations.

Initiative

Initiative represents a character's ability to remain cool and act most effectively in combat situations. Characters with a high Initiative score will usually begin acting sooner, and therefore achieve more actions in a combat round than will characters with low Initiatives. This is not because high Initiative characters are any faster, but simply because they react more quickly and spend less time hesitating.

Initiative values range from 1 to 6, with beginning characters tending to start out on the low end of the scale, then increasing as they gain experience in combat. Each combat turn is divided into six, phases, counting backward from six to one, and characters get to perform one action in each phase equal to or less than their Initiative level. The Combat chapter explains this in more detail, but it should be obvious even now that initiative is very important if you are to be involved in combat.

Your character's beginning Initiative is based upon the types of careers he or she has pursued. Serving in Education and Civilian careers yields a beginning Initiative of 2 or a random roll of 1D3. Serving in Military careers yields a 3 or a random roll of 1D6. The player selects the fixed number or the die roll. Also, in each of these two areas, there are some careers that give bonuses to Initiative, as indicated in the Careers chapter. Players should note that Initiative bonuses due to Careers are not cumulative—you can only gain a maximum of +1.

If your character has served in both civilian and military career terms, you get to choose the civilian or military beginning Initiative. Bonuses from a civilian career can only be used when the beginning Initiative is civilian. The same applies for military bonuses.

Unarmed Combat Damage

Unarmed Combat is the conflict that ensues when the combatants use only their limbs and bodies to inflict damage on one another. This sort of fighting happens at close quarters, where quick-thinking and the right technique are just as important physical Strength.

Unarmed combat damage is made up of two parts: the ability to do a base amount of damage and the ability to 'stage-up' damage.

Unarmed Combat Damage Rating (UCDR)

Your character derives their base Unarmed Combat Damage Rating by adding his or her Unarmed Martial Arts skill level to their Strength (STR) attribute and dividing the result by 5, rounding fractions down (note that a result of 0 is considered to be 1). This is your character's UCDR and represents the number of points of damage dealt by a successful unarmed combat hit.

UCDR = [Unarmed Martial Arts + STR] ÷ 5

Physical Damage Capacity

A character's capacity to absorb damage before dying is represented by a number of hit points calculated from their Attribute scores. The principle method of assigning hit points to body locations is given in the Base Hit Points table, below. The player calculates the base hit points at each location and enters the value in the Slight Wound column on the Minion Hunter's character worksheet. The referee should negotiate with players on which method of computing hit points to be used in his or her setting.

Influence and Contacts

After all career terms have been served, the player sums all accumulated Influence points. Each generic contact must be allocated at least one (1) point. The character can then spend other influence points to improve relations with their

Base Hit Points

Body Location	*Original Method*	*Optional Method*
Head	2 x CON	CON + STR
Right Arm	2 x (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Left Arm	2 x (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Chest	3 x (CON + STR)	2xCON + STR
Abdomen	2 x (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Right Leg	2 x (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Left Leg	2 x (CON + STR)	CON + STR

stable of contacts or bank them for contacts made in the future. Note that at this point the player can also designate which of the character's generic contacts she will develop into solid ones. When a contact is converted from generic to solid, the player receives a bonus of +2 to their Influence pool. The player must allocate this bonus to the solid contact, keeping them at an influence level of 3. Players should note that solid contacts require background and story to receive this bonus. If during play, the results of an influence check indicate that the contact's influence level dropped below 1, the contact is fed up and has moved on—effectively not available to the Minion Hunter any more. Characters will have to service their contacts to keep the ones best suited to assist them.

Career Cash

The character should add together all of the cash saved in each career term they completed. Note that criminal and homeless careers may adversely effect accumulated career cash. But adventuring is expensive and carrying case is dangerous. Your character will also have a credit rating.

Credit Rating: Characters with a current Social Standing (SOC) attribute of eight (8) or greater have a credit rating sufficient to purchase any LoTek equipment and HiTek equipment with a Very Common or Common code rating (subject to the referee's approval) without paying cash for it. Characters in this social class merely present their identification card and the item is purchased. Characters with a current SOC attribute of five (5) through seven (7) can purchase most Very Common and Common availability LoTek items on credit, again subject to the referee's approval. Characters down at the lower end of the social spectrum (less than 5) must pay for all goods they purchase out of their available cash. However, characters in this class have access to LoTek items from all availability codes without the need to go through a contact. See "Gear" on page 267 for more information.

Buying Power

Social Standing (SOC)	*Credit Rating Benefit*	
8+	LoTek (C/VC) HiTek (C/VC)	Can purchase on credit
5-7	LoTek (C/VC)	Can purchase on credit
4–	LoTek (all)	No credit, but no contact needed for LoTek equipment of all availability codes.

Skill Abilities

Once your character's Attributes have been finalized, and the final points have been allocated to skills, your character's ability in each skill can be determined. A Skill ability (called Asset) is the final number that tells how good a character is at each task and represents a combination of their training, experience, and natural talent in that particular skill.

During play, when a character attempts a task—be it attempting to access a computer or observing for a battery of Artillery—it is the asset that the player usually consults, compares to a roll of a D20, and determines whether or not their character succeeded in the attempt.

Calculating Skill Abilities: For each skill listed on the your character sheet, which has at least one point allocated to it or is identified as a default skill (see "Default Skills" on page 99), add the appropriate Controlling Attribute score (i.e. the Attribute under which the skill appears on the character sheet) to the number of points allocated to the skill.

Off Adventuring

Now your character stands on the brink, about to step out from the veil of innocence and ignorance that has protected for so long. As your character enters this new world of conspiracy, darkness and disbelief, a lifetime of experience and knowledge can guide them through the trying times ahead. But whether these, will be enough, time will tell.

Trigger Events

Characters did not start life as adventurers, they were brought there through exposure to some encroaching Dark. In the character's past there is always an incident that brings the sudden knowledge that "something is not quite right". This knowledge always comes with the surety of firsthand experience. The trigger event should be developed and incorporated into your character's background and should define the character's relationship to the Dark. Often a wrong done or some other injustice, the event can be direct, like "they tried to eat me" or witnessed, like "I watched in horror as they took my sister", but it should always be personal.

Referees are encouraged to develop short side adventures to role-play the trigger event. The other players in the team can be included in a team union adventure, or they can run the non-player characters. Playing out the trigger event will give life to the background.

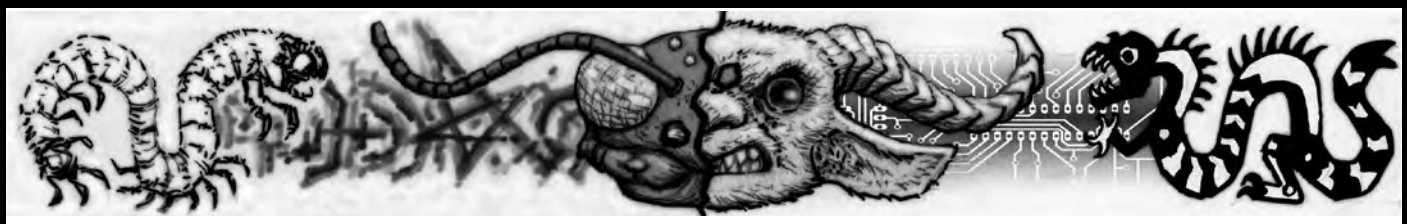
Creating a Party and Contacts

With all the players' characters created all that remains is a rationale for why they would join to go off adventuring. The referee can use a contact from each of the characters to bring them together with by request (for example, a common contact among all characters). Alternately the characters can be forced together through the context of a starting adventure, called a team union adventure. At this point all the characters make a Contact of their teammates (and receiving 3 Influence points for each of them). Having player characters as contacts is useful as the character may be removed from active play for various reasons, but can still be used in future stories as a minor character.

Languages

Abkhazian	Breton	Fiji	Icelandic	Kurdish	Sindhi
Afar	Bulgarian	Finnish	Indonesian	Laothian	Singhalese
Afrikaans	Burmese	French	Interlingua	Latin	Siswati
Albanian	Byelorussian	Frisian	Interlingue	Latvian, Lettish	Slovak
Amharic	Cambodian	Gaelic (Scots Gaelic)	Inupiak	Lingala	Slovenian
Arabic	Catalan	Galician	Irish	Lithuanian	Somali
Armenian	Chinese	Georgian	Italian	Macedonian	Spanish
Assamese	Corsican	German	Japanese	Malagasy	Sudanese
Aymara	Croatian	Greek	Javanese	Malay	Swahili
Azerbaijani	Czech	Greenlandic	Kannada	Malayalam	Swedish
Bashkir	Danish	Guarani	Kashmiri	Maltese	Tagalog
Basque	Dutch	Gujarati	Kazakh	Maori	Tajik
Bengali, Bangla	English, American	Hausa	Kinyarwanda	Marathi	Tamil
Bhutani	Esperanto	Hebrew	Kirghiz	Moldavian	Tatar
Bihari	Estonian	Hindi	Kirundi	Mongolian	Tegulu
Bislama	Faeroese	Hungarian	Korean	Nauru	Thai
				Nepali	Tibetan
				Norwegian	Tigrinya
				Occitan	Tonga
				Oriya	Tsonga
				Oromo, Afan	Turkish
				Pashto, Pushto	Turkmen
				Persian	Twi
				Polish	Ukrainian
				Portuguese	Urdu
				Punjabi	Uzbek
				Quechua	Vietnamese
				Rhaeto-Romance	Volapuk
				Romanian	Welsh
				Russian	Wolof
				Samoan	Xhosa
				Sangro	Yiddish
				Sanskrit	Yoruba
				Serbian	Zulu
				Serbo-Croatian	
				Sesotho	
				Setswana	
				Shona	





Kiss Me Deadly
By Matt Forbeck
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Mo Dugan winced as he stepped on something wet and spongy. The butcher-shop smell of the dark tunnels he'd been stealing through here in the bowels of the arcology had pushed him right up to the edge of what he could tolerate. Bringing the flashlight taped to the top of his pistol down to see what he'd almost slipped in shoved him right over.

A human tongue lay there, still soaked in saliva. It glistened in a pool of blood, a stainless steel stud stabbing out of it as if the pink flesh was the silk setting in a jewelry box.

As he forced himself past the amputated muscle, Dugan shifted his grasp on his pistol. He didn't want to holster it long enough to dry his sweating palm.

Few people came this deep into the arcology, the mountain-sized city/corporate headquarters of one of the largest multinational conglomerates on the planet. They stayed in the areas as high up as they could afford, and even the poorest average mike didn't have to venture here.

Precious few folks could afford to even visit the Dreamlands, the luxurious penthouse region that topped the thick blanket of smog that cast the rest of the arcology in permanent shadow. Still, that's where Dugan had found himself this morning.

"Some of our ballotmen have gone missing," the suit had said. "Word is a group of eco-terrorists known as the Green Tide—part of the Empathic Underground—is responsible. Find out."

Dugan hadn't needed to hear any more, not after he'd seen how much had been stuffed into his account. This would be his ticket out of his illegal crawlspace in the anthills.

Unfortunately, all the money had bought for him so far was this hike into Hell. He just hoped it would be a round trip.

He'd interviewed the families of the missing people. Most of them were more worried about being busted back down to a miketown—where they'd have to work for their beer—than what happened to their missing "loved" one. Being salaried for your ballots balanced on a knife's edge. Don't pull the right levers at the right time, and you'd be wishing you could find a place as posh as a sewer to lay your head.

Still, one of them—a mother of one of the missing souls—had told Dugan that her son had been called to a meeting down in the worst part of the arcology. That had led Dugan to where he was now, creeping through the intestines of the mountainous structure, hoping to trip over another clue.

Now that he had, he wondered if he should have stayed in bed today and nursed his hangover instead.

Working on a hunch, Dugan flicked off his flashlight. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw a soft glow up ahead.

He crept forward, the light brightening and growing more sickly and green as he went, forming into the rectangle of a doorway. Soon, he heard voices murmuring among the soft hum of fluorescent lights, but he could not make out what they were saying.

Dugan peered a single eye around the edge of the door and had to bite back a gasp.

The floor of the narrow, round room splayed out below him. On it, twelve adults lay in a circle, strapped down with their feet toward a hole in the center of the room, trails of blood running out of their shredded mouths, leaving their teeth exposed in skeletal grins. The wash of green light from the LEDs overhead drained the color from them, casting them in pale emeralds and icy blacks.

Each of them bore gaps where their eyeteeth had once been.

Dugan looked up. He stood in the bottom of a well—or a missile silo. Tall, smooth walls of reinforced steel stretched high over his head, broken only by regularly spaced rings of greenish lights that pulsed downward in sequence.

He squinted at the distant ceiling. The glowing rings narrowed up there, almost to a point. Then he realized the voices had stopped.

Dugan wanted to turn around and run as fast as he could, but he knew it was already too late. If whoever had been in here had stopped talking, they knew he was here.

Swallowing his fear, Dugan took a tentative step into the cylindrical chamber. The floor held his weight, so he let go of the doorframe and crept in. He had just enough room between the room's wall and the tops of the victims' heads for him to walk around them.

He forced himself to look past the bodies and examine the floor. He'd almost missed the soft glow of a thick ring of green lights that encircled the mutilated corpses.

The lights here moved in strange shapes and patterns that Dugan didn't recognize, pictograms or hieroglyphics from an ancient age cast in a liquid crystal array. They slid clockwise around the edge of the circle.

Dugan bent his head to the right and saw that he'd been reading the signs upside down. He stepped between two of the corpses and bent down to get a closer look.

The symbols crept into his head like they wanted to mean something—something horrible and alien and evil—but he





slammed shut his eyes and stood back up before they could make sense. Searching for something to force the tendrils of those invading thoughts from his head, he turned around and peered into the circle's hub.

A bottomless hole stared back at him from there, stretching just wide enough that a man might be able to fit into it—if he never wanted to climb back out again. A circle of small, green stones surrounded the hole, unmoving. Dugan knelt down to get a better look at them.

Each of the pristine eyeteeth pointed straight toward the center of the hole. Dugan didn't need to count them. He knew there would be forty-eight.

"We can make this painless for you," a voice said from somewhere high in the darkness. "If you slip into the hole yourself, that is."

Dugan cursed at the suit's voice. He glanced upward but could see no sign of the man. He pointed his gun in the direction of the voice and thumbed on his flashlight.

A small black dome—the kind that protects security cameras—stared back at him from far up the wall, glistening in the naked light.

"It's over, Dugan," the suit said. "You're not here to solve this puzzle. You're the final piece in it."

Dugan's guts flipped. He glanced at the gaping doorway, but he knew it would be no use. If he took a move toward it, the suit would just seal it off. All he probably had to do was press a button on his keyboard to trap Dugan in the place forever.

But he hadn't done so yet. That meant there was hope.

Then something flashed in the back of Dugan's mind that chased that momentary optimism away. Off in the darkness, somewhere in the tunnel through which he'd come, something scuttled toward him. He couldn't hear it, smell it, or see it, but he knew it was there.

Dugan had often had flashes of intuition like this before. He'd learned the hard way not to ignore them.

"What's the picture of this little jigsaw show?" Dugan asked. He trained his gun on the doorway.

The suit chortled. "Power," he said. "For the corp. For me. Power enough to crush groups like the Green Tide—maybe the rest of the Empathic Underground too."

"And for me?"

"Death, of course. Minions like the one we'll bring through here don't care for live bait."

Dugan glanced down at the sigils on the floor and spat at them. His saliva sizzled wherever the green lights ran under it. "Demons, you mean."

"That's a small-minded way to put it." Condescension dripped from the suit's voice.

"Deals like that never work out, I hear."

"All it cost us was a dozen ballotmen too lazy to press the right buttons, and the pittance we paid for an illegal investigator no one will miss."

Dugan stared into the pit in the center of the room. He knew the suit was right. He had no family. No friends. If he dropped off the face of the earth, the only one who might notice would be his landlord, who'd just sell off his few belongings and put up a sign for a new tenant, probably within the week.

"The minion," said Dugan, ice in his heart, "it wanted me?"

"Don't flatter yourself." The suit snorted at the idea. "Lost souls are a buck a billion. You were just convenient. Who else could I pay to walk into this place?"

Dugan raised his gun and snapped off a pair of shots at the camera's globe. It shattered and sent pieces of glass and plastic showering to the floor.

He smiled for a triumphant moment. Then his sense of impending doom chased that feeling away.

He aimed his pistol at the doorway. The flashlight's beam stabbed through the tunnel and caught someone stalking toward him.

She had a face of haunting beauty. Eyes as pale as ice. Hair black as oil. Skin the ruddy color of an infection. Dressed in black the same color and shine as her hair, she strode nearer on what sounded like stiletto heels.

As she grew closer, Dugan saw that her legs terminated not in feet but ebony blades that tapped a staccato threat on the concrete when she walked. Then she drew back her crimson lips and smiled at him, exposing not teeth but a rectangle of steel.

No matter how horrible this creature was, though, she clearly only served as a herald of whatever monster the suit and his technicians wanted to suck into this world. Dugan could barely imagine how terrifying her master would be.

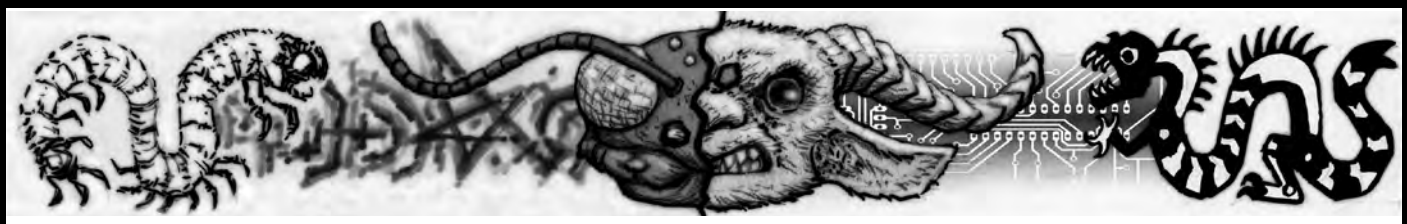
Dugan guessed that bullets wouldn't do much against this minion, but he had to try. He snapped off three shots at the thing marching his way to dispatch him to his doom. That left him just one bullet in the gun, for himself, just in case.

Two of the bullets smacked into the minion's chest, stopping her, but just for a moment. The third ricocheted off her forehead. Exposed metal shone back at Dugan from under each wound, even through the unbloodied skin.

The creature's lips spread wider than anything human could manage. The silver rectangle there unfolded bit by bit, and a cluster of articulated blades stretched out one by one. Their razor-sharp tips reached toward Dugan and seemed to dance in delight.

"Give us a kiss," the creature said in a hissing voice constructed by rasping several of its blades together. Its hands





reached forward and grasped the edges of the doorway as it pulled itself into the room.

Dugan cast about for a weapon—something, anything to defend himself with. His gaze fell on the nearest corpse and could not avoid the dead ballotman's shredded face. If he didn't do something soon, he knew he'd end up just like this poor soul, having suffered a gory death, his tongue resting somewhere other than his mouth.

Then Dugan spotted the gaps in the man's mouth and knew what he had to do. He reached down and scooped up a handful of the eyeteeth outlining the pit that was meant to be his grave. Then he hurled one at the creature in the doorway.

The tooth smacked into the minion's chest. It stuck there for a moment, and the creature glanced down at it and laughed. Then a wisp of smoke curled up from the tooth as it sizzled into her unnatural flesh, and she screamed in shock.

The minion brushed the tooth from her chest, and it fell to the floor, already disintegrating from contact with her skin. It hissed and sputtered where it lay.

The creature stared at the tooth for a moment, then raised its head and snarled at Dugan. Its oral blades flashed and clashed together in furious hunger, and Dugan crept backward, putting the narrow bit between himself and the minion.

The minion hissed and crouched, readying for a final launch at Dugan. The way she moved left no doubt that she could catch him anywhere in the room, no matter where he went. If he somehow managed to avoid her long enough to make it to the door, she would hunt him down, a relentless doom. He figured he wouldn't make it to the first bend in the tunnel.

He knew he'd only get once chance at this, so he had to make it count. He picked the smallest of the eyeteeth and shoved it into the barrel of his gun.

The creature spotted this and charged at him, her leg-blades launching her across the pit. With no time to aim, Dugan raised his pistol and fired.

In the echoing silo, the gun's report set Dugan's ears ringing. The bullet—and the tooth before it—fired straight through the minion's mouth and came flying out of the rear of her snapped-back head. She collapsed in mid-leap and fell partially into the pit.

"Kiss that, sweetheart."

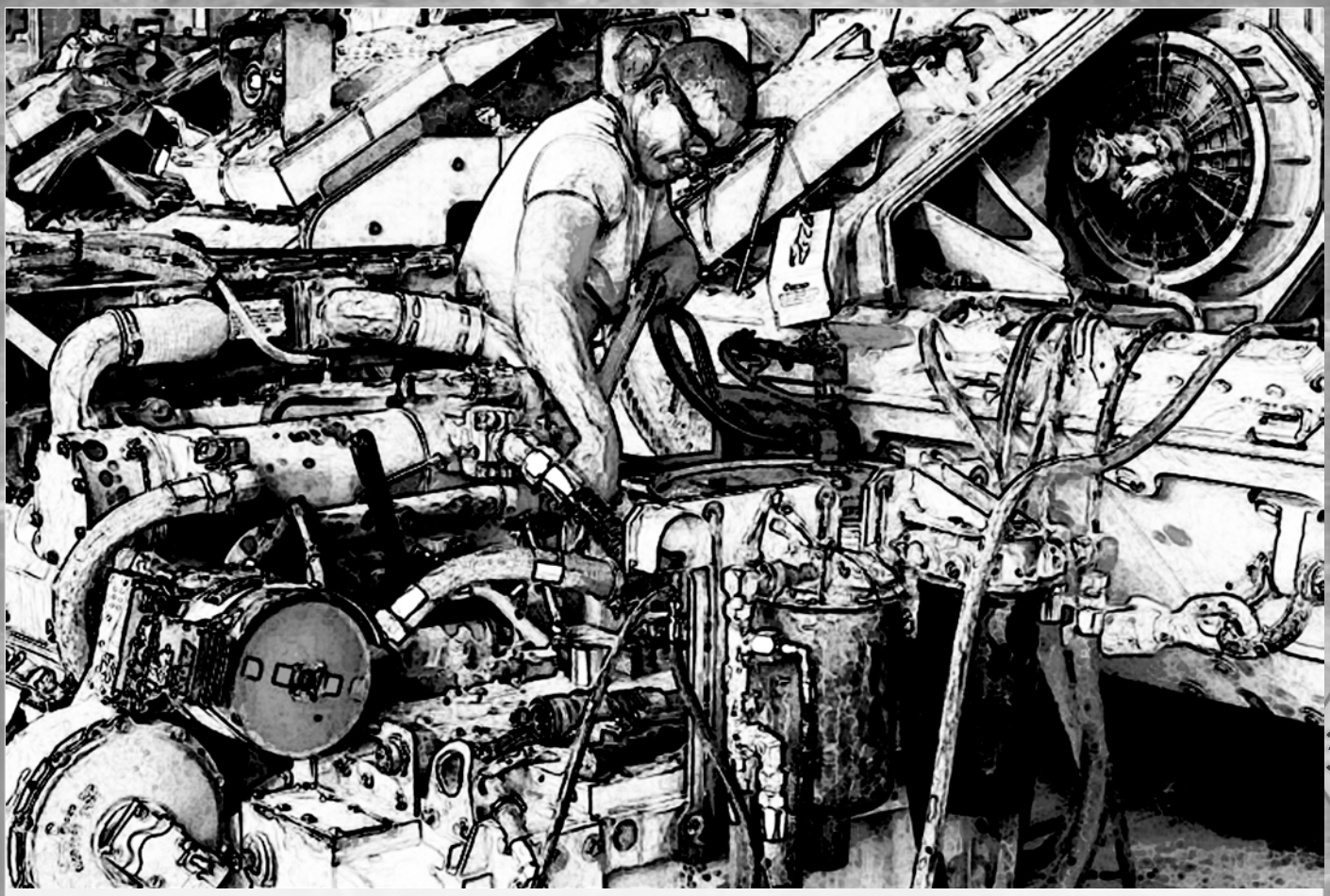
Dugan reached out with his foot and kicked her the rest of the way. He didn't know how that might affect the suit's plans or the monster's arrival, and he didn't care to find out.

As Dugan raced back down the tunnel, his heart wanting to stop in his chest, he thought that if the suit hated the Green Tide, then maybe that was the side to be on—if only he could find them before the suit found him first.






CAREERS



CAREERS

Careers are divided among three broad categories: education, civilian, and military. Characters can pursue any type of career for which they meet the prerequisites. Note that while the careers listed here do not cover every possible occupation a person might pursue, it is possible to reflect other occupations by creatively mixing those listed below.

Education Careers

Higher education is a prerequisite for many careers. Certain forms of higher education have EDU attribute requirements for admission; others do not. All schools are limited to one term, except for graduate university, which may be taken as many times as desired.

Undergraduate University

In former times, undergraduate education was seen as a generalized preparation for a broad range of activities. In the more modern times, a more pragmatic approach is followed, and undergraduate education is used to meet specific educational goals required by academic or technical careers.

Prerequisites: EDU 5+.

All Terms

Skills: Total skill levels equal to character's Education attribute from any combination of the following, but no more than level 3 in any one skill: **Physical Science**, **Economics**, **Engineer**, **Social Science**, **Fine Arts**, Computer, *Language*, Leadership

Contacts: One per term, either academic or journalist. On a 1D10 roll of 8+ the contact is foreign.

Special: +1 EDU (after all skills have been awarded). No commissions, promotions, or special assignment rolls are made. Characters receive no income while attending undergraduate school. The character is awarded a BS/BA degree as a result of graduation. Characters may elect to join ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps). If so, the next career choice must be a Military Career term. Character enters service at a rank of 2nd lieutenant or equivalent (officer, O-1).

Civilian Flight Academy

Flight academies are available to train aircraft pilots for civilian service. Entry is highly prized, so competition for available openings is great. Flight academies have also recently taken on the training of pilots for remotely-piloted aerial vehicles.

Prerequisites: SOC 7+ and either (EDU 6+ or AGL 6+).

All Terms

Skills: A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following: **Aircraft**, **Economics**.

Contacts: Two specialist (pilot) contacts. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

Special: No commissions, promotions, or special assignment rolls are made. No income is received while attending flight academy, nor are any secondary activities allowed. At the start of the next term, the character automatically enters the Civil Pilot career (regardless of whether he or she has the normal prerequisites) with a commission.

Military Academy

Not all governments believe in military academies. Many armies feel they do better by selecting promising enlisted personnel for officer training. But those governments that do maintain military academies do so at least in part because of the glowing traditions and reputations that these institutions maintain. Military-style academies exist and are maintained that serve the following careers: Army, Air Force, and Navy. Marine Corps cadets attend the Naval Academy in the US.

Prerequisites: SOC 8+ or both (STR 5+ and EDU 6+).

All Terms

Skills: Total skill levels equal to character's Education attribute from any combination of the following, but no more than level 3 in any one skill: **Aircraft**, **Economics**, **Engineer**, **Interaction**, Leadership, **Physical Science**, **Social Science**, **Technician**, **Vessel**.

Contacts: Three military per term. On a 1D10 roll of 10+, the contact is foreign military.

Special: No secondary activities are allowed while attending military academy, nor is any money received. Character receives an automatic commission and must spend one term in a career in the service served by the academy. The character is awarded a BS/BA degree as a result of graduation.

Graduate University

Characters who wish to progress from an undergraduate degree to a master's degree or doctorate go to grad school to do so.

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree and either (EDU 7+ or INT 7+).

All Terms

Skills: A total of 6 skill levels with 4 levels per term in any one specialty, plus 2 levels in electives.

Specialties: **Physical Science**, **Economics**, **Engineer**, **Social Science**, **Fine Arts**, **Persuasion**, Computer, *Language*.

Electives: Computer, Instruction, *Language*, Leadership.

Contacts: One per term, academic or government. On a 1D10 roll of 7+, the contact is foreign military.

Special: +1 EDU (after all skills have been awarded). No commissions, promotions, or special assignment rolls are made. No income is received while attending graduate school, nor are any secondary activities allowed. The First Term provides a masters degree (MS/MA); each subsequent term provides a doctorate (PhD or equivalent). Degrees must be taken in one of the specialties noted above. Characters who specialize in Persuasion are granted master's degrees or doctorates in Communication. No income is received while attending graduate school. Graduate university may be selected for as many terms as desired.

Law School

If you want to be a lawyer, you have to go to law school. The same is true if you want to go into Federal Law Enforcement. But a lot of other lines of work can benefit as well from the things a law student learns.

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree and either (EDU 5+ or INT 5+).

All Terms

Skills: Admin/Legal 2, Bargain 1, Interrogation 2, Observation 1, **Persuasion** 2.

Contacts: One academic or government.

Special: No commissions, promotions, or special assignment rolls are made. No income is received while attending law school. The character that passes an Average [Legal/Admin] test is considered to have passed the bar exam and is considered an Attorney. Characters that fail the exam can retake it once per month.

Medical School

Medical school is a prerequisite for working as a medical doctor or a psychiatrist. Few people go to the trouble of going to medical school without going on to pursue one of those careers.

Prerequisites: (EDU or INT 8+), Undergraduate degree, Biology 3+, Chemistry 2+.

All Terms

Skills: Computer 1, **Medical** 6, **Perception** 1.

Contacts: One medical. On a 1D10 roll of 8+ the contact is foreign.

Special: No secondary activities are allowed during medical school. No income is received while attending medical school. The character is considered commissioned as a Doctor.

Technical School

The drive for a well-rounded, well-educated populace has been nearly trampled in a mad dash to get people a skill and get them working.

Prerequisites: None.

All Terms

Skills: A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following: **Aircraft**, Computer, **Economics**, *Medical* (Trauma Aid), **Technician**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**.

Contacts: One specialist (in one of the areas listed above).

Special: No commissions, promotions, or special assignment rolls are made. No income is received while attending technical school.

Civilian Careers

Civilian occupations include the majority of things most people think of as typical careers. But many things that people do not normally think of are included here as well.

Astronaut

With a series of economic downturns, space exploration appears to have not just been back-burnered, but put back in the fridge. Nonetheless, to the public NASA does a decent job working as a satellite placement and repair service for various customers, and the astronaut corps is a pool of highly talented individuals NASA uses for a variety of purposes.

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree plus any single *Pilot* skill at 4+.

First Term

Skills: Computer Operation 2, *Pilot* (Interface) 2, Mechanic 1, Electronics 1, Environment Suit 1, Zero-G Environment 1

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Aircraft**, **Physical Science**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Perception**, **Space Tech**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+, DM+1 for SOC 7+ for **Explore**, **Vessel**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, **Personal Transport**.

Promotion: 8+, DM +1 for INT 7+.

Contacts: Two per term, government, intelligence community, journalist, or specialist (PC's major skill). On a 1D10 roll of 7+, the contact is foreign.

Special: A character who remains an astronaut after character creation ends can join any PC group without having a previous connection to it. She or he simply shows up, following a NASA lead.

Athlete

No matter how wealthy and advanced or how poor and primitive a society, it seeks escape from its every day cares by following competitive sports. These sports can be violent and quite dangerous, and everyone wants to get into the major leagues!

Prerequisites: CON 9+ or AGL 9+ or STR 9+.

First Term

Skills: Acrobatics 4, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 1, **Melee** 1, Running 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Determination**, **Melee**, **Personal Transport**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Economics**, **Charm**, **Vice**, **Perception**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if CHR 7+. Promotion represents a major contract.

Contacts: One business, journalist, entertainment, medical, or specialist (Acrobatics or Melee) per term. If a special assignment is rolled, one additional contact of any type.

Special: For each term as an athlete, use the higher of STR, AGL or CON instead of SOC when calculating starting money. If the character receives a business contact, income earned for this term is doubled, and receives a major contract, he gets a bonus of ½ the greater of STR, AGL, and CON time $10,000. During each term as an athlete, any one physical attribute (STR, AGL or CON) may be increased by 1 (up to the limit of 2 each total from all career-based increases).

Attorney

This is what you do with a degree from law school: court procedures, legal representation, and negotiation.

Prerequisites: Law School.

All Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Interaction**, **Economics**, **Perception**.

Special Assignment: 7+ for **Crime**, **Vice**, **Determination**, **Social Science**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if EDU 7+.

Contacts: One per term, government or criminal. On a roll of 1D10 of 8+ the contact is foreign.

Special: Two secondary activities are allowed per term. +1 SOC per term served to a maximum of SOC 7. Double SOC when determining starting money for each term served as an attorney.

Bodyguard

Sometimes you're hired for protection, other times just for show. In any event, the sorts of people who can afford to hire you tend to draw the attention of violent types, so you often earn your fee. Life as a bodyguard can be exciting, and you like the feeling of reacting to threats and overcoming them on a moment's notice.

Prerequisites: Any single Melee Combat skill at 5+ and any single Small Arms at 4+.

First Term

Skills: **Acrobat** 2, **Perception** 3, **Determination** 1, **Vehicle** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Animal Handling**, **Charm**, **Determination**, Demolitions, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, **Interaction**, **Perception**, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled).

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+, DM for each rank attained (see Promotion). **Animal Handling**, Demolition, Foreboding, **Interaction**, **Explore**, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 8+, DM +1 if INT 7+. Promotion represents being hired by a higher profile client. Attained ranks should be recorded and used to determine special assignments.

Contacts: One per term, criminal, business, or law enforcement. On a 1D10 roll of 7+, the contact is foreign. On a 1D10 roll of 9+ the contact is an entertainer (current client).

Special: Double the income earned in this term if the contact is an entertainer.

Bounty Hunter

Nowadays, the bounty hunter business is booming. There are all sorts of organizations willing to pay to have malefactors captured. It's not just the public authorities anymore; corps shell out a lot of money every year to have escaped employees returned. The problem is that the quarry is getting more dangerous every year.

Prerequisites: AGL 4+.

First Term

Skills: **Gun Combat** 1, **Melee** 1, **Determination** 2, **Perception** 2, **Vehicle** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Determination**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Personal Transport, Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for *Language*, **Gun Combat**, Interrogation, **Crime, Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if AGL 6+.

Contacts: One per term, criminal or law enforcement.

Special: When figuring beginning cash, use the Streetwise asset instead of SOC for each term as a bounty hunter. If more than one term is served, +1 to civilian Initiative.

Bureaucrat

Someone has to oil the machinery of government in order for it to work at all, but few people appreciate the importance of your job. Funny thing is…the big corps have the same machinery.

Prerequisites: EDU 7+

First Term

Skills: **Perception** 1, **Economics** 3, **Charm** 1, **Vice** 1, **Interaction** 2

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Perception**, **Economics**, **Charm**, **Vice**, **Interaction**

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Crime**, *Ground Vehicle*, **Gun Combat**, *Language*, **Vessel**.



Promotion: 7+, DM+2 if INT 8+, SOC 8+ receives automatic promotion.

Contacts: Two government or two business contacts per term.

Special: Each promotion adds 1 to SOC to a maximum of 8.

Bureaucrat Ranks Table

Rank	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
There are no 'rank and file' ranks.		0-1	Assistant Commissioner
		0-2	1st Assistant Commissioner
		0-3	Deputy Commissioner
		0-4	Commissioner
		0-5	Under-Secretary
		0-6	Deputy Secretary
		0-7	Secretary

Civil Engineer

New construction materials and design techniques are being developed every day. Civil Engineer careers range from architects to site managers on projects, big and little.

Prerequisites: Master's degree, Construction 3+.

First Term

Skills: **Engineer** 2, **Explore** 2, **Physical Science** 1, **Technician** 1, **Vehicle** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Determination**, **Economics**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Interaction**, **Physical Science**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Gun Combat**, *Language*, **Crime**, **Vice**, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if EDU 6+.

Contacts: One per term, government or business. On a 1D10 roll of 10+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.

Civil Pilot

Whether flying light aircraft into the outback or shuttles to low-earth orbit, pilots are a crucial and much-needed profession. Many routine aircraft piloting tasks are entrusted to automation, but it takes eye-hand coordination and good flying sense to handle the things automation won't.

Prerequisites: Technical school or flight academy, *Pilot* 3+

First Term

Skills: Navigation 2, Observation 2, **Aircraft** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Technician**, **Explore**, **Perception**, **Aircraft**, Parachute.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for *Language*, **Crime**, **Vice**, **Personal Transport**

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if AGL 6+.

Contacts: One per term, specialist (aircraft pilot). On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: None.



Clergy

It seems the golden age of "science as saviour" never came. But people have to have hope. In the modern age of misery, they need more than ever to have a shoulder to lean on and an ear that listens. And they are willing to pay for the privilege. Some of those who step in to fill the gap do so for a quick and easy profit. Others are self-sacrificing saints.

Prerequisites: CHR 6+, EDU 5+.

First Term

Skills: Act/Bluff 2, Human Empathy 2, *Language* (any) 2, Persuasion 2, Psychology 2

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm, Determination, Economics, Empathy**, *Language*, **Perception, Social Science**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Crime**, *Language*, *Ground Vehicle*, **Interaction, Vice**.

Promotion: 9+, DM +1 if SOC 7+.

Contacts: One per term, any type. On a 1D10 roll of 7+, the contact is foreign.

Special: Clergy are allowed two secondary activities per term.

Computer Operator/Programmer

Computer operator or programmer includes the roles of system administrators and web programmers in addition to the traditional application programmers.

Prerequisites: Technical school or undergraduate degree, Computer Operation 2+.

First Term

Skills: **Economics** 2, **Technician** 4.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Economics**, **Technician**, **Interaction**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for Carousing, *Language*, *Ground Vehicle*, Intrusion.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+.

Contacts: One specialist (Computer or Electronics) per term. On a 1D10 roll of 9+, the contact is foreign. If a special assignment is rolled, add an extra contact of any type. This represents a person met through an electronic network, email, messaging, blog, post, etc. The character may know this person only through electronic communication, and it is highly likely they have never laid eyes on each other.

Special: Computer operator/programmers are allowed two secondary activities per term.

Construction Worker

There will always be a need for strong backs and skilled hands to crew construction projects. Of course, the question is when and where. Demands for construction workers change from season to season and region to region. As long as you're willing to go where the work is and are skilled enough to compete with other laborers, you'll do fine.

Prerequisites: STR 4+ or AGL 5+.

First Term

Skills: **Acrobat** 1, **Artisan** 1, **Engineer** 2, **Technician** 2, **Vehicle** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Artisan**, Carousing, **Explore**, **Engineer**, *Ground Vehicle* (Heavy), **Technician**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for *Language*, **Determination**, **Vice**, **Melee**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if CON 7+.

Contacts: One per term, specialist (Construction/Civil Engineer). On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: Construction workers are allowed two secondary activities per term.



Criminal

Player characters are supposed to be heroes, but sometimes they're tarnished heroes and have broken laws to achieve their goals. Of course, sometimes a law deserves to be broken. For whatever reason, then, a PC may have experiences reflected by this career.

Prerequisites: None.

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 1, **Gun Combat** 1, **Determination** 2, **Interaction** 1, **Melee** 1, **Perception** 1, **Vice** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Gun Combat, Interaction**, **Perception**, **Melee**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 5+ for Demolitions, **Economics**, *Language*, **Melee**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+.

Contacts: One per term, criminal or law enforcement.

Special: -1 SOC per term served. If more than one term is served, +1 to Initiative. At the end of each term check for arrest and incarceration: Roll an Average [INT] test. Success means the character avoided capture or beat the rap and is free. Outstanding Success means that the crime was high profile and the character receives SOC +1. Failure indicates the character is sent to jail for the next term. The character's next term must be taken as a Prisoner. Critical Failure indicates the possibility of a long sentence. Roll a 1D6. On a roll of (1-3) only the next term must be taken as a Prisoner. (4-5) indicates two terms must be taken. A result of 6 indicates three terms must be served in the Prisoner career. When determining starting money, use INT in place of SOC for each term served as a criminal.

Diplomat

Serving as a representative of one's country, diplomats typically have immunity from criminal prosecution by the host government.

Prerequisites: CHR 7+ or INT 7+.

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 3, **Determination** 1, **Economics** 1, **Interaction** 2, *Language* 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Determination**, **Charm**, **Economics**, **Interaction**, **Perception**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if EDU 7+. With SOC 8+ the character receives an automatic promotion.

Contacts: Two government contacts per term. If a special assignment is rolled, add an intelligence community contact.

Special: Minimum SOC for a diplomat is 5. (All characters with lower SOC have it raised to 5 upon enlistment.) Each promotion adds 1 to SOC up to 8.

Diplomat Ranks

Rank	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
There are no 'rank and file' ranks.		0-1	Attaché
		0-2	Deputy Consul
		0-3	Consul General
		0-4	Envoy
		0-5	Chargés d'Affaires
		0-6	Ambassador
		0-7	Special Envoy

Drifter

With the economic crash brought about by break-away international business conglomerates, there has been a resurgence of transients who wander from farm to farm and city to city looking for work. Generally, when they begin, they're looking for somewhere to settle down. After a few years, though, the travelling life gets into their blood, and they wouldn't put down roots if they could.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites.
First Terms
Skills: Streetwise 3, Observation 2, **Melee** 1
Subsequent Terms
Skills: **Acrobat**, **Animal Handling**, **Artisan**, **Charm**, **Determination**, **Explore**, **Fine Arts**, **Perception**, **Physical Science**, **Technician**.
All Terms
Promotion: None.
Special Assignment: 5+, **Crime**, **Engineer**, **Empathy**, **Gun Combat**, **Medical**, **Melee**, **Social Science**, **Vehicle**.
Contacts: One per term, business, criminal, government, or law enforcement. On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.
Special: No secondary activities allowed; you have no place to do them.

Entertainer

When times are hard, the need to escape is at its greatest. Executives, soldiers, construction workers, managers, rich and poor alike need entertainment. Whether it's an exclusive club or a sleazy dive, there's a job for you.

Prerequisites: Charisma 8+.
First Term
Skills: **Charm** 2, **Determination** 1, **Fine Arts** 4.
Subsequent Terms
Skills: Acrobatics, **Animal Handling**, **Charm**, **Determination**, **Fine Arts**, **Melee**, **Vehicle**.
All Terms
Special Assignment: 8+ for **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, *Language*, **Melee**, *Ground Vehicle*, **Vice**.
Promotion: 8+, DM +1 if INT 7+.
Contacts: One per term. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is in business; otherwise, it is in entertainment. If it is entertainment, roll 1D10 for 8+ for it to be foreign.
Special: At the referee's option, random NPCs may recognize the character as a favorite media performer. When determining starting money, use CHR in place of SOC for each term served as an entertainer.

Factory Worker

Just the dull grind of putting part A into slot B, and repeat as many times as you can per shift. Most characters will not want this career...at least not for very long.

Prerequisite: None.
First Term
Skills: **Technician** 4, **Charm** 1.
Subsequent Terms
Skills: **Technician**, **Charm**, **Vehicle**
All Terms
Special Assignment: 8+, **Crime**, **Interaction**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**
Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if CON 6+.
Contacts: One business contact per term.
Special: Factory workers are allowed two secondary activities per term.

Farmer

Farmers are people that live closer to the land, raising real food for people with real jobs to do. It isn't an easy life with the pollution, the loss of the top-soil, and the agricorps to contend with, but there's something rewarding about raising food from the earth.

Prerequisites: None
First Term
Skills: **Animal Handling** 1, Biology 2, **Perception** 1, **Technician** 2, **Vehicle** 1.
Subsequent Terms
Skills: **Animal Handling**, **Determination**, **Explore**, **Perception**, **Vehicle**, **Personal Transport**, **Technician**.
All Terms
Special Assignment: 8+ for **Gun Combat**, **Empathy**, **Melee**, **Physical Science**.
Prerequisites: None.
Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if CON 6+.
Contacts: One per term, specialist in one of the above skills or government.
Special: None.



Federal Law Enforcement

The federal government still has a stake in pursuing and prosecuting the illegal activities of interstate criminals. Characters in federal law enforcement serve in national-level agencies like the US Marshals or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Prerequisite: Law school or graduate university, no prison record.

First Term

Skills: *Ground Vehicle* 1, **Gun Combat** 2, **Interaction** 2, **Perception** 1, **Melee** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Squad Weapons**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Explore**, **Physical Science**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+.

Contacts: One per term, government or criminal. On a 1D10 roll of 8+ this contact is foreign.

Special: If more than one term is served, add +1 to civilian Initiative.

Federal Law Enforcement Ranks

Rank	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
R-1	Trainee	O-1	Detective
R-2	Deputy	O-2	Senior Detective
R-3	Officer	O-3	Field Agent
R-4	Sergeant	O-4	Special Agent
R-5	Sr. Sergeant	O-5	Senior Special Agent
R-6	Supervisor	O-6	Assistant Director
		O-7	Director

Gambler

Your kind has been around since the dawn of time, making a living out of sharp wits, a knack for bluffing, and a little bit of luck. In a world that changes as fast as this one, you figure only the gamblers can hope to survive.

Prerequisite: Luck 5+.

First Term

Skills: Act/Bluff 2, Bargaining 1, Observation 1, **Persuasion** 1, Streetwise 2

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Determination**, **Empathy**, **Interaction**, Luck, **Melee**, Psychology.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 8+, DM +1 for Luck 7+.

Contacts: One per term, criminal, law enforcement, or another gambler. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

Special: When calculating starting money, use Luck instead of SOC for each term as a gambler.

Ganger

You're young, you're tough, and you're slick. You're part of a family of the street, a motley collection of disaffected youths that knows the world is going to pieces and intends to party and rumble until the world's last gasp. But lately you've been wondering if it's ever going to end. Maybe someone's manipulating things to keep everyone right on the brink but never letting them go over. Maybe you and your chums ought to find out who that someone is and kick their manipulative butt.

Prerequisite: CHR 3+, SOC 5-.

First Term

Commission: 9+, DM +1 for INT 7+, DM+1 for Streetwise 5+. The character is commissioned as a local gang Boss. Otherwise the character is rank 'n' file.

Skills:

Boss: **Acrobat** 1, **Charm** 1, **Determination** 2, **Gun Combat** 1, **Interaction** 1, **Leadership** 1, Streetwise 1.

Rank 'n' File: **Acrobat** 1, **Explore** 2, **Gun Combat** 1, Streetwise 3.

Subsequent Terms

Skills:

Boss: **Acrobat**, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Interaction**, **Gun Combat**, Leadership, **Melee**.

Rank 'n' File: **Acrobat**, Archaic Weapon, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, Foreboding, **Melee**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 for INT 7+, DM +1 for CON 8+.

Special Assignment: 6+, **Crime**, Demolitions, **Empathy**, **Gun Combat**, **Medical**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**.

Contacts: One per term, criminal, law enforcement, or specialist (Streetwise). On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: When calculating starting money, use CHR times $500 for each term as a ganger.



Government Agent

It's no longer just the CIA and FBI. Nowadays some of the most effective agents are FCC, EPA, SEC, IRS, and the like. Even NASA has agents (see Astronaut, above.)

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree, INT 6+, and CHR 6+.

First Term

Skills: **Gun Combat** 1, **Interaction** 1, *Language* 2, **Perception** 2.

Subsequent Term

Skills: Computer Operation, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, Grenade Launcher, *Language*, **Melee**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+

Special Assignment: 6+, **Empathy**, **Explore**, Demolitions, **Gun Combat**, **Medical**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**.

Contacts: One per term, government or intelligence community. On a roll of 1D10 for 8+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None

Homeless

You're an expert at urban survival. You know all the latest scams for getting food and at least minimal shelter out on the streets. You also know pretty much every face within your territory, every deal that's going down, every trap to avoid. Lately, though, things have been getting really weird. There's a feeling in the air, like something unhealthy has settled its nets around the area. If you can't get someone with clout to listen, you figure it might be getting time to move on.

Prerequisites: None.

First Term

Skills: **Melee** 1, **Perception** 3, Streetwise 3

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Empathy**, *Language*, Luck, **Melee**, **Perception**, Thrown Weapon.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 5+, **Acrobat**, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, **Vice**.

Contacts: One per term, criminal, journalist, or law enforcement. On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: Reduce SOC by -1 for each term served homeless. No secondary activities are allowed for the homeless. Also, no money is received for terms as homeless. Starting money from careers prior to and after this one is retained.

Hunter/Guide

Hunting used to be for food or protection from wild animals. Now it's the idle rich that crave the excitement of big game hunts, but they need experienced guides to take care of them.

Prerequisites: AGL 9+ or CON 9+.

First Term

Skills: **Acrobat** 1, **Explore** 2, **Gun Combat** 2, **Perception** 2, **Vehicle** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Animal Handling**, **Archaic Weapons**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Perception**, **Personal Transport**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Charm**, Xeno-Biology, **Economics**, **Interaction**, **Melee**, **Squad Weapons**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 6+.

Contacts: One per term of any type.

Special: Character may stipulate that people must call him or her "Bwana" or "Nimrod."

Idle Rich

Like that guy said, "Life is like a 'crap' sandwich the more bread you have the less 'crap' you have to eat." Leaves you plenty of time to pursue other activities.

Prerequisite: SOC 7+, CHR 7+.

First Term

Skills: **Economics** 1, *Language* 1, **Personal Transport** 1, **Explore** 1, **Vehicle** 1, **Vessel** 1.

Subsequent Term

Skills: **Technician**, **Vehicle**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Persuasion**, **Gun Combat**, **Vessel**, **Explore**, **Personal Transport**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Charm**, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, Luck, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if INT 7+.

Contacts: One per term, wealthy or entertainment. Roll 1D10 for 6+ for the contact to be a foreign contact.

Special: Double the money available to the character for terms spent in this career.

Journalist

Most countries enjoy a nominally free press, but in many places the news services have fallen prey to big money or big government. Regardless of the boss, though, there's always a demand for exciting news and for journalists willing to go where the action is, regardless of danger.

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree or Charisma 7+.

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 1, **Determination** 1, **Interaction** 2, **Perception** 2, **Technician** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Determination**, **Interaction**, **Perception**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Acrobat**, **Crime**, **Explore**, Foreboding, Human Empathy, *Language*, **Social Science**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if EDU 7+.

Contacts: Three per term any.

Special: None.

Local Law Enforcement

It takes a tough cop to keep people in line, and that's where you come in. You've worked hard to establish a reputation as a hard-bitten officer who's tough but fair. You're proud to think of yourself as a peace officer, someone who not only enforces the law, but who also defuses confrontations before they escalate into violence. The trouble is, out-of-towners don't know your reputation. With them, you have to prove yourself anew in each encounter. Sometimes you resent the added trouble they bring to your beat.

Prerequisites: STR 6+, no prison record.

First Term

Commission: 9+, DM +1 if EDU 7+, DM +1 if INT 8+, DM +1 if SOC 6+. A commission makes the character a detective; all other characters are uniformed police officers.

Skills:

Detectives: **Admin/Legal** 1, **Charm** 1, **Determination** 1, **Gun Combat** 1, **Interaction** 1, **Melee** 1, **Perception** 1, **Vehicle** 1

Uniformed Police Officers: **Charm** 1, **Gun Combat** 2, **Melee** 2, **Personal Transport** 1, **Vehicle** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Commission: 7+, DM +1 if INT 8+, DM +1 if CHR 8+. Applies to Uniformed Officers serving a subsequent term as local law enforcement.

Skills:

Detectives: **Determination**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Melee**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**.

Uniformed Police Officers: **Acrobat**, **Admin/Legal**, **Determination**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Archaic Weapons**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Medical**, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if CON 7+, DM +1 for SOC 8+.

Contacts: One criminal and one law enforcement contact per term. On a 1D10 roll of 8+ the contact is foreign.

Special: If more than one term is served, add +1 to civilian Initiative.

Local Law Enforcement Ranks

Rank	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
R-1	Trainee	O-1	Detective
R-2	Deputy	O-2	Det. Sgt.
R-3	Officer	O-3	Det. Lieutenant
R-4	Sergeant	O-4	Det. Inspector
R-5	Sr. Sergeant	O-5	Det. Captain
R-6	Supervisor	O-6	Deputy Chief
		O-7	Chief

Manager

These are busy times, and your corporation is one of those at the center of the modern economy. Your job also takes you to many interesting places and challenges you with new problems every day.

Prerequisites: Undergraduate degree.

First Term

Commission: 8+, DM +1 if INT 7+, DM +1 if Business 4+, DM +1 if SOC 8+. A commission makes the character an executive; all other characters are management.

Skills:

Executives: **Economics** 2, **Charm** 1, **Determination** 2, **Interaction** 2.

Management: Admin/Legal 2, Computer Operation 1, **Economics** 2, **Interaction** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Commission: 7+, DM +1 if Business 5+, DM +1 if CHR 8+. Applies only to management serving a subsequent term as a manager.

Skills:

All: **Economics**, Forgery, **Charm**, **Determination**, **Interaction**, **Perception**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Crime**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, *Language*, **Technician**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if EDU 6+.

Contacts: One per term, business or government. Executives may instead make a wealthy contact. Roll 1D10 for 8+ for the contact to be foreign.

Special: Executives receive +1 SOC per term (max 8). Use Business (not asset) to calculate cash for this term. Management receives two secondary activities.

Martial Artist

Cities are more dangerous than ever before, but you're well trained in self-defense and can hold your own against multiple foes in face-to-face combat. Even in fire combat your training gives you an edge, making your reactions quicker and more exact. Also, your physical control translates into stealth when necessary. The martial artist career includes everything from martial arts instructors to Eastern-style assassins.

Prerequisites: None.

First Term

Skills: STR +1, AGL +1, **Acrobat** 1, **Determination** 1, **Melee** 3.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Characters receive skills on the normal basis from Group A. Alternatively, for each two levels not taken from group A in a single term, one level may be taken from group B.

Group A: **Acrobat**, **Archaic Weapons**, **Determination**, **Interaction**, **Melee**, **Perception**.

Group B: AGL +1, STR +1, CON +1.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Gun Combat**, **Crime**, **Perception**, Running, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if AGL 7+.

Contacts: One per term, business, criminal, or specialist (martial arts).

Special: Use AGL instead of SOC for determining starting money per term. If one or more terms are served, +1 to civilian Initiative.

Mechanic

There's not much romance or mystique to being a mechanic, but people sure holler when they need one. It's not everyone who can take a look at a piece of machinery, figure out what's wrong, and then fix it. You can. As long as humans use machines, you'll have work to do.

Prerequisites: None

First Term

Skills: **Technician** 6, **Vehicle** 1. No more than 3 skill levels can be taken in any one skill.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Economics**, **Interaction**, Intrusion, **Vehicle**, **Technician**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+ for **Determination**, **Empathy**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if CHR 6+.

Contacts: One per term, a specialist in one of the above skills. Roll 1D10 for 10 for the contact to be foreign.

Special: Mechanics receive two secondary activities.

Medicine

For centuries, healing has been a respected profession. In troubled times such as these, there is more need for your skills than ever. Doctors have completed medical school or have enough experience to qualify as one. Other health care specialists are nurses and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

Prerequisites: AGL 5+.

First Term

Commission: Automatic if medical school was completed. Otherwise Medical 4+ and INT 7+. A commission makes the character a doctor. Doctors without a SOC 7+ are automatically elevated to SOC 7; other characters are either EMTs or Nurses.

Skills:

Doctor: Biology 2, Chemistry 2, **Interaction** 1, **Medical** 3.

Nurses: **Charm** 2, **Medical** 2, **Perception** 3.

EMT: **Determination** 1, Electronics 1, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 1, **Interaction** 1, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 2, **Perception** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills:

Doctors: **Determination**, **Charm**, **Interaction**, **Perception**, **Physical Science**, **Medical**.

Nurses, EMTs: **Charm**, *Ground Vehicle*, **Perception**, **Physical Science**, **Technician**,.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for Xeno-Biology, **Economics**, *Language*, **Medical**, **Explore**, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if EDU 7+. SOC 8+ receives automatic promotion. (Note, however, that doctors never are promoted, and thus do not receive the bonus skill level for promotion.)

Contacts: One per term, medical.

Special: The first commissioned term is internship and residency. No secondary activity is allowed during this time. For each additional career term, however, doctors are allowed two secondary activities. EMTs and nurses are allowed one secondary activity per term. For each term as a doctor, double SOC when calculating starting money.

Medical Ranks

Ranks	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
R-1	Orderly	O-1	Doctor
R-2	Technician		
R-3	Paramedic		
R-4	Nurse		
R-5	Therapist		
R-6	Practitioner		

Mercenary

With globalization, there is a lot more need for mobile, trained, and equipped troops than there used to be, and small governments are crying for someone to come and train their troops in modem warfare techniques. Whether you're force protection doing "rent-an-escort" convoy charters, or a part of a training cadre hired to build a local army from scratch, you're a sought-after commodity. Maybe that's why everywhere you go, the bullets start flying.

Prerequisites: STR 4+, prior military career.

First Term

Skills: **Gun Combat** 1, **Determination** 1, **Interaction** 2, *Language* 1, **Melee** 1, **Squad Weapons** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Acrobat**, **Determination**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Personal Transport**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+ for **Engineer**, Grenade Launcher, **Empathy**, RCV Operations, **Personal Transport, Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if CON 7+.

Contacts: One per term, criminal, government, intelligence community, military, or specialist (mercenary).

Special: Roll 1D10 once per term. On a roll of 9, the character must spend the next term in a noncombat career due to serious wounds. A roll of 10 means the character was captured by the opposition and must spend the next term as a prisoner. If more than one term is served, add +1 to civilian Initiative.



Merchant Marine

The most cost-effective way to move bulk cargo from one place to another is by sea. And in the end it all comes down to seamanship. The life of a merchant mariner involves hard labor, but it also allows you a lot of time between watches to think and study.

Prerequisites: CON 5+ or STR 6+.

First Term

Commission: 6+, DM +1 if EDU 7+, DM +1 if INT 8+. SOC 8+ receives automatic commission. A commission makes the character an officer; all other characters are ratings.

Skills:

Officers: **Economics** 1, **Determination** 1, Map 1, Navigation 1, **Vessel** 3.

Ratings: **Gun Combat** 1, **Melee** 1, **Squad Weapons** 1, **Technician** 2, **Vessel** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Commission: 9+, DM +2 if INT 8+, DM +2 if CHR 8+.

Skills:

Officers: **Charm**, **Determination**, **Economics**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Enlisted: **Artisan**, **Economics**, **Explore**, **Determination**, **Gun Combat**, **Technician**, **Vessel**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Acrobat**, **Archaic Weapons**, **Crime**, Heavy Gun, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, *Pilot*, **Perception**, **Vehicle**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if EDU 8+, DM +1 for SOC 8+.

Contacts: One per term, business, law enforcement, or specialist (merchant marine).

Special: Two secondary activities allowed per term.

Militant

When the social contract between the rulers and the governed is maintained, all members of society have an equal opportunity to participate in the process of governance and benefit from the economic activities of the society. When that contract is not honored, the result is oppression, and the oppressed often take up arms to strike back. Starting with simple disobedience, militants ratchet up the violence to what are considered criminal levels.

Prerequisites: AGL 5+.

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 2, **Crime** 2, Demolitions 1, **Gun Combat** 1, **Melee** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Crime**, Demolitions, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Melee**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 5+ for **Aircraft**, **Combat Engineer**, **Determination**, **Explore**, *Language*, **Personal Transport**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if INT 7+.

Contacts: One per term, criminal or law enforcement.

Special: If more than one term is served, +1 to civilian Initiative. Also, roll for capture and incarceration (see Criminal above) but apply a DM +1 if a special assignment was executed. If unsuccessful, the next career term must be in prison.

Paraphysicist

As an expert in the workings of the human mind, you have become very interested in what have come to be called the psionic powers. This field was once known as parapsychology, but as the laws governing their use have become better known, it has been rechristened paraphysics. You want to delineate the limits of those powers, to learn how they work, and to discover what has brought about their sudden upsurge in today's world.

But your interest has led you into subjects you never expected. You've begun to find evidence of a psychic invasion sweeping the planet. Now, you realize that the research you are doing is no longer merely simple interest: It may be the only thing that can save the world.

Prerequisites: Prior term as psychiatrist or a PhD in psychology.

First Term

Skills: **Perception** 2, Willpower 2, **Empathy** 2

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Empathy**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Perception**, **Physical Science**, **Social Science**, Willpower.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+, DM +1 per term served as a paraphysicist, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Explore**, *Ground Vehicle*, **Melee**, *Slug Weapon*, **Vice**.

Contacts: One per term, medical, academic, or psionic. On a 1D10 roll of 7+, the contact is foreign.

Special: Double normal starting money per term as a paraphysicist. Free paraphysicist's field kit and people can call you Venkman.

Pirate

Arr. When you steal a television, you're a thief. When you steal a person, you're a kidnapper. When you steal a ship full of people or televisions, you are a pirate. A lot of pirates like to repeat the weepy line about how they're victims of circumstance. You know, one man's war is another man's crime. Yeah, everybody's got an excuse. What's yours? The government doesn't approve of it and neither do the corps. In fact, the corps have begun hiring people you used to work with to track you down.

Prerequisites: CON 6+ or STR 6+.

First Term

Skills: **Crime** 1, **Gun Combat** 2, **Interaction** 1, **Technician** 3, **Vessel** 1, **Vice** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Explore**, **Melee**, **Technician**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 5+ for, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Economics**, *Language*, *Pilot*, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**.

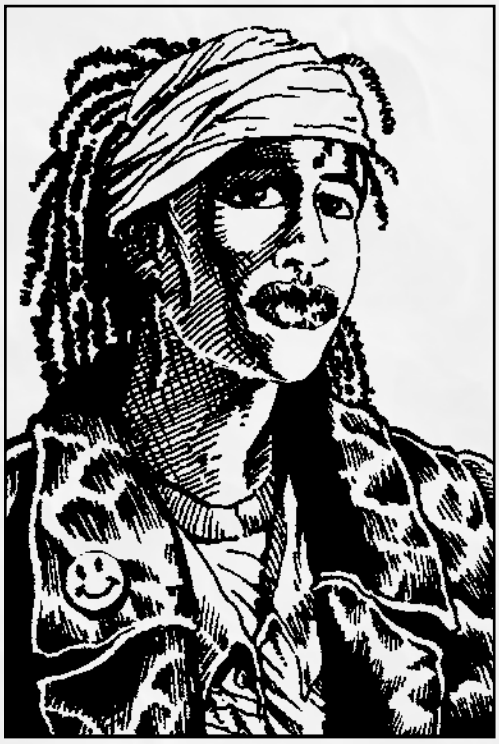
Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if STR 8+, DM +2 if CHR 8+.

Contacts: 1 per term, government, criminal, military, or law enforcement.

Special: -1 SOC per term served. If more than one term is served, +1 to Initiative. Check to see if the character is caught while *doin' piratin'*: At the end of each term check for arrest and incarceration: Roll an Average [INT] test. Success means the character avoided capture or beat the rap and is free. Outstanding Success means that the crime was high profile and the character receives SOC +1. Failure indicates the character is sent to jail for the next term. The character's next term must be taken as a Prisoner. Critical Failure indicates the possibility of a long sentence. Roll a 1D6. On a roll of (1-3) only the next term must be taken as a Prisoner. (4-5) indicates two terms must be taken. A result of 6 indicates three terms must be served in the Prisoner career. When determining starting money, use CHR in place of SOC for each term served as a pirate.

Pirate Ranks

Ranks	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
R-1	Seaman	There are no 'officer' ranks.	
R-2	Mate		
R-3	Bos'n		
R-4	Master at Arms		
R-5	Lieutenant		
R-6	Captain		



Politician

In this increasingly complex world, public governance is becoming steadily more demanding. No one is really qualified to make sense of things, but you believe that you are more qualified than most. More importantly, you are able to inspire faith in the masses, and with their backing you know you can achieve the changes necessary to set the world to rights. But they'll have to trust you to use that power wisely, a trust sometimes too freely given.

Prerequisites: CHR 8+

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 3, **Determination** 3, **Economics** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Economics**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Perception**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+, **Crime**, *Slug Weapon*, **Melee**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if SOC 7+.

Contacts: Three per term, journalism, government or military. Roll 1D10 each for 9+ for the contact to be foreign.

Special: None.

Prisoner

It's tough in this world. Maybe you were breaking the law for all the right reasons, maybe not. Maybe you didn't even do anything wrong, and they just had to arrest someone. The point is, here you are, and you're going to have to live through it.

Prerequisites: Forced due to capture while engaged in illegal activity in the Criminal, Pirate, Mercenary, or Militant careers.

All Terms

Skills: A total of 6 levels (max 3 from any one skill) from any one or a combination of the following: Acrobatics, Admin/Legal, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Economics**, **Interaction**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Vice**, STR+1, EDU+1.

Special Assignment: 9+, DM +1 if INT 7+. **Charm**, **Engineer**, **Melee**.

Promotion: None.

Contacts: Two per term, criminal.

Special: No secondary activities allowed. No income earned while in prison. If a special assignment is successfully rolled and the character has one or more additional terms remaining from their sentence for their crimes, the assignment represents a jail break attempt. Should the character choose to participate, she makes a capture and incarceration test the same as for a criminal career. Success means that the character is considered free to enter another career, but the referee should note the character's outstanding warrants. Failure causes another term to be added to the sentence. Critical Failure indicates harsher penalties, such as additional terms or physical incapacitation. This is left to the referee and the player to work out as it will affect the character's concept.

Private Investigator

It used to be you tracked down missing husbands and testified at divorce proceedings. Sometimes you'd get a real case investigating crimes the police had decided to let lie. Nowadays you track monsters in the sewers and investigate crimes that would get you an appointment with a psychiatrist, if you told anyone. You're not sure exactly what's happening to the world, but you certainly intend to find out.

Prerequisites: INT 5+ and CHR 5+.

First Term

Skills: **Charm** 2, *Slug Weapon* 1, Disguise 1, **Perception** 2, **Persuasion** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Admin/Legal, **Acrobat**, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Economics**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, Luck, **Melee**, **Perception,** Streetwise.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+, **Crime**, **Melee**, **Squad Weapons**, **Vehicle**, **Technician**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 9+, DM+1 for EDU 8+. No rank change, but the character gets the skill for each promotion.

Contacts: Two per term, criminal, law enforcement, or government. Roll 1D10 for 9+ for the contact to be foreign. If a special assignment was rolled, receive one extra contact from any type—your client.

Special: None.

Professor

Your time is divided between the search for additional knowledge and your university responsibilities—the training of new scholars. Occasionally your researches lead you to see things others have neglected; things of an insidious nature.

Prerequisites: PhD.

First Term

Commission: Automatic. The character is considered a professor and can be called Professor or Doctor.

Skills: Specialty 1 (a level in a character's specialty skill that was taken in graduate university), **Charm** 1, **Interaction** 3, *Language* 1, Research 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Charm**, **Determination**, **Interaction**, *Language*, Specialty (any skill available in the graduate university career term.

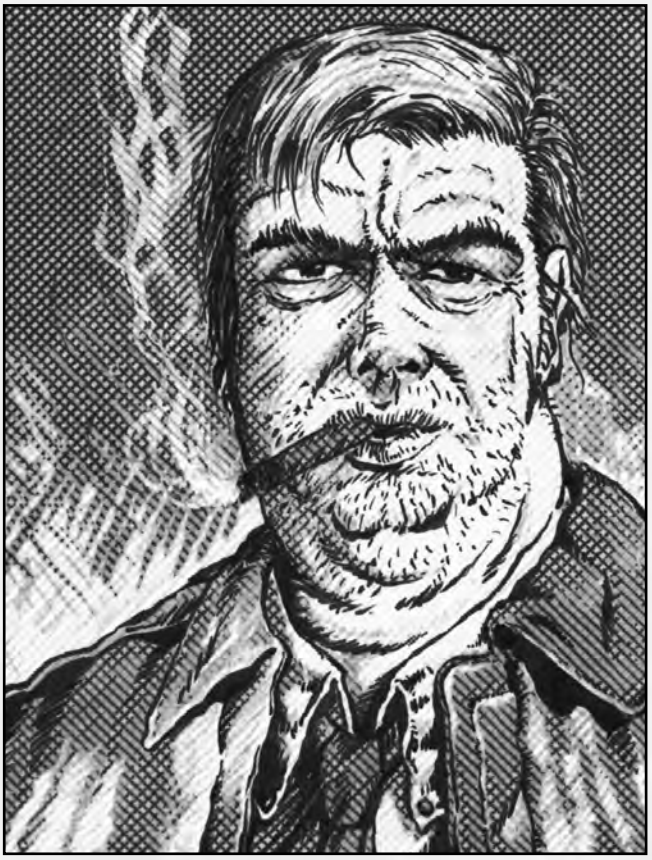
All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+ for **Explore**, **Perception**, *Slug Weapon*, **Vessel**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if INT 8+, +1 if SOC 8+.

Contacts: Two per term, academic or government. Roll 1D10 for 7+ for the contact to be foreign.

Special: All professors use the "commissioned" ranks of the scientist rank table. Professors receive two secondary activities per term. For income use EDU instead of SOC.



Public Employee

Not everyone can have the cushy jobs. Someone has to sort the mail, drive the school buses, and make out city water bills. You're just happy to have a job at all, especially as this one provides you with both the money, health care insurance, and the time to pursue your hobbies.

Prerequisites: None

First Term

Skills: Computer Operation 3, **Economics** 4.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Computer Operation, **Economics**, **Interaction**, Leadership.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+, **Crime**, **Melee**, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+. Character receives SOC +1 for each promotion, max of SOC 9.

Contacts: One per term, business or government. On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: Two secondary activities are allowed each term.

Psychiatrist

Stress in the modern world is extremely high, and many people are suffering mental breakdowns as a result. Some of them lash out in violence, adding to the stress. Others begin to "see" strange things that have no place in the real world. Others are convinced that the government is cooperating with dark forces to kill them or worse. It is your job to help these people cope with their stress in a healthy manner. The problem is, you're beginning to wonder if some of these strange visions might not be true.

Prerequisites: Medical school and graduate school (MS/MA) with emphasis in psychology.

First Term

Commission: Characters entering this career are considered doctors of psychiatry.

Skills: **Economics** 1, **Perception** 3, **Determination** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Computer Operation, **Determination**, **Economics**, Hypnosis, Interview, **Perception**, **Social Science**.



All Terms

Special Assignment: 8+, **Crime**, **Explore**, **Interaction**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 8+, DM +1 for INT 8+. Character receives SOC +1 for each promotion, max SOC 7.

Contacts: One per term, specialist (Psychology), or medical. A roll of 8+ on 1D10 means the contact is foreign. Alternatively, the referee may allow the contact to be a patient with an interesting background.

Special: When calculating starting money, each term as a psychologist counts triple. Hey, it's a good life.

Scientist

Although many of your colleagues are educators, your concerns are almost entirely with research, either of natural or man-made phenomena. In recent times there have been a lot of phenomena, and not man-made or natural...

Prerequisites: INT 7+ or PhD in any physical science.

First Term

Commission: 9+, DM +2 if EDU 8+, DM +1 if INT 8+, +1 if SOC 8+. A commission makes the character a doctor (officer ranks); all other characters are technicians (rank-and-file ranks).

Skills:

Doctors: **Physical Science** 5, *Language* 1, **Perception** 2.

Technicians: Computer Operation 2, **Physical Science** 2, **Technician** 3, **Perception** 1.

Subsequent Terms

Commission: 9+, DM +2 if EDU 8+, DM +2 if INT 8+.

Skills:

Doctors: **Determination**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Perception**, **Physical Science**.

Technicians: **Charm**, *Ground Vehicle*, *Medical* (Diagnosis), **Perception**, **Physical Science**, **Technician**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 5+ for **Acrobat**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Personal Transport**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if EDU 7+.

Contacts: One per term, government or scientist. On a roll of 7+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.

Scientist Ranks

Rank	*Rank and File*	*Rank*	*Officer*
R-1	Trainee	O-1	Doctor
R-2	Jr. Technician	O-2	Associate Professor
R-3	Technician	O-3	Assistant Professor
R-4	Sr. Technician	O-4	Professor
R-5	Supervisor	O-5	Fellow
R-6	Sr. Supervisor	O-6	Sr. Fellow / Named Chair
		O-7	Department Chair

Truck Driver

As an independent operator, you've been all over the nation. In those travels, you've seen some really weird things and learned to deal with strange customs. Most of the time, you haul loads for small companies struggling to survive in the shadow of the big corps. But sometimes those corps will contract an independent to supplement their own fleets on a particular run. For them, it's cost effectiveness. For you, it's a windfall.

Prerequisite: AGL 4+.

First Term

Skills: Mechanic 2, Navigation 2, Streetwise 2, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Mechanic, **Melee**, Navigation, *Ground Vehicle*.

All Terms

Special Assignment: **Charm**, **Crime**, **Determination**, **Gun Combat**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM +1 if CON 7+.

Contacts: One per term, specialist (Mechanic) or law enforcement. On a 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: Truck drivers are allowed two secondary activities per career period.

Welfare Case

You used to be unemployed, homeless, and hungry. Now you're just unemployed. You live in the bowels of welfare housing or in some tiny apartment provided by some local organization. You wear the clothes they give you. And you watch the television they pipe in. All in all, it doesn't seem a bad exchange, but it's awfully boring, or would be if it weren't for the gangs, gambling, and gin mills. You also tend to meet a lot of strange people in the slums and see even stranger things.

Prerequisites: SOC 5-.

First Term

Skills: Act/Bluff 1, Observation 1, Willpower 2, **Vice** 2.

Subsequent Term

Skills: **Empathy**, Luck, **Melee**, **Perception**, Willpower, **Vice**.

All Terms

Promotion: None.

Special Assignment: 8+, **Acrobat**, **Crime**, **Gun Combat**, **Melee**.

Contacts: One per term. However, for each term, a roll of 10 on 1D10 means that the character receives one government or journalist contact. Otherwise the contact is criminal. On an additional 1D10 roll of 10, the contact is foreign.

Special: Each term spent as a welfare case reduces SOC by -1 (minimum of SOC 3). No secondary activities are allowed. Also, no money is received for terms in this career, and any money earned at prior careers is forfeit. Only careers held after being a welfare case count toward starting money. Hey, it's a tough life.



Military Careers

The military is a great place to get skills just like it is in the real world. You as a relatively young character can receive the skills you need to operate very expensive systems, manage and lead a significant number of people, and generally make a lot of very important things happen. In return for those skills and responsibilities, the military requires you to lay down your life if need be. You are banking that is not going to happen.

Regular Forces

By entering the regular forces, a character is expected to serve multiple terms and to remain loyal to their service once they return to civilian duty. In return for this dedication, the regular forces provide skill sets and relatively powerful military contacts. During a character's generation, the player should keep their character concept in mind when determining the military path through the service they will choose.

Branch of Service

Military occupations are somewhat different than civilian occupations due to the nature of military service. Players chose a service for their character (Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Special Forces) and, assuming they meet the entry requirements, they sign up. Special forces operators are drawn from any of the four main branches of the service. Characters entering the Special Forces military career must meet the requirements for their selected service branch. The character must also meet the requirements of the Special Forces branch. After serving a career in a military branch, the character then transfers to Special Forces. This transfer carries no negative impacts as described in Continuation in Military Skills, below.

Entering Military Careers

All characters enter military service as enlisted members unless their previous career term was spent in a commissioning source. Characters can enter the military as a commissioned officer if the previous term completed is a service military academy, ROTC in Undergraduate University, or from Medical School. An alternate method of being commissioned is to enter Officer Candidate School in the first or subsequent terms spent in their service branch.

Basic Training

Characters entering the military receive the basic training skill package in their first military term. Characters may only receive the basic training package once. This package is in addition to any skills package received for their first term. Later transfers to other branches do not confer additional basic training packages. However, should the character enter Officer Candidate School, they do receive the OCS skill package. Characters receiving a direct commission as a medical officer do not go through basic training or OCS, but instead enter a service familiarization school where they are indoctrinated to their chosen military service.

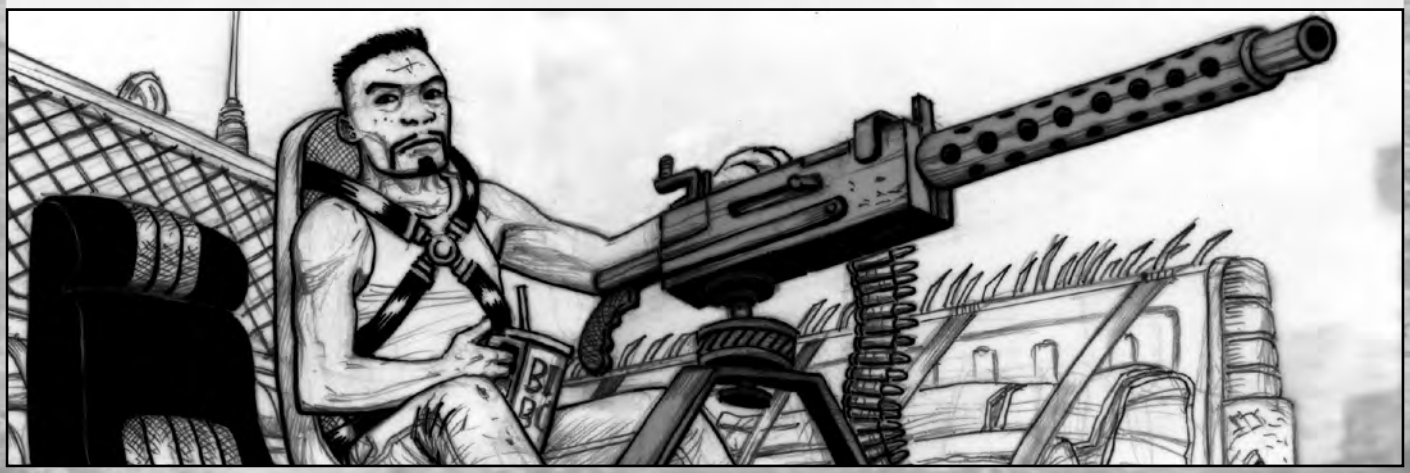
Commissioning

Entering military service as a commissioned officer is automatic for graduates of ROTC and the military service academies. Characters seeking entrance to the military as a commissioned officer through officer candidate school from the outside must meet prerequisites for OCS as well as those of their service arm. Doctors and Medical School graduates can also enter the armed services as an officer via a Direct Commission. Receiving a commission gives the character the starting rank of O-1 (for example, Marine 2nd Lieutenant). See the Commissioning Sources table, below.

Promotion

In each term of military service, characters roll to see if they are promoted. Unlike civilian careers, the enlisted men entering the military may be promoted immediately upon entering if they meet the First Term promotion requirements. The character will also receive the promotion opportunity identified in the All Terms section of the occupational term. This gives enlisted characters two chances at promotion during their first term in a military occupation. Note that changing service branches does not qualify the character for this First Term promotion as the character retains their rank

Each occupational term has its own promotion number and DMs affecting the promotion roll. Generally, if a promotion is achieved, the character advances to the next higher rank in the service. Should a character be promoted, they receive an additional skill drawn from the occupation's Subsequent Terms skill list.



Commissioning Sources

Source	*Description*
Officer Candidate School	Any time after the completion of Undergraduate University, characters can apply to Officer Candidate School to receive a commission. If the character meets the requirements for OCS and for the selected branch of service, the character is commissioned as an officer (O-1) in that service. The character receives the OCS skill package and then enters the career term as a commissioned officer, normally. Characters that did not go through Undergraduate University can still enter OCS if they meet the entrance requirements. After enlisting and going through Basic Training, characters can enter OCS if they meet the requirements and serve as a commissioned officer from that point onward.
ROTC	Following the completion of Undergraduate University, characters in ROTC can enter the military as a commissioned officer. The character must meet the entrance requirements for the selected occupation within their branch of service. The character then enters Basic Training and the career term, normally. Alternately, the character can go directly into the reserves (see below).
Military Academy	Once the character completes a Military Academy, they must enter their chosen branch of service, regardless of the entrance requirements. The character enters Basic Training and their first career term as a commissioned officer, normally.
Direct Commission	Characters entering military service from medical school or from the medicine career can enter service commissioned as an O-3, (e.g. Army Captain). Note that the rank is increased for each term spent as a Doctor prior to entry into the military service. The maximum rank for a Doctor to enter the military is O-6. If the character meets the requirements of the service and the service has a Medical specialty, the character then receives a commission, enters Service Familiarization Training, receives that skill package and serves an officer career in the Medical Specialty for their chosen service. Note that the Marine Corps does not have a medical occupational specialty. Navy medical personnel are assigned to the Marines and serve as their medical corps.

Military Rank

Characters in military careers receive rank as part of the character generation process, and record their advancement by promotion. Rank is recorded either as enlisted rank (specialist, private, corporal, NCOs, etc.) or officer rank (lieutenants, captains, generals, etc.).

A character's rank is a good measure of his or her success and level of responsibility. Characters of lower rank must show respect and defer judgment to persons of higher rank, regardless of service. However, characters will find that real leadership is the result of a person's internal qualities, and the insignia of rank is only a reflection of those strengths.

The Military Ranks Table lists the classes of rank in the US military (enlisted, NCO, and Officer) in ascending order from the top (the lowest ranks are at the top and the higher ones at the bottom). Equivalent rank names across the services are also shown in that chart. Note these are US military ranks and should be adjusted for foreign militaries.

Service Loyalty

Military members are expected to remain loyal to their chosen service. Characters desiring to switch services may do so if they meet the new service's entrance requirements. Once the service is switched, the character retains their previous rank, however, the character will suffer a DM–3 on promotion rolls while in the military, regardless of service. Even if characters return to their original service, they have demonstrated a lack of loyalty and will be discriminated against during promotion.

Non-Commissioned Officers

When an enlisted man makes promotion to E-4 he is made a non-commissioned officer (NCO) and receives the NCO Skills package described below. This three-skill package is a one-time benefit, and is taken in lieu of the normal single skill earned with a promotion. In each subsequent term served as an NCO the character may take one of his Subsequent Term skill points as an NCO Skill instead of the normal term skills for that career.

Special Assignment

Each term spent in the military, characters have the possibility of receiving an assignment that exposes them to special experiences. Special assignments are rolled the same as for civilian careers and the number of skill points received is governed by the total number of career terms served.

Players are strongly encouraged to create a story revolving around the Special Assignment that highlights the use of the selected skill set.

Continuation in Military Careers

Characters can leave the military after their first term is complete, stay in for another term, change branches of service, or once five military terms have been completed retire from active duty. The character can also use the random method described in "Continuing in Careers" (page 24) to continue.

Changing Branches: Characters who are planning to change military branches on the following term must subtract 2 from their continuation dice roll (if random continuation is being used).

Retirement: All characters that have served five or more terms in military careers are considered retired. Retired characters draw a pension and are entered into the inactive reserves automatically. The character's pension is drawn monthly and is based on their rank and commissioning status. Note that the following amounts represent cash available after living expenses.

Enlisted Pension: Rank x $100 per month

Commissioned Pension: Rank x $500 per month

Players can have their characters enter a civilian occupation after they leave the military. If random continuation is being used, the player must pass the continuation roll (see page 24 or end character generation.

Reserves

A character completing one or more full terms of active duty with the armed forces may leave the armed forces and enter the reserve component.

ROTC graduates can enter the reserves directly after graduation from Undergraduate University. While in the reserves, the character may be active or inactive, at the player's option. An active reservist can resign (permanently leave the service) or enter the inactive reserve.

An inactive reservist retains his previous rank but does not roll for military promotions and does not receive any additional promotion-based skills from the military career.

Active reservists count reserve duty as their secondary activity for their career terms. Where the character's civilian career indicates two secondary activities, active reserve duty only uses one skill level. For each term in the active reserves the character rolls for military promotion using the promotion criteria of his last military career term in addition to rolling for their civilian promotion. Passing the military promotion check results in a skill level to be selected from the military term's subsequent terms skill list. If the civilian promotion check is also passed, the character receives an increase in rank in their civilian occupation if it has ranks. If the military promotion check is failed, the character may receive a skill level for a passed civilian promotion. However, only one skill level can be received for a promotion in a career term.

Military Occupations

Characters are indoctrinated in military occupations by first completing one of several forms of basic training: Officer Candidate School, Service Familiarization Training, and classic enlisted Basic Training. After basic training, the character may enter a branch of service where she serves one or more military terms. After the last term in the military is served, the character must make a continuation roll to enter a civilian career if random continuation is used.

Basic Training

The skills acquired from completing basic training are the same for all the military services. The character receives skills as a part of his basic training in addition to the first term skills listed with the chosen military occupation. If the character desires and meets the entrance requirements for Officer Candidate School, she records her Basic Training skills, enters OCS and records those skills, then enters her chosen occupation. Note that the character must always meet the service entrance requirement prior to receiving any of the basic training-type skills.

Prerequisites: None, but the recruit must meet the requirements of their branch of service.
Basic Training Skills: Armed Combat (Polearm) 1, *Ground Vehicle* 1,



Grenade Launcher 0, *Slug Weapon* (Rifle) 1, Swimming 1, Tac Missile 0, Thrown Weapon 1, Unarmed Martial Arts 1.
Special: Recruits with Intelligence and Education of 7+ may enter OCS if they meet the requirements.

Officer Candidate School (OCS)

The character receives skills as a part of Officer Candidate School in addition to the first term skills listed with the service-specific military career. In addition, the character is commissioned as an O-1 in their chosen branch of service. Note that some default skills are duplicates of the Basic Training package. This is because university graduates can apply for a commission without entering Basic Training.

Prerequisites: INT 7+, EDU 7+.
OCS Skills: Grenade Launcher 0, Leadership 1, Running 1, *Slug Weapon* (Pistol) 1, *Slug Weapon* (Rifle) 0, Swimming 1, Thrown Weapon 1.

Service Familiarization Training

Doctors entering military service through direct commissioning receive the following instead of Basic Training or OCS:

Service Familiarization Skills: Leadership 1, Admin/Legal 1, *Slug Weapon* (Pistol) 0.

NCO Skills

When an enlisted character is promoted to E-4, they are considered a non-commissioned officer (NCO). The character immediately receives the following skills:

NCO Skills: Instruction 1, Leadership 1, **Persuasion** 1.

Professional Military Education

Military members are encouraged to continue their military education. Characters in the military may select from the following list of skills when selecting a Secondary Activity. The military member can also use these skills for a Special Assignment, but when doing so, all skill levels must come from PME.

PME Skills: History, Instruction, Leadership, **Persuasion**, Recruiting, Research, Psychology, **Tactics**, Willpower.

Military Ranks

Enlisted Ranks	*Army*	*Marine Corps*	*Navy*	*Air Force*
E-1	Private	Private	Seaman	Airman
E-3	Spec 4	Lance Corporal	Petty Officer 3rd Class	Senior Airman
E-4	Sergeant	Sergeant	Petty Officer 3rd Class	Sergeant
E-5	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer 3rd Class	Staff Sergeant
E-6	Platoon Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	Technical Sergeant
E-7	Master Sergeant	Master Sergeant	Senior CPO	Master Sergeant
E-9	Sergeant Major	Sergeant Major	Master CPO	Chief Master Sergeant

Officer Ranks	*Army*	*Marine Corps*	*Navy*	*Air Force*
O-1	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant	Ensign	2nd Lieutenant
O-2	1st Lieutenant	1st Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade	1st Lieutenant
O-3	Captain	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain
O-4	Major	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Major
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6	Colonel	Colonel	Captain	Colonel
O-9	General	General	Admiral	General

United States Army

The US Army is made up of several specialized arms, including Armor, Artillery, Aviation, Combat Engineers, Infantry, Medical Corps, Military Intelligence, and Support. Characters should choose a military occupational specialty based on their character concept. For example, to be a medic, the character would choose the Medical Corps specialty below to get Biology and Trauma Aid as skills.

Army Enlisted

Prerequisites: No prerequisites.

First Term

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for EDU 5+, DM+2 for CON 8+. This promotion opportunity is in addition to that received under the All Terms entry below, that is, the character can receive two promotions in their first term.

Skills:

All: Bargain 1, *Armed Martial Arts* (Polearm) 1.

Armor: *Ground Vehicle* (Tracked) 2, Heavy Gun 2, Mechanic 1.

Artillery: *Ground Vehicle* (Tracked) 2, **Heavy Artillery** 2, Heavy Weapon 1.

Aviation: *Pilot* (Rotary) 3, Navigation 1, Observation 1.

Combat Engineer: Construction 2, Demolitions 2, Excavation 1.

Infantry: **Explore** 1, *Slug Weapon* 2, **Squad Weapons** 2.

Medical Corps: *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 2, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 2, Observation 1.

Military Intelligence: Interrogation 2, *Language* 2, **Persuasion** 1.

Support: *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 2, **Technician** 3.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Acrobatics, **Artillery**, Engineer, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Heavy Weapons**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Observation, Parachute, Running, Tracking, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, DM+2 if CON 8+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 for CON 8+.

Contacts: Two military per term. If a special assignment was successfully rolled, one additional criminal or business contact. On a roll of 9+ the contact is foreign.

Special: Two secondary activities are allowed per term.

Army Officer

Prerequisites: Commission from OCS, a military academy, ROTC, or a direct commission as a doctor.

First Term

Skills:

All: Computer Operation 1, Leadership 1, *Slug Weapon* 1.

Armor: Heavy Gun 2, Navigate 1, Map 1.



Artillery: **Heavy Artillery** 1, Autogun 1, Liaison 1, Sensors 1.
Aviation: **Aircraft** 2, Navigation 1, Parachute 1.
Combat Engineer: Construction 1, Demolitions 1, Excavation 1, **Explore** 1.
Infantry: **Explore** 1, **Personal Transport** 1, *Slug Weapon* 1, **Squad Weapons** 1.
Medical Corps: **Interaction** 1, **Medical** 3.
Military Intelligence: **Interaction** 2, *Language* 1, **Vice** 1.
Support: **Charm** 1, **Technician** 3.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Aircraft**, Acrobatics, **Artillery, Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Observation, Parachute, Running, Tracking, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, DM+2 if INT 8+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Perception**, **Space Tech**, Streetwise, **Vice**.
Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 for SOC 7+.
Contacts: Three per term, military, government, specialist, or intelligence per term. On a roll of 9+ the contact is foreign.
Special: None.

United States Marine Corps

The United States Marine Corps is a separate branch of service from the US Army with a similar organization of military specialties. Traditionally, the Corps has been used historically for amphibious operations, shipboard security, and security of US embassies abroad. Recent increases in foreign combat operations have resulted in the Corps' use as a rapid deployment force for more conventional missions.

Marine Corps Enlisted

Prerequisites: STR + AGL + CON = 16+.

First Term

Promotion: 7+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 for CON 8+. This promotion opportunity is in addition to that received under the All Terms entry below, that is, the character can receive two promotions in their first term.
Skills:
All: *Slug Weapon* 2, **Melee** 1, Survival 1, Throwing 1.
Armor: *Ground Vehicle* (Tracked) 1, Heavy Gun 1, Mechanic 1.
Artillery: Ground Vehicle (Tracked) 1, Heavy Artillery 1, Autogun 1.
Combat Engineer: Construction 1, Demolitions 1, Excavation 1.
Infantry: **Explore** 1, *Slug Weapon* 1, **Squad Weapons** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Observation, Parachute, Running, Tracking, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+, DM+1 if CON 8+. **Charm**, **Crime, Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vessel**.



Promotion: 7+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 for CON 8+.
Contacts: Two military per term. On a roll of 9+ the contact is foreign.
Special: None.

Marine Corps Officer

Prerequisites: Commission from OCS, a military academy, or ROTC. Doctors may not enter the USMC in the Medical Corps.

First Term

Skills:
All: **Explore** 1, Leadership 1, *Slug Weapon* 1, Throwing 1.
Armor: Heavy Gun 1, Navigate 1, Map 1.
Artillery: Heavy Gun 1, **Heavy Weapon** 1, Sensors 1.
Aviation: **Aircraft** 2, Navigation 1, Parachute 1.
Combat Engineer: Construction 1, Demolitions 1, **Explore** 1.
Infantry: **Explore** 1, **Personal Transport** 1, *Slug Weapon* 1, **Squad Weapons** 1.

Subsequent Terms

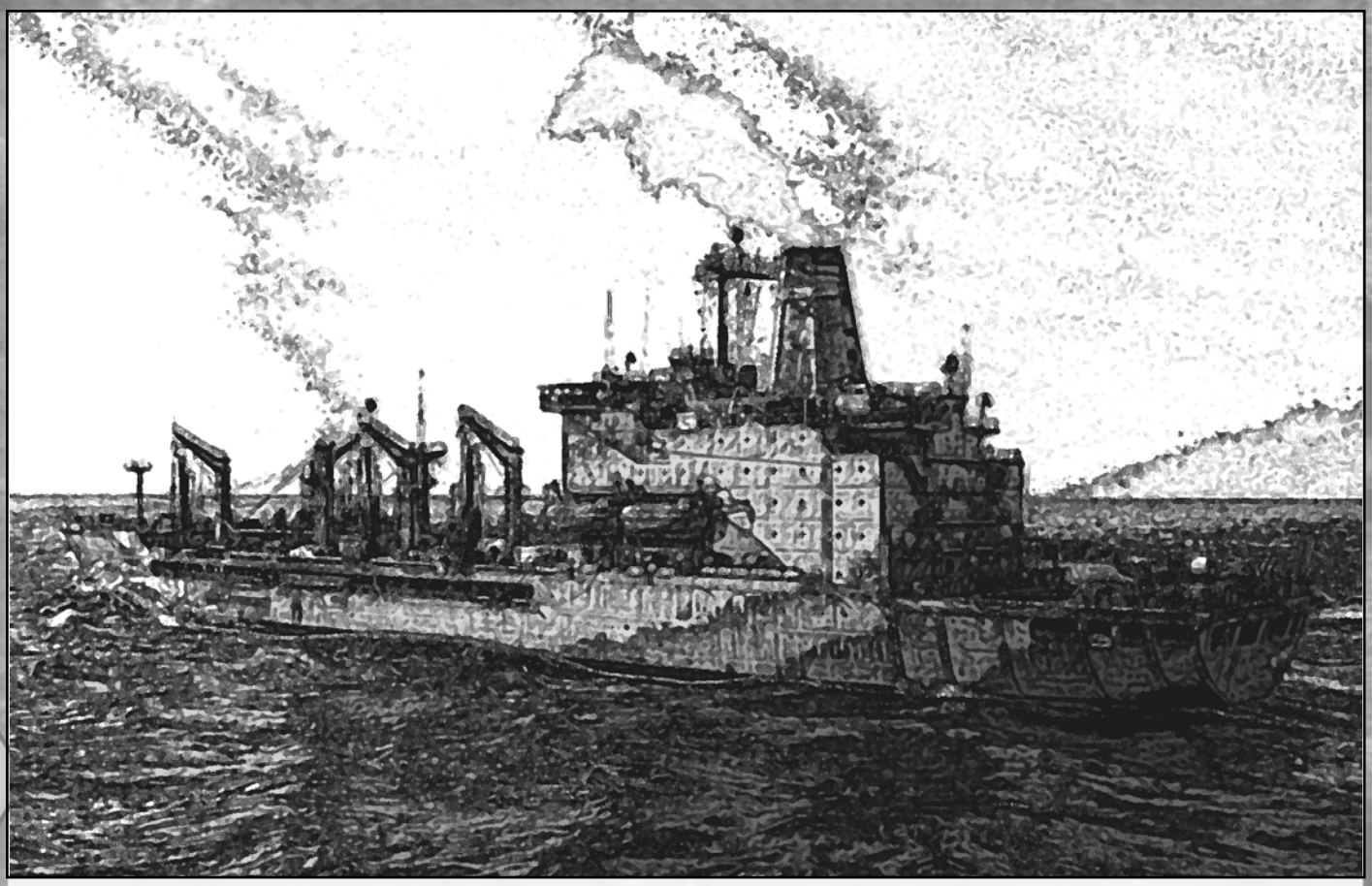
Skills: **Aircraft**, Acrobatics, **Artillery**, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Observation, Parachute, Running, Tracking, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+, DM+2 if INT 8+. **Archaic Weapons**, **Charm**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**.
Promotion: 7+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 for CON 7+.
Contacts: Two military, government, or intelligence per term. On a roll of 8+ the contact is foreign.
Special: None.

United States Navy

Specialties within the US Navy are Operations, Weapons, Aviation, Medical Corps, Military Intelligence, and Support. Operations specialties fall within the execution of naval combat missions—coordinating and controlling the various naval components in battle. This includes shipboard operations as well as battle group and fleet operations. The weapons specialty includes the direction of weapon systems in combat—main guns, missiles, etc. As with the



other branches of the military, characters should choose a specialty consistent with their character concept.

Navy Enlisted

Prerequisites: No prerequisites.

First Term

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for INT 8+. This promotion opportunity is in addition to that received under the All Terms entry below, that is, the character can receive two promotions in their first term.

Skills:

All: Computer Operation 1, Swimming 1, Small Watercraft 1.

Operations: Communications 1, Computer Operation 2, Sensors 1.

Weapons: Heavy Gun 1, **Squad Weapons** 3.

Medical Corps: Biology 1, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 3.

Military Intelligence: Communications 1, *Language* 2, Mapping 1.

Support: Bargain 1, **Economics** 1, **Technician** 2.

Subsequent Term

Skills: Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Parachute, **Perception**, Running, Tracking, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, DM+2 if EDU 6+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for INT 8+.

Contacts: Two military per term. If a special assignment was successfully rolled, one additional criminal or business contact. On a roll of 7+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.

Navy Officer

Prerequisites: Commission from OCS, a military academy, ROTC, or a direct commission as a doctor.

First Term

Skills:

All: Computer Operation 1, Leadership 1, *Slug Weapon* 1.

Operations: Communications 1, Sensors 1, Large Watercraft 2

Weapons: Sensors 2, **Squad Weapons** 1, Heavy Gun 1.

Aviation: **Aircraft** 2, Navigation 1, Parachute 1.

Medical Corps: Biology 1, **Interaction** 1, **Medical** 2.

Military Intelligence: Communications 1, **Interaction** 1, *Language* 1, Liaison 1.

Support: **Economics** 2, **Technician** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Aircraft**, Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Parachute, **Perception**, Running, **Technician**, **Vessel**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, DM+2 if EDU 8+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 8+, DM+1 for INT 8+, DM+2 for SOC 7+, DM+1 if a graduate of a military academy.

Contacts: Two military, government, or intelligence per term. On a roll of 7+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.

United States Air Force

The US Air Force has the mandate for combat in the skies. Organizationally, the Air Force has a "rated" specialty (aviation) and a non-rated specialty (operations) in addition to the other normal military specialties of Medical Corps, Military Intelligence, and Support.

Air Force Enlisted

Prerequisites: EDU 4+ and no criminal record.

First Term

Promotion: 8+, DM+2 for EDU 5+. This promotion opportunity is in addition to that received under the All Terms entry below, that is, the character can receive two promotions in their first term.

Skills:

All: Admin/Legal 1, Computer Operation 1, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 1.

Operations: Communications 1, Computer Operation 1, **Persuasion** 1, Sensors 1.

Medical Corps: Biology 1, Computer Use 1, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 2.

Military Intelligence: Communications 2, *Language* 1, Sensors 1.

Support: **Economics** 1, *Ground Vehicle* (Wheeled) 1, **Technician** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, **Perception**, Running, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: 7+, DM+2 if EDU 6+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+1 for EDU 6+.

Contacts: Two military per term. If a special assignment was successfully rolled, one additional criminal or business contact. On a roll of 7+ the contact is foreign.

Special: Two secondary activities are allowed per term.

Air Force Officer

Prerequisites: AGL 6+ and a commission from OCS, a military academy, ROTC, or a direct commission as a doctor.

First Term

Skills:

All: Computer Operation 1, Leadership 1, *Slug Weapon* 1.

Operations: Communications 2, Liaison 1, Sensors 1.

Aviation: **Aircraft** 2, Navigation 1, Parachute 1.

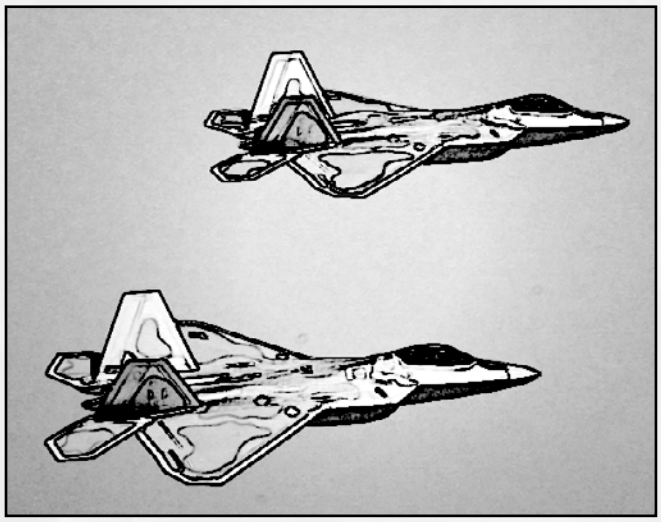
Medical Corps: Biology 1, **Interaction** 1, **Medical** 2.

Military Intelligence: Communications 1, **Interaction** 2, *Language* 1.

Support: **Economics** 2, **Technician** 2.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: **Aircraft**, Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, **Medical**, **Melee**, Observation, Parachute, Running, Tracking,



Squad Weapons, **Technician**, **Vehicle.**

All Terms

Special Assignment: 6+, DM+2 if INT 8+. **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 8+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+2 if character is in the aviation specialty.

Contacts: Two military, government, specialist, or intelligence per term. On a roll of 9+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.

United States Special Forces Command

Special Forces include military occupational specialties of Force Recon (long range ground reconnaissance), Search and Rescue (including covert insertion and extraction of personnel), and SEALs (sea-air-land special operations like snatch-and-grab or terminations). Enlisted special operations include the occupational specialty of Sniper, representing the aggregation of sniper schools under the Special Forces Command. Selection, training, and advancement of Special Forces are rigorous physically as reflected in entrance criteria.



Special Forces Enlisted

Prerequisites: STR + AGL + CON = 18+. The character must have served in an immediately prior military career.

First Term

Promotion: 8+, DM+1 for INT 6+. This promotion opportunity is in addition to that received under the All Terms entry below, that is, the character can receive two promotions in their first term.

Skills:

All: Climbing 0, Demolitions 0, *Ground Vehicle* 0, **Gun Combat** 2, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 0, **Melee** 1, Observation 1, Parachute 0, **Squad Weapons** 1, Stealth 1.

Force Recon: **Acrobat** 1, Communications 1, **Explore** 1.

Search and Rescue: Communications 1, Liaison 1, Sensors 1.

SEAL: Demolitions 1, Swimming 1, **Vessel** 1.

Sniper: *Slug Weapon* (Rifle) 2, Stealth 1.

Subsequent Terms

Skills: Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Medical**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Personal Transport**, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**.

All Terms

Special Assignment: Automatic. **Artisan**, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, **Space Tech**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 6+, DM+2 for CON 7+.

Contacts: Two military per term. If a special assignment was successfully rolled, one additional criminal or specialist contact. On a roll of 6+ the contact may be foreign.

Special: As a result of receiving the Sniper specialty, the character receives the service's standard issue sniper rifle.

Special Forces Officer

Prerequisites: STR + CON = 13+, INT 6+. The character must also have served in an immediately prior military career, and must have a commission from their prior service. Entry in the Search and Rescue specialty requires an aircraft pilot skill, i.e., Pilot (Fixed or Rotary Winged) 3+.

First Term

Skills:

All: Climbing 0, Demolitions 0, *Ground Vehicle* 0, **Gun Combat** 1, Liaison 1, *Medical* (Trauma Aid) 0, **Melee** 1, Observation 1, Parachute 0, **Squad Weapons** 1, Stealth 1.

Force Recon: **Acrobat** 1, Communications 1, **Explore** 1.

Search and Rescue: Communications 1, Liaison 1, Sensors 1.

SEAL: Demolitions 1, Swimming 1, **Vessel** 1.

Subsequent Term

Skills: Acrobatics, **Determination**, **Engineer**, **Explore**, **Gun Combat**, **Interaction**, *Language*, **Medical**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Personal Transport**, **Squad Weapons**, **Technician**, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**.

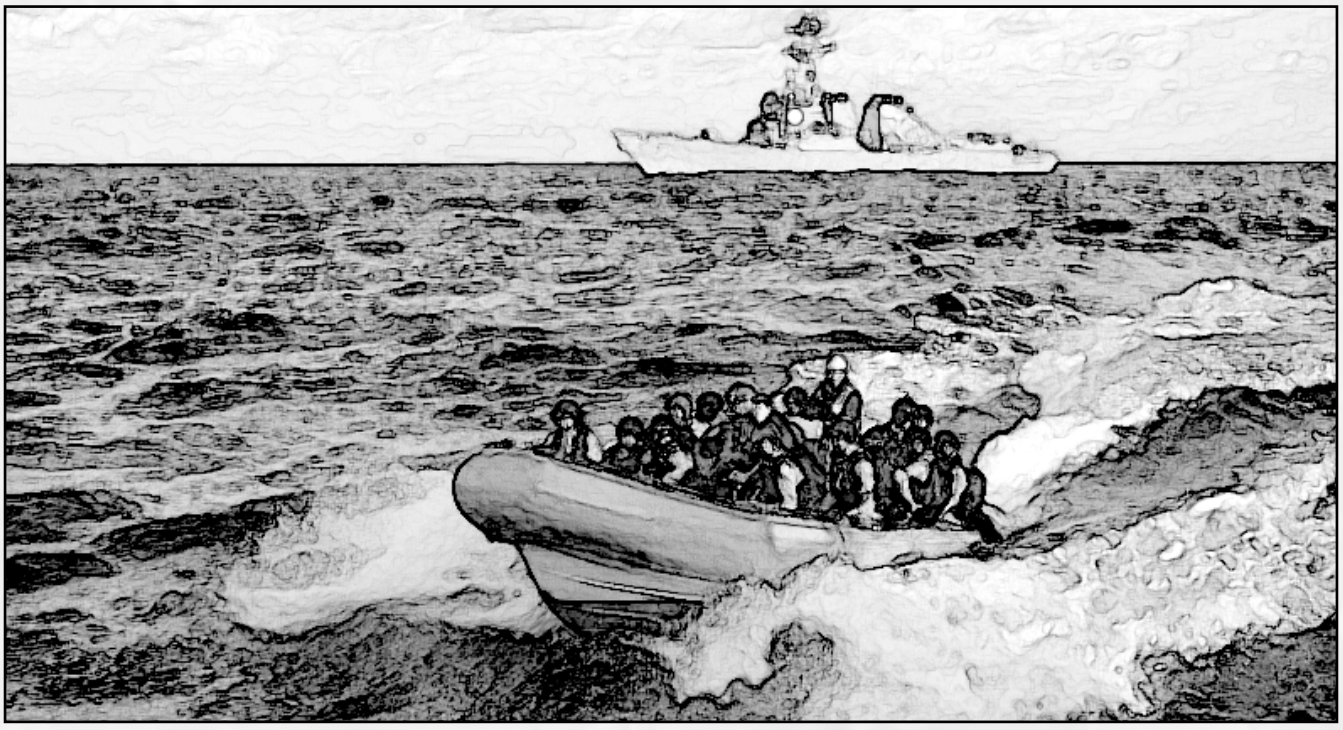
All Terms

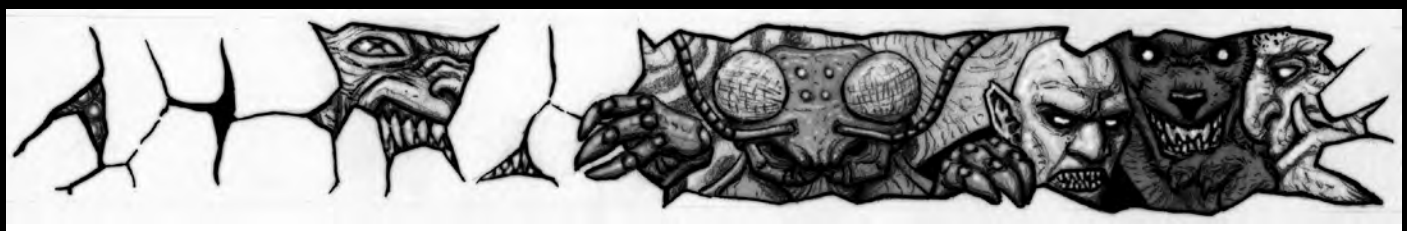
Special Assignment: Automatic. **Artisan**, **Charm**, **Crime**, **Empathy**, **Perception**, **Space Tech**, Streetwise, **Vehicle**, **Vessel**, **Vice**.

Promotion: 7+, DM+2 for INT 8+, DM+1 for CON 7+.

Contacts: Two military, government, specialist, or intelligence per term. On a roll of 7+ the contact is foreign.

Special: None.





In the Darkness, I Feel for You
by Jason L Blair

Nathan lined up another plank over the broken window and motioned at Becky. She hesitated a moment before she put the hammer in his hands.

"It's just, you look angry."

"I am angry," Nathan said. He flattened the nail against the wood in a single strike. He fingered another nail from between his teeth and lined it up best he could with one hand.

"I said I was sorry."

"I know." The nail bent a bit this time. Nathan swore and flattened it best he could. It would hold as well as the others.

"What else can I do?"

"Give me time. And board up that other window. Take the hammer. I'll make do with," he looked around the sprawling one-level. The home had held people once, a family once, before the entire world went mad. Shattered glass and broken furniture littered the blood-stained floor. "Something."

Becky turned, considered speaking, but put her efforts into barricading the house. Nathan glanced at his wife and sighed. He found a heavy metal table leg. Good heft. Solid. It clanged with each downward strike. Four per board. Two boards per window. They didn't have enough.

When the last nail was in place, Nathan closed his eyes and fell against the overturned couch in the center of the room. Becky stood before him, hammer loose in her grip, and shrugged.

"I didn't see anything, I—"

"Let's," Nathan interrupted. "Let's just forget about your thing for now and think about what our next play is. We obviously can't stay here forever. If more of those whatever-they-are come after us, we're dead unless—"

"We're dead anyway," Becky said.

"Don't. Don't lose it. Not now. No." He fought to keep himself together. Be cool. He had to be cool. "We have to stick together. There will be time for breakdowns and pity parties later. But right now we have to think. Stay focused."

Becky's eyes darted around the room, unable to focus on any one thing. She saw the crimson trail leading up the stairs. They had been in this house before; they would be back. Her knees wobbled and she collapsed to the floor. A thousand bad outcomes flooded her mind.

"We shouldn't have left the car."

Nathan sat up and grabbed her shoulders to stop their shaking.

"Listen. Listen to me, Becky. We had to leave the car. We had to. You saw that thing it was...there was no way we were going to get anywhere on the road. We had to get on foot. You know that."

"It just, the road, it opened up right in front of us."

"I know."

"That car, the car with the boy, it just, it fell right into the hole." Tears caused her words to sputter. "I saw it. I saw his face. I heard his screams. In my head. I heard his screams in my head. I couldn't help it, Nate, I couldn't—"

Nathan pulled Becky close, nestling her face against his shoulder. He hadn't considered what it must have felt like for her. The past week, the way she somehow knew what he was thinking, feeling—it felt intrusive. He felt violated. But he realized she must have felt the same way. Every errant thought, every stupid fleeting emotion, she felt them too. His on top of hers on top of, who knows, everyone? It seemed to get worse every day for her. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that happened to you."

"And then I heard you scream--"

"But I didn't scream, Becky. I didn't."

"I heard you scream." Her eyes red, cheeks slick with tears.

"I know."

Another scream, a real scream, cut through his words. Nathan scrambled to the window. From under the slat, he saw the sliver of the moon over the barn outside. Then, something else in the darkness. Eyes. Dozens of glowing red eyes. Their owners cried like young wolves.

Becky clutched her stomach and stifled her own painful outburst. "Nathan," she said weakly.

Her husband crawled over to her, careful to keep as low as he could. He rested her head on his lap. He put his left hand on her back, comforting. He picked up the hammer in his right. The weight was good but the weapon was so small. The metal dowel, his makeshift nail-driver, wobbled by his feet, unsettled by the evening breeze that wound through the house, from one broken window to the next.

*"I'm hungry," Becky said, her words dissolving into sobs. Thin rivulets of blood rolled down her nose and across her lips. "*They're *hungry. They're so hungry."*

"I know," Nathan said, stroking her hair. He steadied his grip on the hammer. "I know."



SKILLS



SKILLS

What skill set does a character need to effectively *get stuff done*? As the character grows and develops they gain skills representing accumulated learned ability and knowledge in different areas. The skill descriptions and task examples in this chapter are intended to give players a basic idea of how the skills work in this game, so that players can design their characters intelligently.

The skill descriptions that follow should give players a basic idea of how the skills work, however, the referee has the final say in which skill and task difficulty level applies to a task. Each skill entry that follows lists the skill name, its skill clusters, and the governing attribute (or attributes for cascade skills) in addition to a short description of the skill.

Skill Levels

Skills are rated in levels from 0 on up. A rating of zero (0) is a default value, which can be obtained by observing, and means that the character only has a familiarity with the skill. (See Default Skills on page 99.) The default skill level removes the penalty for not having that skill without actually having a skill level. (See Unskilled Actions on page 99.) Skill levels for humans normally range from 0-10, but there is no upper limit to skill levels.

Controlling Attributes and Skills

When a character attempts a task, the referee decides on which skill is appropriate. While each skill has a pre-defined controlling attribute, the referee can change the attribute used in the task check to something more appropriate to the situation. In the listings that follow, the skill's controlling attribute serves as a recommendation to the referee and as the limiting factor in character skill level improvements.

Skill Clusters

Most skill awards in the career listings are in terms of skill clusters. For example, the Physical Science skill cluster includes the specific skills of Biology, Chemistry, Farming, Genetics, Geology, Meteorology, Physics, and Robotics. Skill clusters are listed in **bold** type in the career lists and skills are mapped to clusters in the Skills by Cluster table (see page 289). A skill award in a skill cluster may be taken in any skill contained in that cluster.

Cascade Skills

A cascade skill is a collection of several closely related skills under one heading used to represent skills that have either a shared knowledge or a related level of understanding. These skills assume that the knowledge and understanding required in one application of the skill are, at least in part, easily transferable to the other skills within its cascade. Examples of cascade skills are *Pilot*, which includes Airship, Fixed Wing, Rotary Wing, Glider, and Interface; and *Slug Weapon*, which includes both Pistol and Rifle cascaded skills. In the career listings, when any skill in the cascade list can be selected, the cascade skill is shown in *italics*, for example *Slug Weapon*. When a specific cascade is called for it is shown as follows: *Pilot* (Fixed Wing).

Characters who receive a skill level in a cascade for the first time must decide to which sub-skill the level will be applied. The sub-skill with the highest skill level is considered the specialty for the cascade. For sub-skills with equal levels, the character decides which sub-skill is her specialty. Otherwise the overall skill level for the cascade is the highest skill level among all the sub-skills.

Knowledge in one sub-skill usually confers knowledge in the other sub-skills in the cascade. When a character receives a skill level in their specialty sub-skill, she also receives a ½ level for each of the other sub-skills in the cascade. However, the other sub-skills cannot be raised above a level of 3 in this fashion. When other sub-skills reach a level of 3, the character must allocate received skill levels directly to the sub-skill. Fractions should be recorded to allow growth of the character after character generation.

Vocational Skills

In campaign settings, characters can use their proficiencies to earn income. Some of the skills, such as History, the Physical Science skills, and the Fine Arts skills, represent specialized, scholarly knowledge or culturally oriented talents. The character can leverage these skills into a vocation that earns the character regular income. To earn this income, the vocational skill must be at a skill level of 4+. For example, a character with a History skill level 8 could be a university professor or a high-paid consultant. A character with a Song skill of 9 could be a high-paid lounge act or a world-famous rock 'n' roll star. Although the referee has the final say on vocational income, vocational skills can earn a player a monthly income of the skill level (not asset) x 1D6 x $250. This amount should be adapted for the referee's campaign setting.

However, possession of such a job is not automatic. The referee may wish to handle job-hunting as a task or series of tasks, based on the character's location. The character's ability to find a day job is based on their attributes and skills, including Charisma, Recruiting, Persuasion, and the skill with which the character wishes to gain employment. Remember that this income usually represents a steady five-day-a-week job, which will not necessarily allow the character time to adventure. Characters with a typical adventuring schedule may lose their jobs fairly quickly.

This is not intended to prohibit characters with Mechanic, Electronics, or other similar skills from making a living with them. Rather, it is intended to make the more exotic science and artistic skills attractive to players in addition to the more survival-oriented combat and technical skills.

Artistic Vocational Skills

Characters with Painting, Sculpting, and Music (Composition) earn their money somewhat differently, the irregular nature of art being what it is. The base monthly pay rate is calculated as above, but it is only paid irregularly. Roll 2D6 and subtract the character's Willpower skill (not asset) from the result. That is the number of months until the character is next paid. Payment will be in one lump sum, the number of months elapsed times the monthly rate.

Creating Art

Artists may also attempt to create notable artwork. First they must find a *patron* by succeeding at a Formidable [Persuasion] test. Alternately the character can designate a Wealthy generic contact as a patron. Once this is successful, the character decides whether to attempt a Work of Art, a Show Piece, or a Masterpiece, and then begins work. Each month, the character must attempt a Formidable [Willpower] test. If it is a success, the work is completed, and the character makes a roll for the result. If it is failed, work proceeds for another month. The character tests her Willpower each month until it succeeds, or until the character decides to give up.

When the work is done, the character rolls a Difficult test against the appropriate Fine Art asset. On a success, the player rolls for a Power Level with the 1D10 roll staged (see Staged D10 on page 80). Note that Outstanding Success doubles the attained power level. Consult the Artwork Appraisal table for the amount to the character receives. Failure indicates that the character has forfeited all monthly pay for that period. Catastrophic Failure is decided by the referee and could include public ridicule or loss of the patron.

Artwork Appraisal

Stage	*Multiplier*	*Value*
1	$1	× 1D10
2	$10	× 1D10
3	$100	× 1D10
4	$1,000	× 1D10
4	$10,000	× 1D10
5	$100,000	× 1D10
6	$1,000,000	× 1D10
7	$10,000,000	× 1D10
8	$100,000,000	× 1D10
9	Invaluable	Collector's Item
10	Invaluable	Collector's Item

Skill Descriptions

Acrobatics — ***Acrobat—AGL***

Acrobatics is the ability to exercise precise control over body motions and actions. For example, an attempt to jump from a moving helicopter and land on the back of a running horse would be a Formidable [Acrobatics] test. Acrobatics is also extremely helpful in melee combat. Characters with Acrobatics skill may use their Acrobatics asset in place of the Agility attribute in any of the melee combat tasks normally rolled against Agility alone.

Act/Bluff — ***Charm, Fine Art—CHR***

Act/Bluff is the ability for the character to convincingly pretend he is something he is not or do something the character will not. For actors, it means portraying a fictitious character, of course, but it also covers such things as effectively pretending you are holding a winning hand at poker or convincing voters that you will fulfill your campaign promises, or that you even know what they mean. While Act/Bluff can be used in shady dealings



like smuggling, confidence games, and the like, this skill can also be used as vocational skill to artistically manipulate an audience's emotions by a professional actor or actress.

Admin/Legal ***Economics—EDU***

The character has experience with the rules and assumptions of how administrative and legal agencies work, and understands the requirements of dealing with and managing them. The character with Admin/Legal skill can navigate through a morass of red tape to solve problems. Several examples include: Easy [Admin/Legal] to find the right person in a bureaucracy to answer a specific question. Average [Admin/Legal] to fill out and file a visa form. A Difficult [Admin/Legal] test is required to understand a standard legal contract. A Formidable [Admin/Legal] test is required to understand an unusual legal contract. Characters with Admin/Legal can function as lawyers in their native country. Where differences in local laws prevail, rolls against Research, Interrogation, and Liaison skills may be used as enabling skills and is often required.

Archaic Artillery ***Artillery—STR***

The Archaic Artillery skill indicates an ability to maintain, build, and use heavy archaic indirect fire weaponry. These weapons use mechanically stored tension to throw solid projectiles or large darts, and include catapults, scorpions, mangonels, and ballistae.

Archery ***Archaic Weapons—STR***

The Archery skill allows the use of short, long, and composite bows, and blowguns. Specifics of this skill's use in combat are explained in the combat section. Characters using a crossbow instead test against the Early Firearms skill.

Armed Martial Arts ***Melee—AGL, STR***

Armed Martial Arts is a cascade skill that allows the use of various hand-held weapons in melee combat. See the combat rules for details on the use of this skill. The cascade skills are:

Large Blade: Includes use of swords, cutlasses, and machetes

Small Blade: Includes knives and daggers

Polearm: Includes spears, pikes, pugil sticks, staves, and rifles with bayonets affixed

Club: Includes use of maces, hammers, hand axes, and improvised clubs.

Astrogation ***Space—INT***

The character has training in interplanetary astrogation (only—not interstellar astrogation at this technology level). This includes the ability to compute orbital rendezvous, accurate time-over-target ground tracks, interplanetary orbital injection, and courses to jump space points with necessary entry parameters.

Autogun ***Heavy Weapons—STR***

The character can use high-rate of fire slug-firing weapons, including machineguns and autocannons. These weapons are usually crew-served, semi-portable, and are often vehicle-mounted.

Bargain ***Interaction—CHR***

The Bargain skill implies some knowledge or experience in bartering for goods and services. Although bargaining should often be role-played out between the referee and players, a character with the higher Bargain skill is often at the advantage.

Biology ***Physical Science—EDU***

The Biology skill reflects a general knowledge of the physical functions of living creatures. For role-playing purposes, characters with a Biology skill level of 4+ should choose a specialization. Sample specializations include: botany (concerning plants), zoology (concerning animals), ecology (concerning environmental relations), genetics (concerning heredity), or biochemistry (concerning the chemical nature of life). This skill allows sufficient knowledge of genetics for controlled breeding, but not for genetic engineering, which is covered by the Genetics skill.

Bribery ***Vice—CHR***

The individual has experience in bribing officials in order to circumvent regulations or ignore cumbersome laws. Difficulty of the task depends upon the seriousness of the circumstances (only the most corrupt official would take a bribe to ignore a murder). Bribery is generally a Difficult task, but can be modified by the referee based on the circumstances.

Business ***Economics, Social Science—EDU***

The Business skill indicates a familiarity with business practices. It includes knowledge of bookkeeping procedures, an awareness of resources necessary to conduct different businesses, and familiarity with methods of locating or attracting customers. Selling is covered by the Marketing skill.

Carousing ***Charm—CHR***

The character can be gregarious and sociable and is well adapted to meeting and mingling with strangers in unfamiliar surroundings. When used in conjunction with Interrogation skill as an averaged or enabling skill, Carousing can be used to gain information from people in a social setting, often without their realizing that you are even looking for information from them.

Carpenter ***Artisan—CON***

The character is skilled in building items out of wood. At low levels, these items are utilitarian, but at higher levels, the character may use this woodworking skill to actually add aesthetic value to his creations by the use of inlays, veneers, etc. This skill can be used as a vocation.

Chemistry ***Physical Science—EDU***

The individual has skill in the science of inanimate matter, and understands the composition, structure, properties, and reactions of elements and compounds. Chemistry skill applies to inanimate matter, not living organisms. Characters with this skill can, with the proper equipment, perform chemical analysis. At higher skill levels, the character is encouraged to specialize in a vocation.

Characters with skill in Chemistry can also create useful substances such as chemical smoke (Average), gunpowder (Average), smokeless powder (Difficult), tear gas (Difficult), dynamite (Difficult), explosive primer (Difficult), and plastic explosive (Formidable). Note that Smokeless powder is the propellant in modern cased ammunition; gunpowder is for old-fashioned weapons in which the powder and shot are loaded separately.

Climbing ***Acrobat, Explore—CON***

Climbing is the ability to scale vertical surfaces, whether rock faces or buildings, with the proper equipment. Climbing a steep slope or sheer rock face with good hand holds is Difficult. Climbing a sheer, mostly smooth rock face or a building wall is Formidable. The above assumes no specialized equipment. With climbing equipment, the difficulty is one level lower. Rappelling is Average. An experienced climber may assist an inexperienced climber. If so, the inexperienced climbers use their own CON attribute as a Climbing skill (i.e. a default level of zero (0) while being helped). Without assistance, the character will suffer the normal unskilled action penalties.

Combat Engineer ***Engineer—CON***

The Combat Engineer skill allows the construction and demolition of obstacles, minefields, and field fortifications, and the ability to enhance mobility by building temporary bridges, ramps, and causeways across or around natural or artificial obstacles. The Combat Engineer Tasks table lists selected tasks and their difficulties.

Most of these tasks assume access to tools, axes, picks, and shovels at the very least. These tasks are made easier with equipment similar to backhoes, bulldozers, etc.

Combat Engineer Tasks

Task	*Difficulty*
Place demolitions charge (with a demolition kit)	Average
Improvise detonator/ fuse, etc. (in absence of engineer demo kit)	Formidable
Improvise anti-personnel obstacles	Average
Improvise anti-vehicle obstacles	Difficult
Camouflage position	Average

Communications ***Technician, Space—EDU***

The individual is trained in the use, repair, and maintenance of communications devices. While nearly everyone can press the button and make a cell phone or radio function, this skill is necessary to be able to understand why the device does not work correctly, as well as to be aware of the details and limitations on the device's possible use.

For example, it is an Easy [Communication] test to open communications with another communications unit within range. Long ranges, jamming, and environmental interference can make this more difficult.

Computer ***Technician—EDU***

Computer indicates ability in the design and construction of computers and networks. While most any character has an ability to use a computer, the ability to build a computer and program it to perform complex tasks requires the Computer skill. For example, to run a search using a database requires the Computer Use skill. However, writing a program to extract data from an existing data stream requires the Computer skill.

Computer Operation ***Space, Technician—INT***

As might be expected, Computer Operation indicates a familiarity with the use of computers, software and hardware applications. While knowledge of computer software is needed to perform this skill, the skill does not cover programming a computer. The referee will determine difficulty levels for tasks a character wishes to perform with a computer. Accessing the Internet requires this skill. Writing applications that communicate over the net requires the Computer skill.

Construction ***Engineer—EDU***

This skill allows the construction of permanent structures. The character is skilled not only in the actual tasks of pouring foundations, erecting frames, and hanging drywall, but is also able to design durable buildings for many purposes, and organize their construction.

Dance ***Fine Arts—AGL***

The character is able to dance. Low skill levels (0 and 1) are sufficient for recreational and informal dancing (ballroom, trance, etc.). Moderate levels (2 and 3) are required for formal affairs; for example, a character can be required to pass an Average [Dance] test in order to avoid embarrassing himself at a formal diplomatic reception. High levels (4+) are required to be considered a professional dancer, i.e. professional ballet or interpretive dance troupe; and to use the Dance skill in a vocation.

Demolitions ***Engineer—AGL***

Demolitions skill involves the knowledge of explosives, including how to place and detonate them effectively. Typically, placing an explosive charge to simply blow something up is an Easy task. But the difficulty may increase if the

character wishes to achieve something fancy, such as making a wall fall in a particular direction, or if the character has to improvise the explosives and/or detonator. Note that a Catastrophic outcome may result in a premature detonation to the detriment of the character or those around her.

Disguise ***Fine Arts, Vice—CHR***

This skill involves convincingly looking like something or someone the character is not. It includes use of camouflage, as well as such things as make-up and costume. The use of this skill is often an uncertain task, as the character will not always know if the disguise has fooled anyone. Difficulty depends on the materials available to fashion the disguise, the already existing differences or similarities between the character and the person being impersonated, as well as the distance from which the disguise is intended to be effective. In order to impersonate someone, the character's task is a test of both Act/Bluff and Disguise. Of course, the character must always have detailed knowledge of the person who is being impersonated.

Early Firearms ***Gun Combat—STR***

Early Firearms confers the ability to use various muzzle-loading and cap'n'ball black-powder firearms, including the arquebus, hand cannon, and musket. This skill also covers the use of crossbows.

Electronics ***Technician—EDU)***

Pretty much everyone can figure out how to operate most electronic devices, especially everyday ones. Characters with the Electronics skill know how to create and repair those devices, and can figure out fairly easily how to operate the more advanced sorts (such as radar systems, power plant controls, and the like).

Energy Artillery ***Artillery, Heavy Weapons—EDU***

This skill indicates the ability to maintain and use heavy direct and indirect fire battlefield weaponry that fires bursts of energy or energetic particles rather than macroscopic physical projectiles. These weapons include battlefield meson guns, fusion and plasma guns, and heavy-vehicle mounted lasers.

Energy Weapon ***Gun Combat—STR, AGL***

This skill allows the use of energy weapons as small arms. This is a cascade skill, with two cascades: Energy Pistol and Energy Rifle. Energy Pistol allows use of laser pistols, while Energy Rifle allows the use of laser rifles, laser carbines, plasma and fusion rifles. This skill is unusual in that it uses two controlling attributes, depending on the weapon being used. When firing plasma or fusion weapons, the controlling attribute is Strength due to their size. When firing laser weapons, it is Agility.

Environment Suit ***Space—CON)***

This skill confers the ability to wear and conduct various activities in the many specialized suits designed for hostile environments. Use of such suits includes the standard astronaut's vacuum (vac) suit, any high pressure suits for underwater use, and closed-system suits for hazardous chemical, biological, or nuclear environments.

In addition, when attempting tasks with Stealth, Acrobatics, Climbing, and any weapons skills while wearing an Environment Suit, the character uses the lower of Environment Suit skill level or the normal controlling attribute to compute the asset. For example, a character wearing a hazmat suit attempts to fire an assault rifle, which uses the Small Arms (Rifle) skill. The character has a Rifle skill level of 4. The controlling attribute for Rifle is STR, and the character has STR 8, for a total Rifle asset of 12. But the character only has Environment Suit 4, which must be used instead of the higher STR attribute. This yields a Rifle asset of (4+4=) 8 when wearing an Environment Suit.

Excavation ***Engineer—EDU***

This skill indicates an individual's expertise in planning and executing the digging of safe, stable, and useful large holes. These holes can be the



foundations for buildings, bunkers, and trench systems, or extensive underground mines or tunnels. The excavation of archeological or paleontological digs also requires the Excavation skill. Other uses include the exposure of mass graves, digging up ecological contamination, as well as tunneling out of subterranean holds. Because the character with the Excavation skill usually does not do all the work alone, this skill is best used with an enabling skill of Leadership when directing the activities of large groups of workers. Note that this skill does not enable the use of heavy machinery (see the Ground Vehicle cascade skill), but rather knowledge of how that machinery should be used.

Farming ***Animal Handling, Phys. Science—INT***

The Farming skill represents the ability to raise crops and livestock for food or other uses. In addition to actually producing fields of plants and herds of animals, all of which takes months and is dependent upon weather and other conditions, the Farming skill allows the estimation of the quality of soil, identification of pests, the modification of fallow land to productive use, and the breeding, care, and feeding of livestock. Farming skill refers mostly to open-air farming; however, referees may allow for farming in enclosed environments, such as underground fungus farming, or large-scale hydroponics gardening.

Fleet Tactics ***Tactics—INT***

The character has been trained in the art of multi-starship operations—Fleet Tactics is used in command of two or more starships. This skill may be used to predict where an opposing fleet commander has placed his forces, and how they might be deployed. This is an uncertain, Difficult task if the opposing commander has the same skill level as the character, and increases in difficulty one level for



each level of Fleet Tactics asset that the opponent has over the character's level.

Forgery ***Crime—AGL***

Forgery is, of course, the ability to create false documents. When used in conjunction with the Electronics skill, Forgery allows for the falsification of electronic documents.

Forward Observer ***Artillery—INT***

The Forward Observer skill confers the ability to call in, direct, and correct long-range indirect fire onto enemy targets for maximum effect. This fire can be indirect ballistic artillery, indirect rocket and missile fire, geodesic meson fire, and orbital fire. This skill consists almost exclusively of correcting the accuracy of fire that has already been observed. Only under the most unusual of circumstances, such as with artillery equipment firing from surveyed positions and using equipment with which the observer was very familiar, could a forward observer even attempt to achieve first-round hits.

Gambling ***Vice—INT***

The individual has an expertise in betting and games of chance. The character has an understanding of how to play many standard gambling games, and knows how to detect cheating or a rigged game (this is an uncertain opposed test against the Gambling skill of the person doing the cheating). This skill also allows the ability to calculate odds. However, gambling should never be confused with normal risk-taking.

The Gambling skill only confers knowledge of the technical aspects of such games, and how to take advantage of them. Interaction with other gamblers, or with persons the character is attempting to fleece (or is being fleeced by), requires the use of other talents. Certain Charisma-based skills, such as Act/ Bluff, Carousing, Persuasion, and Liaison should be used in conjunction with the Gambling skill in such cases.

Genetics ***Physical Science—EDU***

The individual has expertise in the biological mechanics of heredity. The ability to manipulate the functioning of genes is crucial to advanced medical techniques, such as replacement organ manufacture, genetic engineering to create improved forms of life, cloning, and the creation of retroviral medical treatments. It is also useful in the analysis of genetic material, such as forensic sampling, animal versus human DNA, etc.



Geology ***Physical Science—EDU***

The individual has gained experience in searching out and identifying minerals, deposits, and terrain features. The skill of Geology allows an individual a greater likelihood of discovering mineral deposits in an area. This skill alone is not sufficient for the discovery of vast mineral wealth, but it does provide a greater probability of an individual discovering what is there.

Grenade Launcher Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—AGL

The character is skilled in the use of man-portable direct and indirect fire devices. This skill allows use of non-automatic grenade launchers, direct fire anti-armor rocket launchers, and mortars. This skill can be used with both direct and indirect fire.

Ground Tactics ***Tactics—INT***

The individual has training and experience in the proper military use of ground troops and weapons used by and against them. This skill can provide advantages in combat situations, and allow the character to predict what an enemy commander might do (this is a Difficult uncertain task if the enemy's Ground Tactics skill is equal to the character's, and increases in difficulty one level for each level that the enemy's skill asset exceeds the character's). This skill is not to be confused with strategy, which deals with the reasons for a military encounter and the intended results of the encounter; strategy is the realm of the players, rather than of the characters.

Ground Vehicle ***Vehicle—AGL***

This skill indicates an ability to drive vehicles that move on the ground and

rely on friction for propulsion. It also includes knowledge of basic forms of maintenance of these vehicles, such as changing tires, tracks, filters, and oil. Serious repairs require the Mechanic skill. Ground Vehicle is a cascade skill that includes Motorcycle, Wheeled Vehicle, and Tracked Vehicle. Wheeled Vehicle includes everything from sports cars to tractor/trailers. Tracked Vehicle involves primarily military vehicles and very large construction equipment.

Guard/Hunting Beasts ***Animal Handling—CON***

This skill indicates the character has a broad knowledge of animals, typically carnivores, which are used for guarding, tracking, drug- or explosive-sniffing, hunting, and retrieving. Examples include dogs, pigs, seals, dolphins (non-genetically modified), falcons, and hawks. This skill allows for their care, feeding, training, and use in these tasks.

Heavy Artillery ***Artillery—STR***

This skill indicates the ability to maintain and use heavy indirect fire weaponry that fires physical projectiles. This includes chemically propelled howitzers and mortars, ballistic rockets and missiles, and mass drivers.

Heavy Guns ***Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—STR***

The character is skilled in the use of heavy direct fire guns, such as large artillery being used in direct fire anti-tank guns (including recoilless rifles), tank main guns, and naval turret weapons. These weapons are usually mounted in vehicles or field carriages, but can also be static defensive guns.

High-G Environment ***Explore—CON***

The individual has experience in an environment having a gravity greater than 1G. A high-gravity environment exerts considerable stress on the body and often does bodily harm to those not accustomed to dealing with extreme gravity. High-G Environment is used as an enabling skill for tasks in extreme gravity. High gravity severely limits the range of slug throwers, but has little or no effect on lasers and energy weapons.

History ***Social Science—EDU***

This skill indicates knowledge of specific historical facts, as well as general historical trends or forces. This skill can serve as an enabling skill when attempting to puzzle out the significance of salvaged equipment, local customs, and excavated sites.

This skill includes other social science disciplines as well. For example, an anthropologist would be a character with high History and Liaison skill levels, an economist one with History and Business, and a political scientist one with History and Admin/Legal.

For purposes of role-playing and generating character color, a player can designate an area of specialization for each two (2) skill points. For example, military campaigns of the Viet Nam War, the War in the North Caucasus, or the economic history of the Pacific Rim. Characters who have advanced degrees (see Character Generation) should be encouraged to come up with the titles of their thesis papers and dissertations, with extra credit given for Byzantine and grandiose titles ("On the Urge: or the Epistemology of Yearning").

Hovercraft ***Vehicle, Vessel—AGL***

This skill allows the use of vehicles that travel on a captured bubble of air and can travel over water and reasonably level ground. Certain specialized hovercraft (known as rigid sidewall craft or surface-effect ships) operate only in the water and can also be used with this skill.

Hypnosis ***Interaction—PSI***

Hypnosis, also called parlor-trick hypnosis, requires a willing subject. The hypnotist puts the subject into a trance by succeeding with a Difficult [Hypnosis] test and spending 30 seconds of uninterrupted effort. Once the subject is in the trance, the hypnotist can question the subject (Average [Psychology] to get true and useful answers), make the subject behave differently (Average [Hypnosis]), or implant post-hypnotic suggestions (Difficult [Hypnosis]). Subjects can resist post-hypnotic suggestions when triggered by passing a Formidable [Willpower] test. Players should note that this task is reduced to Difficult [Willpower] if the subject violently disagrees with the post-hypnotic behavior. If successful, such a subject resists the suggestion and the power of the suggestion is broken. Players should note that the victim of post-hypnotic suggestion started as willing subjects. Unwilling subjects cannot be hypnotized using this skill.

Instruction ***Interaction, Social Science—CHR***

A character with skill in Instruction is able to effectively teach skills to other people. An instructor may teach a number of students equal to the instructor's Instruction skill level and must have a skill level in the skill being taught. An instructor cannot teach a student whose skill level in the subject taught is equal to or greater than that of the instructor.

Teaching a skill requires an Average [Instruction] test. The task takes four hours per day for 7 consecutive days. A successful test at the end of the 7



days results in experience points for both the students and the instructor. An Outstanding Success provides the instructor double the experience points, while a Critical Failure prevents the instructor from ever successfully teaching that skill to those students.

The instructor gains experience for accomplishing a task as explained in the Task Resolution section. Students gain a number of experience points in the skill being taught based on the number of students being taught. If the number of students is less than half of the instructor's skill level, each student gains three experience points. If the number of students is half or more of the instructor's skill level, each student gains one experience point.

Interrogation ***Interaction—CHR***

Interrogation is the ability to obtain information from people. Primarily, Interrogation involves asking the right questions and correctly interpreting the responses. It includes interrogation of unwilling persons, confused witnesses, and even of sources who don't realize how much they really know. Interrogation may include psychological intimidation and manipulation, but does not include torture.

Interview ***Social Science—INT***

The Interview skill functions identically to Interrogation, but is based on the character's Intelligence (INT). This skill is typically acquired in civilian or educational careers, where Interrogation is acquired while in the Military. Characters with the Interview skill are unfamiliar with psychological intimidation and manipulation methods used in Interrogation.

Intrusion ***Crime—AGL***

The Intrusion skill enables a character to manipulate mechanical and electronic locks. Success in opening simple mechanical locks, such as a briefcase, desk or normal door, and hot-wiring a vehicle requires an Average [Intrusion] test. To pick deadbolts or key locks on handcuffs and jail cells is Difficult. Opening combination and key locks on padlocks, strongboxes, and safes is Formidable. All of these assume the use of proper lock-picking tools; the tasks become one level more difficult if tools have to be improvised. Locks on vaults and high-security facilities always require special tools and are always at least Formidable.

Defeating electronic devices comparable to each of the above mechanical classes is one level higher, and also requires a specialized set of electronic intrusion tools, or the difficulty is increased a further level. In some cases, the referee may allow Electronics skill to serve as an enabling skill.

This skill also allows the use of small amounts of explosives to blow open safes, bank vaults, and even walls between adjoining buildings. It does not, however, grant skill in the demolitions of bridges, buildings, etc.

Investigation ***Perception—INT***

The individual is skilled at gathering and interpreting evidence at the scene of a crime or accident. Special investigative equipment is sometimes required. This skill allows things such as the determination of bullet entry and exit directions, likely range of the shot, estimation of the time of death, blood spatter analysis, calculating trajectory and speed of collisions, and the like. A successful Investigation test may, at the referee's discretion, provide characters the clues; however, the conclusions are up to the characters. Note that Investigation can be used to collect and handle evidence gathered from the scene of the crime. However, Chemistry, Biology, Genetics, or another **Physical Science** skill would be used to analyze such evidence.

Jeweler ***Artisan—AGL***

This vocational skill represents the ability to manufacture and repair small, intricate ornamental or mechanical objects, and also to add value to precious and semiprecious materials. A character who wished to repair a mechanical watch—digital clocks require Electronics skill—would have to succeed at a Formidable [Jeweler] test. The difficulty would decrease one level with the possession of a jeweler's toolkit or supply of watch parts, and would be two levels easier with both.

The character can also cut gems and fashion jewelry out of metal. Given a supply of raw materials, a character could manufacture jewelry valued at double its raw material cost with a Formidable [Jeweler] test, triple its cost at one difficulty level higher, quadruple at two difficulty levels higher, and so on. A failed test for a higher value may



result in a success at a lower value at the referee's discretion. For example, if the character attempts to make a quadruple value ring, but fails the roll by only 1 point, the referee may judge that the ring is triple value instead of being ruined. Difficulty is reduced one level with a set of jeweler's tools. Costs include wastage of ruined gemstones. Time required varies with the size of the project. Difficulty and time can be traded off against each other, with each doubling or halving of time yielding a decrease or increase of one difficulty level, respectively. This skill can be used as a *vocation*.

Language ***Interaction—CHR***

This is a special cascade skill which does not function according to the normal cascade rules (see Cascade Skills on page 79). Receipt of the Language skill allows the character to select either a particular language (such as French, German, Hindi, etc.), or the Linguistics cascade skill. Characters may acquire proficiency in any language consistent with their Character Concept. All characters automatically have a skill level of 10 in their designated native language. A list of languages in use as of the last millennium is given on page 60.

Communicating in a language shared by both characters is an Average difficulty task vs. the average of the two characters' Language skill levels. If one of the characters does not speak the language, but is substituting skill in a similar language, the task becomes Difficult. Both of these tasks become one level easier if only simple concepts are being communicated (For example, to communicate "I'm hungry"). Also, if one character is overhearing another character (listening at a door, then only the listening character's Language skill is used.

Identifying a language is Easy if the identifying character speaks it, Average if it is from a group containing a language the character speaks, or Difficult if it only shares a family with a language familiar to the character.

Linguistics, as a cascade of *Language,* does not follow the normal rule for cascade skills. Like other skill cascades, Linguistics may be selected as a specialty separate of other languages already chosen. However, characters who have not selected Linguistics do not use it at one-half the level of the highest specialty of the Language cascade. Rather, characters having a skill level in two or more languages other than their native language take the average of those other languages (round to the nearest whole number) and cut the result in half (again rounding to the nearest whole number). This is the default level of Linguistics skill for the character, up to level three (3).

An individual with the Linguistics cascade has the ability to quickly learn and understand an unknown language based on understanding the common structures of languages. It is used as an enabling skill when learning languages.

Large Watercraft ***Vessel—CON***

This skill confers the ability to maneuver boats and ships, including those powered by sails. The skill can be used with sail-powered vessels to make better time by making better use of the wind, to maneuver safely in restricted waters, and to ride out rough weather. Difficulty increases with high winds and rough water, and with the increasing size of the ship. For large vessels which the character cannot control alone, the task becomes a test of Large Watercraft and Leadership. With very large sailing ships, it is sometimes useful to roll the task against the average of the Large Watercraft and Leadership of all of the ship's officers, so that an inexperienced crew can thwart the abilities of even a skilled captain.

The operation of submarines requires the joint use of Large Watercraft and Sensors. If the submarine is being controlled by one person, it requires the combined use of Large Watercraft and Sensors. If operated by a crew, a Sensors roll made by the sonar operator can be used as an enabling roll to reduce the difficulty of a Large Watercraft roll being made by the commander. Similarly, a Sensors roll may enable the navigation of a surface ship through storm or heavy fog.

Leadership ***Determination—CHR***

Leadership is the use of force of personality to convince others to obey you. Different people have different manners of leading. Some do so by barking out orders, while others simply inspire loyalty in their followers. Players who choose this skill for their characters should consider their character's personality when role-playing its use, and also consider the effect of other related skills. For example, a character with Leadership and Willpower skills, but no Persuasion or Carousing skills, would most likely be a harsh leader, while one with Persuasion and Carousing would use a more inspirational style.

Success at an Average [Leadership] test will convince NPCs to follow your orders. The referee may adjust this, of course, depending upon other factors.

Leadership is also used when organizing the actions of a group of characters (usually NPCs) into cooperative actions. For example, supervising a group of laborers to construct a building would be a task rolled against Leadership and Construction.

Liaison ***Explore, Interaction—CHR***

The individual is trained in the art of dealing with others and has the ability to understand other groups and cultures and the way they organize their societies and live their lives. In addition to quickly assimilating the differing rhythms and priorities of other societies, the character is able to adapt to these patterns without prejudice, and work efficiently within them, and with members of those societies. Within his or her own society, a person with Liaison skill could work effectively as a public relations hack, although mere Act/Bluff skill is usually sufficient for this vocation.

Luck ***None—CHR***

Some people have fortune looking out for them whatever they do. The Luck skill is intended to reflect this innate ability to beat the odds. During an adventure session when a character fails a check against another skill, the



player may ask the referee for a Luck check. If the Luck roll is successful, the player may reroll the original skill check. It is possible to check Luck repeatedly, hoping to gain a second roll on the original skill. However, as characters press their Luck, it deteriorates. The first time that Luck is checked in a game session, the difficulty level is Easy. Each time thereafter, the difficulty increases by one level.

For example, Nigel, a former hit man is trying to snipe a target at the extreme range of his M21. This is an Impossible test versus Nigel's Slug Weapons (Rifle) skill. Nigel's player rolls a miss at that range, but Nigel is a very lucky sniper. Nigel's player asks to test his Luck for the first time in this adventure session, hoping for a second chance at the Slug Weapons roll, and the referee agrees. But Nigel fails the Easy roll versus his Luck. Now desperate with a miss maybe causing the death of a party member, Nigel's player asks for a second Luck check, now at Average level, and again, the referee agrees. This time the test is successful and as a result Nigel rolls for the shot again, which also happens to succeed. If Nigel uses his inherent Luck skill later in this adventure session, the check will be at a Difficult level. The first time he uses it in a different adventure session, however, it will be at an Easy level once again, and so on.

Machinist ***Technician—AGL***

The character is skilled in the fashioning of machine parts to fine tolerances. This vocational skill allows a character to create replacement mechanical and engineering parts using a machine shop, and to repair many pieces of equipment including all varieties of firearms, heavy weapons, and artillery.

Map ***Explore—EDU***

This skill indicates that the character is familiar with the concepts of systematically and accurately exploring, recording, and mapping terrain features (natural and man-made). Use of this skill in conjunction with Sensors and Navigation skills, and the ability to travel around and make measurements, allows a character to generate a map of the world's surface, or whatever portions he or she examines.

Mapping skill also allows a character to keep his bearings when underground, inside a large structure, or in weather when no external points of reference are visible. Certain navigation and sensor devices simplify this job. See Gear on page 9.

Mason ***Artisan—STR***

The character is skilled in the area of stone-cutting and brick-making, as well as construction with these materials. This vocational skill does not confer the ability to conceive and design buildings, which is the province of the Construction skill. However, a character with Construction skill who was attempting to build a Gothic cathedral would do well to have a number of masons working for him.

Mechanic ***Technician—STR***

This vocational skill reflects the knowledge of how to build and repair machinery in general. The difficulty of the build or repair task is set by the referee. If no proper tools are available, increase task difficulty levels by one.

Medical ***Medical—EDU***

The Medical skill allows for the treatment of wounds and diseases. It is broken into three cascades Diagnosis, Trauma Aid, and Surgery.

Diagnosis: Reflects a familiarity with injuries, diseases, allergies, other maladies, and their treatments. Diagnosis also covers pharmaceutical knowledge that allows the prescription of drugs and knowledge of their interactions.

Trauma Aid: Reflects expertise in first aid, treatment for shock and stabilizing of patients for transfer to a location where more comprehensive care is available. This is the cascade of choice for emergency medical technicians, combat medics, and corpsmen.

Surgery: Is the aspect of the Medical skill that allows repairs to be made to injured bodies, as well as more advanced procedures such as transplants, implants, biological modifications, and twisted applications like vivisection. This skill is used in combination with Electronics skill to allow cybernetic implants.

To attempt a Medical task on a non-human is a Formidable or Impossible task, depending upon what is being attempted. If the organism is broadly similar to terrestrial animals (i.e., a carbon-based, oxygen-breathing, water-drinking creature), a Biology

roll of at least a Difficult level can enable the task. Failure of either of these rolls can indicate that there were no materials (drugs, breathable atmosphere, plasma, saline solution, etc.) that were compatible with the creature that could be used during the procedure, or that figuring out how the creature worked was impossible.

See "Healing" on page 132 for a detailed treatment of wounds. Diseases are left to the referee's discretion.

Metallurgy ***Artisan—EDU***

The character has skill in manufacturing metals and fashioning things from them. The use of this skill is very dependent on the technological background and the materials at hand. The character could be a tinker, blacksmith, weapons maker, or armorer, and could fashion alloys and make castings of them. Or in a higher technology environment, the character could forge, cast, and mill various specialized grades of steel or more advanced alloys. At the highest levels, work can be done with various experimental ceramics, crystalline metals, fluid or plastic metals, and dense or super-dense metals.

This skill can be combined with the Mechanic, Electronics, Communications and Sensors skills to fashion specific machine and electronics parts.

Meteorology ***Physical Science—EDU***

This skill allows the character to make predictions of weather and other atmospheric phenomena. Most Meteorology rolls are uncertain tasks, and become more difficult the farther in advance the prediction attempt is made. For broad predictions made of the next eight hours the task is always Easy if the character has access to a radar display or an aircraft to scout out the local weather patterns.

Muscle Transport ***Personal Transport—AGL***

Muscle Transport is a cascade skill, which indicates a character's facility with certain equipment or devices designed to speed human travel in certain environments. Cascades include:

Skates: Roller skates and ice skates (includes unpowered, muscle-driven skate boards)
Wheels: Bicycles, unicycles, etc.
Skis: Snow skis, snow boards, water skis, surfboards, boogie boards, sailboards).

This skill is usually awarded at level zero (0) after a few hours' practice to allow the character to use the device at standard difficulty using his or her Agility attribute alone. If higher levels are taken, it indicates the character's ability to negotiate unusual terrain, to make better speed with the device, or to attempt unusual feats, such as carrying heavy loads or conducting combat.

Music ***Fine Art—AGL, EDU***

This skill represents facility with musical artistic expression. At referee's and players' discretion, it can be broken up into the following cascades: Composition, Strings, Wind, Percussion, Keyboard, and Other. This skill can be used as a vocational skill, and, if one of the characters also has Song skill and a garage, you can start your own band.

Navigation ***Explore—INT***

Characters with the Navigation skill have an ability to maintain a sense of direction, read and follow maps, and use other basic navigational equipment such as a compass. This can be used for land or nautical navigation but does not include the ability to make maps or performing mapping functions.

Observation ***Perception—INT***

Observation reflects a quality of alertness and training in noticing important things in one's surroundings. It is most importantly used for visually sighting objects using the naked eye or visual enhancement devices. It is also useful for such diverse things as detecting ambushes, discovering hidden compartments in luggage, and finding one important file within an entire drawer full of them.

Painting ***Fine Arts—INT***

This skill indicates that the character has a talent for visual artistic expression. While this usually means paints on a flat surface, its use combined with other skills can provide other effects. For example, a character could use Painting and Electronics skills to create holographic art, or Painting with Computer Use skills for digital or graphics arts.

Parachute ***Personal Transport—CON***

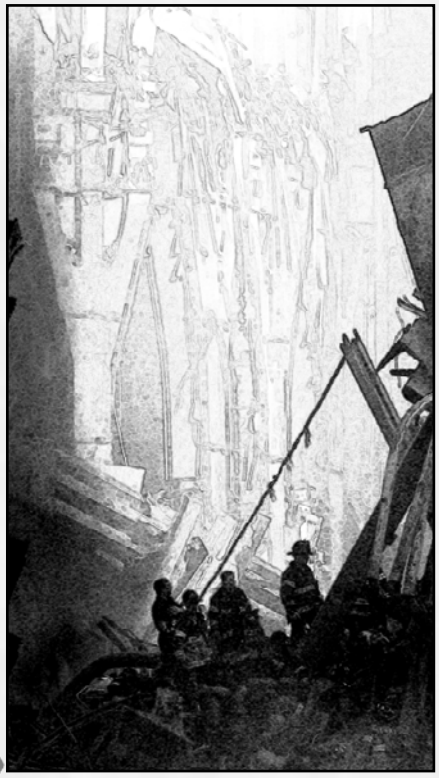
The Parachute skill confers the ability to safely descend from altitude using a parachute or personal paraglider. The character can perform other tasks involving parachuting using this skill. See the Parachute Tasks table, below.

Persuasion ***Charm, Interaction—CHR***

Persuasion, a skill at convincing other people to act as you wish them to, includes such things as haggling for

Parachute Tasks

Task	*Difficulty*
Land safely in most terrain	Average
Land safely in woods, cities, swamps, or water	Difficult
Land in a particular spot:	
with a paraglider	Difficult
with a parachute	Formidable
Rigging or checking a rig	Average
Flying a hang glider	Difficult
Repairing a parachute, paraglider, or hang glider	Average
Making a parachute, paraglider, or hang glider	Formidable



a bargain, rousing a crowd to action, and convincing an enemy to let you go. The referee will set the difficulty level based upon the specific situation and exactly what sort of a speech you make. This skill should in no way replace role-playing the interaction. However, when the referee actually makes the determination, the skill should come into play. Note that this is only used to convince NPCs; all attempts to persuade other player characters are argued by the players themselves.

Physics ***Physical Science—EDU***

Physics represents a theoretical knowledge of the workings of the universe. Although not a cascade skill, for role-playing purposes, players who choose this skill for their characters should designate some area of specialization. Examples include geophysics, astrophysics, or molecular physics. The Physics skill can be used as a vocation.

Pickpocket ***Crime—AGL***

Picking a pocket involves both misdirecting a person's attention and then surreptitiously removing an item from their person. Generally, the victim will get an Observation skill check to notice the theft. The Observation skill check is treated as an opposed test, comparing the victim's Observation skill level to the thief's Pickpocket skill level.

Pilot ***Aircraft, Space—AGL***

Pilot is a cascade skill that includes the following cascade skills:

Airship: Allows the operation of dirigible rigid and non-rigid lighter-than-air craft as well as tethered and free ballooning. These craft may derive their lift from hot air or locally buoyant gases.

Fixed Wing: Allows use of all fixed-wing aircraft, including scissor wing and variable geometry, regardless of their power source or performance. Convertible fixed-wing/rotary (tilt-rotor and x-wing) aircraft use whichever skill is appropriate to the current mode of travel. Fixed-wing VTOL/STOVL, and wing-in-ground effect (WIG) craft are also covered by this cascade.

Rotary Wing: Allows use of helicopters and autogyros. Convertible fixed-wing/rotary ("tilt rotor") aircraft use whichever skill is appropriate to the current mode of travel. Compound helicopters which still derive lift from moving rotors use this cascade, while helicopters which lock their blades in flight (x-wing aircraft) use the Fixed Wing cascade when operated in that mode.

Glider: Allows the use of gliders, sailplanes, hang gliders, and paragliders. This skill also allows the pilot to know how to find sources of aerodynamic lift, such as thermal updrafts, etc.

Interface: Allows the use in an atmosphere, including atmospheric entry, of vehicles that do not primarily rely on aerodynamic lift (although many of these designs do generate some lift). The interface is the transition zone between what is classically orbiting spacecraft and air-breathing flight. The Interface skill does not include inter-planetary vehicles (those beyond orbital distances from the earth), i.e. spaceships, which require the use of the Astrogation skill to move between the stars. Starships are those that travel between the stars using advanced technology and are not normally available to characters in ***Conspiracy Rules***.

Psychology ***Perception, Social Science—INT***

The Psychology skill allows a character to judge the motives of another character. It can be used, for example, to determine the truth or falsehood of statements another character makes. Psychology is also used to administer to mentally ill patients in order to assist them in coping with their condition and their environments. Other uses are left to the referee.

RCV Ops ***Acft, Artl, Space, Squad Wpns—EDU***

The RCV (remotely commanded vehicle) Operations skill allows the character to control weapons or vehicles from a remote location. The limitations imposed by reliance on sensors mounted in the remote vehicle, the absence of subtle sensory inputs such as motion and the time-lag built into the control transmissions make RCV Operations very difficult without training. This means that there is no default or level zero (0) skill level allowed.

RCV Operations should be combined with another skill, such as Pilot, Ground Vehicle, Robotics, Tac Missile, etc., depending upon the type of RCV that is being controlled. The firing of weapons from such vehicles works the same way, and is rolled against RCV Operations and Heavy Gun, RCV Operations and Autogun, etc., depending upon the weapons mounted on the remote vehicle.

The interpretation of sensors mounted in these vehicles does not require the use of the RCV Operations skill, as the data is sent directly to the control station and can be read there.

Recruiting ***Charm, Interaction—CHR***

The Recruiting skill allows a character to attract qualified applicants for various enterprises for which the character may be hiring, including mercenary units and empathic cells. This skill also allows the character to estimate the skill level of potential

recruits. This requires the character to have the skill in question. The character must conduct a 30-minute interview after which she must pass a Difficult [Recruiting] test. Note that characters with Recruiting cannot attempt to estimate a skill level if they do not themselves possess the skill at level 0 or higher.

Research ***Perception, Social Science—INT***

The character has a broad understanding of the techniques that are used in researching information relating to people, places, and events. This skill can be used to gain specific information the characters are looking for, or as an enabling skill to find information that will simplify another task.

Riding ***Animal Handling, Vehicle—CON***

The Riding skill indicates a broad knowledge of all sorts of animals commonly used for riding and as beasts of burden. The skill includes knowledge of their care and feeding as well as the ability to use them for rapid and efficient transportation as either personal mounts or teams pulling payloads. This skill does not confer expertise in breeding, which comes under the Farming, Genetics, and Biology skills.

Robotics ***Technician—EDU***

The character is trained in designing, building, repairing, and conducting operations with robots. Robots are self-controlling and are distinct from remotely commanded vehicles.

Most robots are fairly dumb, i.e., unable to make fine distinctions in complex situations. Robotics skill allows a character to "explain" to a robot, either verbally or via reprogramming, how to conduct specific missions.

When working on or reprogramming a robot, the Robotics skill can be used as an enabling skill for Electronics, Mechanic, and Computer tasks.

Running ***Personal Transport—CON***

The Running skill is the result of training and practice in the ability to run, either in pursuit of a target or when fleeing from the same. This skill covers all aspects of running, from sprinting short distances to endurance running across country. Characters use their Running asset instead of the Constitution attribute for constitution checks when running. See "Move" on page 108.

Scrounging ***Perception—INT***

Characters with the Scrounging skill have the ability to find man-made items such as spare parts, domestic food, ammunition, etc. When a character attempts to scrounge for a specific object, he looks in a particular place. The referee determines difficulty based on his opinion of the likelihood of the object being in such a place. The higher a character's Scrounging skill, the more likely he is to find useful things in unlikely places.

Scuba ***Explore—CON***

The scuba skill allows characters to use underwater breathing apparatus to move around under water without surfacing to breathe. To avoid a mishap while using an aqualung or rebreather is an Average task. To navigate underwater is Average. Avoiding detection from watchers on the surface is Difficult with an aqualung or Average with a rebreather. This skill is combined with the Environment skill when using deep pressure suits.

Sculpture ***Fine Arts—INT***

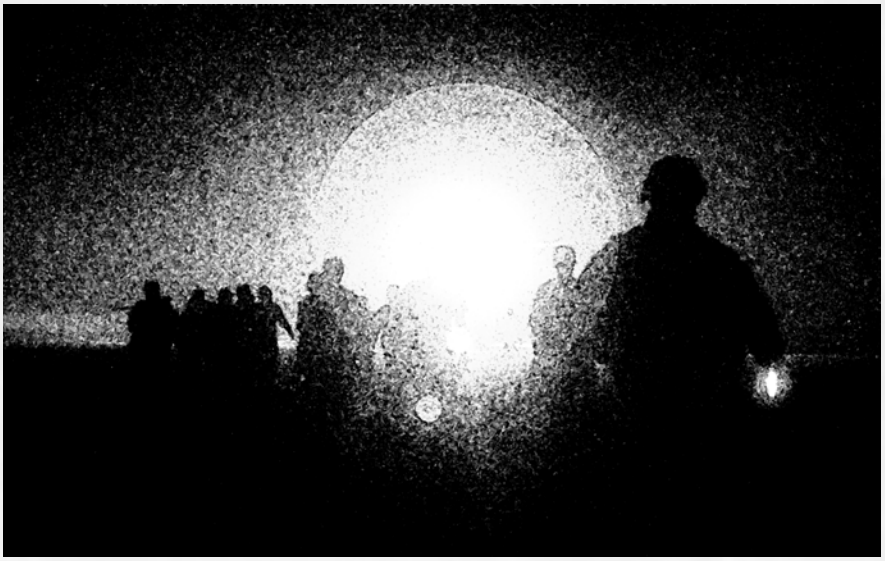
The character has developed a facility for the creation of three-dimensional pieces of art. The form of sculpture depends on the player's wishes and the character's other skills. A character with Sculpture and Mason skills would be able to carve statues from stone; one with Metallurgy might cast statuary in bronze; and one with Mechanic skill might weld sculpture from metal parts. This skill can be used as a vocation.

Sensors ***Space—INT***

The individual can operate, diagnose, trouble-shoot, and repair a variety of sensing equipment, and is familiar with interpreting their readings. This skill can be used alone to interpret the readings sent in from sensors mounted in remotely commanded vehicles or at remote outposts without the need for RCV Operations skill.

The Sensor skill is also useful as an enabling skill for the maneuvering of watercraft, aircraft, and certain ground vehicles in difficult conditions. Referees should remember that because many Sensors rolls are uncertain, the enabling function may not have actually succeeded. An aircraft pilot or submarine commander who is acting on the basis of a "some truth or no truth" Sensors roll may believe that his difficulty level has been reduced when





in fact it has not. This is how airplanes fly into the side of mountains and submarines into sea mounts or shallow bottoms.

Service ***Charm—CHR***

Service individuals have experience and ability in the care and feeding of passengers aboard ships, guests at hotels, diners at restaurants, etc. Service skill represents a general knowledge of cooking, personal care and attention, and other areas of experience which will make guests, passengers, and crew happy and content with the conditions of their stay or passage.

Ship Tactics ***Tactics—INT***

The individual has been trained in the operation of a surface ship, starship or spaceship in battle. Ship Tactics is a skill which is used by individuals who are in command of a single ship in combat. Commanding multiple ships in combat requires Fleet Tactics. Ship Tactics should specialize in surface (oceans) or space ships. The Ship Tactics skill allows die modifiers in ship combat.

Ship's Engineering ***Space—EDU***

The individual can operate and maintain spacecraft maneuver drives, jump drives, and power plants. A skilled engineer is essential for the proper operation of any starship. Engineering experience enables an individual to operate the vital drives of starships (and any craft or installation with a fusion power plant), as well as to maintain the machinery against failure.

Slug Weapon ***Gun Combat—AGL***

The *Slug Weapon* skill allows characters the use of small arms that cause damage by firing a slug of some material, usually metal. It is a cascade skill, allowing its selection as Slug Rifle and Slug Pistol. See the combat rules for further details.

Small Watercraft ***Pers Transport, Vessel—CON***

This skill allows the character to skillfully use small watercraft. These include muscle powered vessels such as canoes, kayaks, rafts, and rowboats, small sailboats, and motorboats.

This skill does not allow operation of submersibles of any size. All dry/pressurized submersibles are handled by the Large Watercraft skill, and all wet submersible vehicles are handled by Swimming.

Song ***Fine Arts—CHR***

The character is an accomplished singer. If Song is used as a vocational skill, the character is a member of a band, choir, opera company, or the like, or has a recording contract working as a studio musician.

Starship Architecture ***Engineer—EDU***

This skill indicates knowledge of how and why starships are built the way they are. Possession of this skill at level 4 or above allows characters to design their own starship modifications without having to pay the usual architect's fee, and to supervise construction and control cost overruns. Starship Architecture is primarily used as a vocational skill or as an enabling skill. It enables Ship's Engineering tasks, which diagnose or repair damage to a starship, install changes or modifications to a starship, or estimate the costs of repairs and modifications.(difficulty level set by referee).

Stealth ***Acrobat—AGL***

The Stealth skill provides the character the ability to move about without drawing notice. To move within one meter of another character at night requires a successful Average [Stealth] test. The same task becomes Difficult in daylight (assuming there is some reasonable route to approach by). Also, attempts to track or stalk a stealthy character require an opposed task check using the Stealth versus the trackers skill. When attempting to hide in shadows, the person trying to see the character makes an opposed task check using Observation versus the character's Stealth skill.

Streetwise ***Determination, Vice—INT***

Close-knit subcultures (for example, those found in the underworld or rural communities) generally reject contact with strangers or unknown elements. Streetwise expertise allows contact for the purposes of obtaining information, hiring people, purchasing or selling contraband or stolen goods, and other shady or borderline activities. It also includes knowing how to project an image that engenders respect among the locals and recognizing where to go to find what you need.

Survey ***Space—INT***

The individual is skilled and knowledgeable in the procedures used in mapping and charting star systems. Survey is a skill conferring expertise to produce accurate maps and directories of previously unexplored or uncharted stellar territory. Survey allows an

individual to accurately derive the characteristics of an unknown or unclassified world based on sensor data. It allows an individual to correctly produce maps and information about star systems as well. This skill must be used in conjunction with Sensors skill in order to provide reliable results. The Survey skill allows astronauts to map asteroids around a moon, planet, or sun.

Survival ***Explore—INT***

Possession of the Survival skill indicates familiarity with a broad variety of environmental conditions. This allows the individual to live off the land or stay alive in situations where most individuals would have trouble finding food, water, or shelter.

Survival allows an individual to find and use any tools at hand to build an adequate shelter or to locate caves or natural features which could assist in survival. Survival also allows the fashioning and use of such environmentally appropriate equipment as skis, snowshoes, protective hats, etc. Certain equipment makes Survival tasks less difficult, such as water test kits and purifiers.

Swimming ***Explore—CON***

Swimming is the ability for the character to stay afloat and move in water. Floating is a Difficult task when fully clothed; Average with little or no clothing. Each kilogram of equipment effectively reduces a character's Swimming skill level by one. If the task is failed, the character sinks and will drown within a number of combat turns equal to his or her Constitution score. Shedding clothing and/or equipment (one turn) allows a new attempt at the task.

If the task is successful, the character floats and may swim at a speed equal to the (adjusted) Swimming skill (not asset), in meters per combat turn. Characters have a Swimming endurance equal to 5 times their Constitution. Floating without clothes uses zero (0) endurance points; floating while clothed uses 1 point per minute (10 combat turns). Swimming unclothed uses 1 per minute at half speed and 5 per minute at full speed. Clothed swimmers use double that endurance and move at half that speed.

To tow another person while swimming requires a Difficult skill check and halves speed. Diving without an aqualung is a Difficult task for up to five meters in depth, or a Formidable task up to 10 meters.

Tac Missile ***Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—AGL***

The character is skilled in the use of direct fire battlefield-guided missiles. Many of these weapons require the character to continue to guide the weapon all the way to its target, correcting any divergences from its proper course. Where the missile leaves the direct observation of the character guiding it, the RCV Operation skill should be used with the Tac Missile skill.

Thrown Weapon ***Acrobat, Archaic Wpns—STR***

The Thrown Weapon specialty is a skill at throwing objects to hit other objects. This allows normal portable objects such as rocks to be used as weapons, but also allows the use of various archaic weapons such as spears, javelins, boomerangs, bolas, etc. It also allows the use of modem weapons like hand grenades.

Tracking ***Perception—INT***

Tracking is a skill used for trailing creatures in a wilderness or rural environment. It includes knowledge of prints, droppings, and habits of wilderness animals, but can be used to track human quarry as well. This skill can also be used in urban environments at higher difficulty levels. However, Streetwise skill can serve as an enabling skill in these circumstances.

In animal encounter situations, this skill enhances the chance of surprising such animals and of surviving encounters when the animals are dangerous.

Unarmed Martial Arts ***Melee—STR, AGL***

Unarmed Martial Arts allows the character to engage in melee combat without a weapon. See "Melee Combat" on page 124.

Willpower ***Determination—INT***

This skill reflects a strength of character that resists domination by outside forces and perseveres in the face of adversity. The skill can be used in several different ways.

Psionic Resistance: Willpower represents the current state of mind for a character. Willpower skill level (not asset) is automatically subtracted from the power level of all psionic attacks directed at the character (see "Psionics" on page 77).

Focus: The referee may decide that certain tasks are so long, dull, and tedious; so offensive and disagreeable; or so demanding of concentration, that the character must make a Willpower check to remain focused on the job at hand. Failure of the Willpower roll will increase the difficulty level of the unpleasant or difficult task. For example, a wounded character that attempts to perform an empathic task must first pass a successful Willpower test or suffer increased difficulty levels.

Fear and Loathing: A Willpower test is also the basis of *fear* and *panic*. The referee will require a Willpower check to be made when the character witnesses or is involved in particularly unpleasant events or when something is going to run her over. The difficulty level of the test will be decided by the referee for fear and panic. See "Panic" on page 106 and "Fear" on page 107 for more information.

Guts: Should characters want to stand firm in the face of physical, mental, and emotional adversity and still persevere, they may be required to pass a Willpower test with the task difficulty set by the referee. In general, the easier the Willpower test, the less severe the effects of failure. Such an event might also be very intimately linked to the character. For example, a character who is being held prisoner and tortured for information will have to make periodic Willpower rolls to

avoid cracking, typically once per torture "session". Success at one of these rolls means that the character will be beaten into unconsciousness without divulging anything. Outstanding Success indicates that the character proved so indomitable that his captors reassess their approach giving the character some respite or killing him out of hand knowing that they will get nothing out of him.

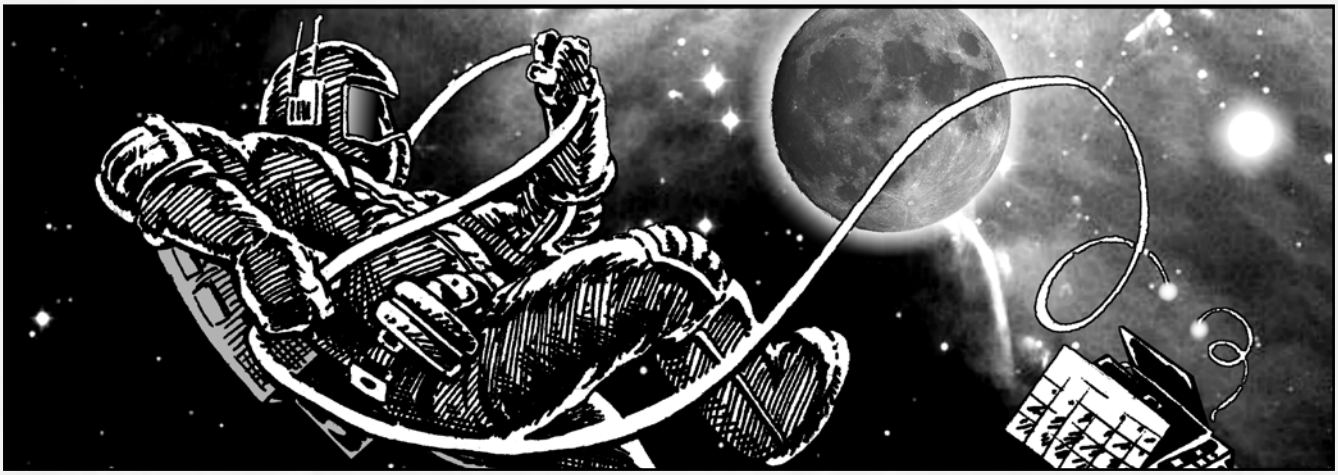
Leadership: characters may command detailed NPCs to perform dangerous or degrading assignments. In these cases the referee may wish to make a Willpower test rolls to see if the NPC resist acting. Where the Leadership skill is used to command NPCs, the referee will use an opposed test by including the NPC's Willpower asset. When commanding groups, one roll is made for the Leader and one roll per NPC. Failure indicates refusal to perform the assignment. Critical Failure indicates a possible mutiny or some other effect left to the referee.

Xeno-Biology ***Physical Science—EDU***

The Xeno-Biology skill indicates a familiarity with large-scale concepts of biology in general, and the way that these biological needs can be met by systems other than the classic terrestrial pattern (i.e., carbon-based chemistry, consuming oxygen and water). Creatures that do not follow these patterns are rare indeed, and are not covered by the normal Biology skill. A character with the Xeno-Biology skill can puzzle out the workings of one of these completely alien life forms, and eventually learn how to keep them alive, breed them, etc.

Zero-G Environment ***Space—CON***

Without gravity to hold one in place, even routine operations can be very difficult for those who are not trained for zero-G operations. When any action is attempted in zero-G, the problems of recoil and inertia can handicap persons not trained to compensate for these effects. Retaining control and orientation is an Average [Zero-G] test for routine tasks. Haste or the use of firearms designed for zero-G increases the difficulty one level, where using firearms not designed for zero-G increases the difficulty two levels. The use of hand holds, magnetic grips, or certain recoil-compensation equipment reduces difficulty by one level. This skill is typically used as an enabling skill to allow the conduct of complicated tasks in zero-G, but also allows a character to regain control if a task has caused loss of control.



Adding Skills to Your Setting

While the skills presented in this section intend to cover all the actions that will require a measure of a character's capabilities and random determination, there may be a reason for additional skills in a given campaign. For example, to add magic, advanced psionics, specialized future-science to a campaign will require additional skills. Referees are encouraged to build upon, edit, or discard the skill list given in Conspiracy Rules. For this reason the following guidance is given to referees.

Controlling Attribute

Select the controlling attribute that is closest to the type of skill that you are designing. Of note are the subtle differences between Intelligence and Education as well as those between Strength and Constitution. INT-based skills rely on the innate intellectual ability of the character. EDU-based skills rely on the character's ability to learn the knowledge associated with the skill. STR-based skills are based on the character's raw power over short durations. Skills testing the character's ability to sustain power over a longer duration is based on the CON attribute.

Default Skills

Skills that everyone in the setting should should be received at the default level (0). These skills can be used in the Background Skills table, a career skill addition, or as part of a new career skill package.



Down with Dogs
by Jason L Blair

When I was a kid, growing up, I heard the stories about albino alligators living in the sewers, clear-skinned cannibals who would pull you out of phone booths, and gargoyles that turn into living creatures after midnight. You hear those stories because those are the stories being told. The fantasies. What you don't hear is the truth. Nobody wants to talk about the real terror living in this city.

I pace the waiting room at North General, eying everyone who walks through the doors. I can't resist turning my head whenever I hear that automatic whoosh. Visitors, mostly. Workers taking a quick smoke break. The occasional patient. I look for their eyes; hunters' eyes look different. My dad talked about some of his buddies having a thousand-yard stare—something they got in the war; something my dad said he made sure he didn't get—and I think that's a good description of how hunters see the world. Always looking in the distance for the threat on the horizon.

Because there is always a threat on the horizon.

Jesse wasn't a hunter. He just played with guns and had a dim outlook on life. He knew of the monsters, wasn't a denier like all these people, but he never should have fought. You have to have a sure firm grip on whatever keeps you human if you want to hunt monsters. What's that line? About staring into the abyss and the abyss stares back into you? That's hunting.

Or maybe it's just: You lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas.

I work hard not to get that stare. That stare means something. It means the darkness broke you. It means you lost. No matter your kill score, the number of notches on your belt, hunting is about humanity. It's what you fight to save but it's exactly what the fight will take from you, if you let it.

I tried to tell Jesse that. He just laughed it off. Gave that devil-don't-care look and loaded another rifle round.

"Tell you what?" He said, with that slanted grin of his. "I ever become one of those monsters, you have my permission to take me down."

The whoosh of the automatic doors. A man holding his bloodied arm in his hands. Shop accident, maybe. Or maybe he just put his fist through a window. His big wet blue eyes tell me he's just another victim.

"Miss Dane?" A voice from behind me. Yet another person in white.

"Yes?" I say, expecting the worst.

"Your friend is Jesse Walsh, is that right?"

"That's right."

"He's been stabilized. He needs surgery though so we're waiting for a room to open up."

"Can I see him?"

"Not yet," she says. Practiced smile. "But we'll let you know when he's ready for visitors. Make sure you give your number to the desk if we need to reach you."

"They have it."

"Good." She turns without waiting. Other patients, other patients' friends and family. Life. Death. Just a job to her.

She'd probably make a good hunter.

An automatic whoosh and I cross the drop-off lanes to the parking lot. I open the trunk to my car. Everything's packed and loaded. I grab my pistol and knife and slide into the driver's seat.

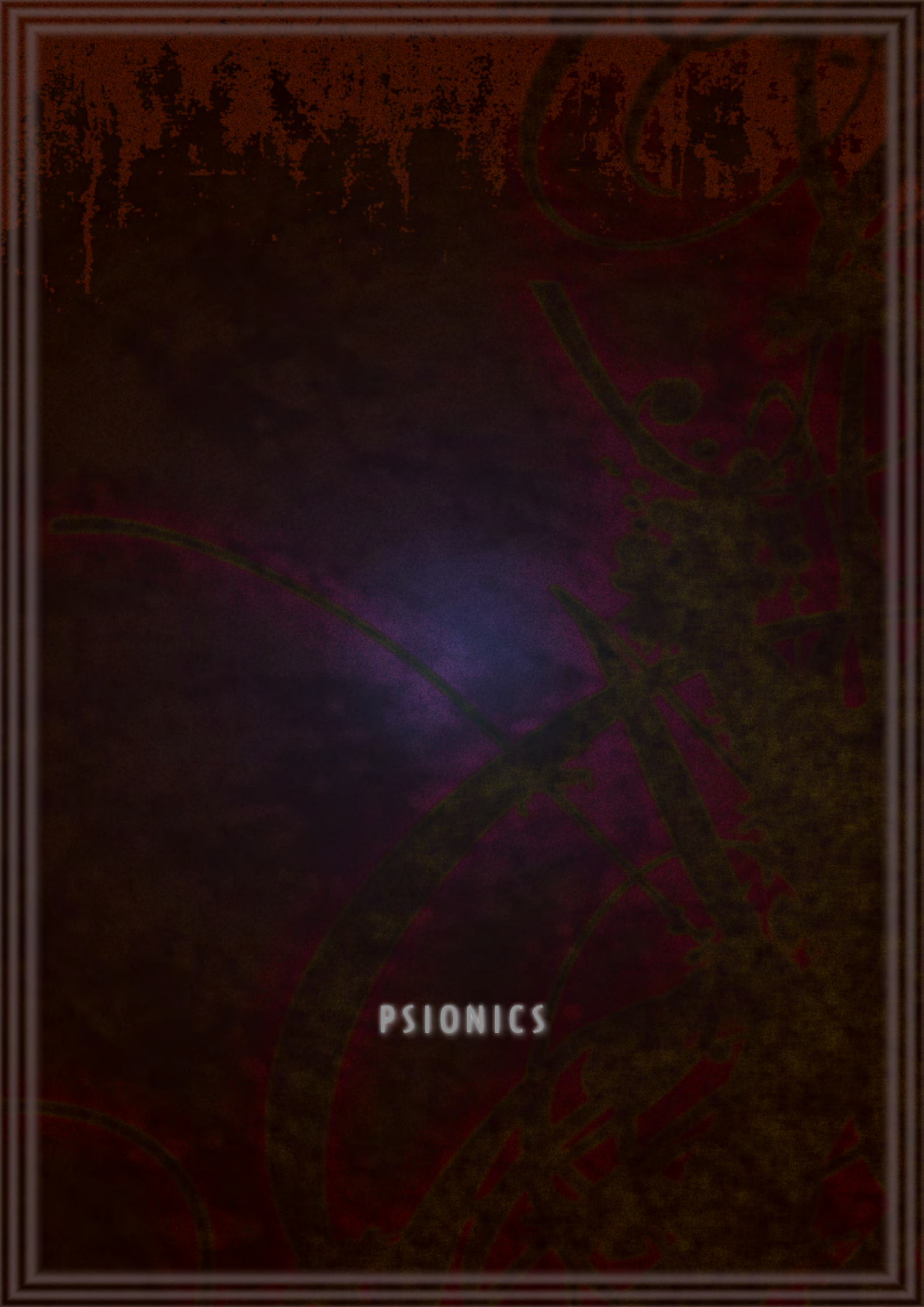
Jesse should have never become a hunter. Truth is, neither should I. But it's too late now. I back out of my stall, pay five dollars to have the man lift the boom, and head back to the highway. The first thing they teach you is: Never hunt alone. But I've no choice right now. I killed the thing that almost killed Jesse. But it doesn't matter. You take down one and a dozen more pop up. Wave after wave of Hell's finest crashes against our shores and we hunters are there to push back the tide. Hoping to keep our footing, hoping not to get pulled under.

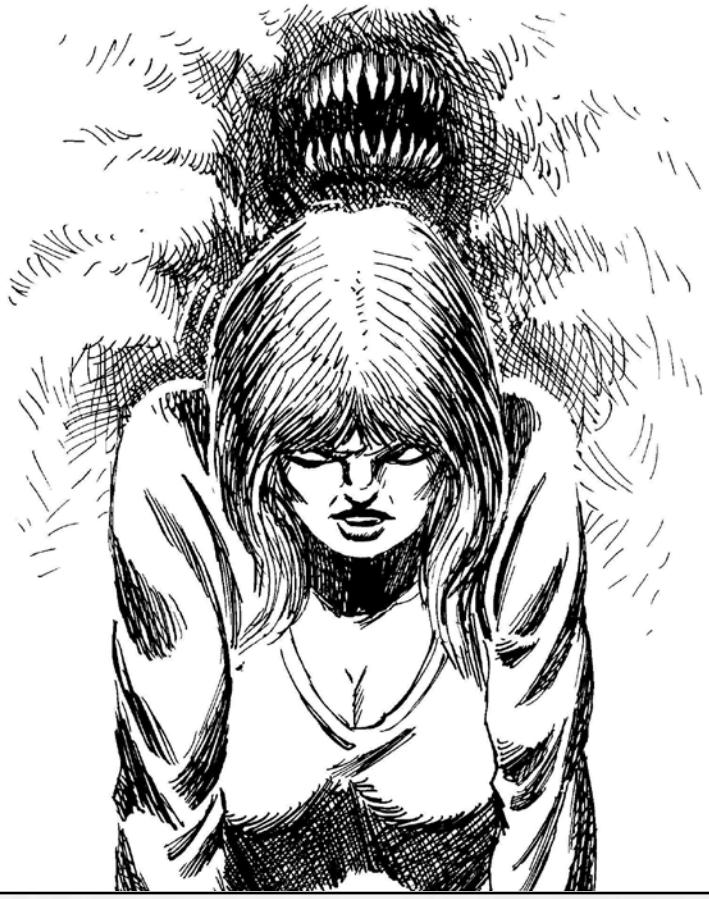
My best friend almost died tonight—he could still—and I need something to pay for that. I need a whole lot of things to pay for that.

I glance over now and then, at the cars and trucks I pass on the highway but really my eyes are on the distance. The worst threat is not behind you, or even the one you're facing right now. It's out there, in the distance.

No matter how many you kill, there is always another threat on the horizon.




PSIONICS



PSIONICS

Humanity has been living with it for all existence: obscure glimpses of other things and other places; mystical experiences with incorporeal creatures; beings with "powers" to do things not quite connected to the usual laws of cause and effect. Once called magic in a former era, these "talents" were often centered on specific persons or regions—the fakirs of the India floating above the ground, mystics of Europe healing with a touch, native American shamans consulting with spirit worlds. All of these anecdotal experiences, real and legendary, stimulate a deep belief that mankind is special—a belief that often results in religious explanations. While empathy and empathic events have been interpreted as religious in nature, the closest explanation is that provided by the Gaia Hypothesis. Gaia is the all inclusive life force, the binding energy of the universe, an immeasurable link between living things on this planet. In Conspiracy Rules this binding is manifested in humans through psionics.

Historically, psionics was the measure of an entity's sensitivity to and attunement with the natural forces of the Universe and its creatures, including humans. Psionics were previously thought limited to a person's ability to sense and influence things beyond the normal five senses: making things move without touching, hearing things without being present, seeing things without using the eyes, etc. Now modern technology has shown that empathy is the name given to a real, measurable, force that can be manipulated using the strength of a person's will, that is, their thoughts. In addition to an extension of the five senses, empathy is used to manipulate the tangible world. Empathic forces, from the mind or through machinery, can access the multi-verse, a capability formerly limited to hit or miss actions of lucky (or unlucky) empathic humans. Access to the multi-verse provides near simultaneous travel between two points in the Universe without travelling through the intervening space, appearing to travel faster than physics dictates.

What is Empathy and Psionics

Empathy refers to the force and the energy behind it. Psionics refers to abilities to manipulate the forces of empathy. As energy, empathy is tuned to a particular universe and to the beings of that universe. Each universe in the multi-verse has a unique empathic signature—multi-verses corrupted by powerful psionics have an empathic flavor quite different than that of the prime Earth dimension. As a force, individuals have an empathic signature based on the universe from which they come. Like waves upon ocean, individual psions leave their empathic signatures on the energy with which they interact.

In a manner similar to the Gaia Hypothesis, all creatures, including plants and insects, in the prime Earth dimension can manipulate empathy. It is only a matter of how much so. The referee and the players must carefully consider how empathic abilities will be used in the game context. Based

on the setting, the bulk of humanity may still deny the possibility of empathy actually working. The dread of the supernatural can still manifest as hatred against those that overtly display psionic talents, even though all living things have the ability.

Conspiracy Rules presents two extremes to players and the referee (the actual degree of psionics use is negotiable):

Mundane: Manipulating empathy is the domain of the Dark, and humans have little or no psionic skill.

Wild Talents: Empathic talents are blossoming in humans at ever-increasing rates. Clandestine schools and other organizations may have emerged to arm humans with psionic skills. While the core psionic skills are still available to specialists, specific skills giving psionic specialists drastic abilities should be made available as part of the setting. The setting should also detail career paths for these specialists.



Using Empathy

While all human characters may be empathic, not all characters have psionic skills. Any character may choose from the generic psionic skills listed below when allowed psionic skills as part of the character generation process. But only trained psions can use psionic skills—psionic skills cannot be attempted without at least a default skill level (see Default Skills on page 151). With the proper psionic skill level a character can attempt a psionic task. Psionic task resolution follows the same steps presented on page page 97 with some slight variations described in the following paragraphs. (See the Empathic Task Resolution table, below.)

Psionic Task Pre-Requisites

Certain psionic tasks, such as Empathic Healing, that affect the state of a living entity must first have an empathic link established. A character can establish an empathic link using the Human Empathy task check (or Animal, Insect, Xeno, etc.). The character must pass the Human Empathy task prior to attempting the dependent task check, such as Project Thought. An Outstanding Success result reduces the difficulty level of the dependent task check by one (1) level of difficulty (see the Psionic Difficulty table, below).

Psionic Task Difficulty

Psionic skill use is a function of character will and is entirely mental in nature. The mental condition of the psion is critical in determining psionic difficulty. psionic skill attempts are typically Easy when done under very relaxed conditions, such as in a safe and peaceful environment, and with willing subjects. In normal conditions, however, skill checks suffer a –1 difficulty shift, due to general distractions and normal resistance. In a stressful condition, such as during combat, they suffer –2 or more difficulty shifts. Difficulty shifts add, so shifts due to being wounded, fog of war uncertainties, or other psionicist or target conditions also may apply, such as an Outstanding empathic link result. The referee, of course, has the final word in determining which conditions apply to any specific psionic skill use.

Psionic Task Check

Players conduct empathic task checks the same way as other skill checks. For empathic tasks the base target number for the empathic task check is the psionic skill's asset—the PSI attribute—plus the character's psionic skill level.

Normal Task Check = Psionicist's PSI attribute + Psionic skill Level

Difficulty shifts are then applied to the target number in the normal fashion. The PC rolls 1D20 and compares it to the target number. Success occurs when the roll is less than or equal to the target number. But how successful the task was executed is determined by rolling for the attained Power Level. Success indicates the power level is rolled normally. Outstanding Success improves the power level roll. Normal failure means no effect with no negative consequences. Critical Failure indicates something bad has happened—wrong target, destroyed target, backlash effect

Psionic Task Difficulty

Condition	*Difficulty Shift*	*Base Difficulty*
Total Security	0	Easy
Relaxed	-1	Average
Normal Stress	-2	Difficult
Great Stress	-3	Formidable
Incredible Stress	-4	Impossible
Outstanding Success on Empathy Link	+1	—

Empathic Task Resolution

Action	*Description*
Step 1 Declare Psionic Actions	Characters declare psionic actions in the same way as normal actions. Players should note that some psionic skills usually require an empathic link with the target to have already been established before attempting the task.
Step 2 Define the Target Number	Controlling attribute for psionic skills is always Psionics (PSI). The asset is always PSI plus the psionic skill level.
Step 3 Set Empathic Task Difficulty	The conditions under which the character attempts the task drive the difficulty level the referee will assign. Difficulties are generally defined by the mental or emotional state of the character attempting the task.
Step 4 Check for Psionic Success	The player rolls 1D20 and compares the result with the target number—the same as for mundane task checks. But success in this roll does not mean success in the task. The results of the Power Level check can cause a 'no effect' result. Players should note an Outstanding Success or Critical Failure, as they impact the Power Level.
Step 5 Determine Psionic Power Level	To determine the effects of the psionic task the player or the referee must perform a Power Level check. The referee then interprets the roll result to describe the outcome of the task. If additional resolution is needed, for example from an Outstanding Success result, the player may have to make more rolls, such as another Power Level determination or another task check.

determined by the referee, etc. Players should note that success in this check does not mean that the target was affected. The Power Level describes that.

Psionic Success

Using the base target number for the psionicist's attribute and skill, a 1D20 is rolled to determine outcome. Players and referees should note that this roll should be done in secret by the referee. The referee should tell the player whether the task succeeded or failed, but not any extreme results.

Catastrophic Psionic Failure

When attempting the empathic task, if the number rolled is 10 or more points higher than the target value, then the player will need to roll again. As with a normal Catastrophic Failure, if the subsequent roll is not a success, then a Catastrophic Failure results. The results of a Catastrophic Psionic Failure are left to the referee, and are based completely on the context of the situation.

Outstanding Psionic Success

When attempting the empathic task, if the number rolled is 10 or more points below the target value, then the Power Level is doubled. If the number rolled is 20 points or more below the target value, then the Power Level is tripled. Theoretically, this progression will continue for every 10 points of success.

Pushing

Human psionicists have a unique empathic ability called *pushing*. Pushing their power gives them a better chance of succeeding empathic checks, but causes the neuropath specific psychological harm. Whenever a psionicist fails their Psionic skill check, they have the option of 'pushing', which involves taking damage to the brain (head location). By taking this damage, the character can perform the skill check again. Failing a push, the psionicist can try again by pushing harder. Each push attempt causes more damage to the head location. The first push attempt causes 1D6, each succeeding attempt causes a cumulative1D6 in damage, so that the second attempt causes 2D6 additional, the third, 3D6 additional, etc. Note that a third push will cause (1 + 2 + 3 =) 6D6 damage. After taking the damage, the psionicist may roll again for psionic skill success. Note that this damage is caused whether the task succeeds or fails.

Control Issues

Pushing represents a wild natural talent channeled with no control. The psionicist 'pushes' empathic energy into the situation with hopes of forcing it to work. For this reason the character has difficulty controlling their applied power. When pushing, psionicists cannot throttle-back their skill results. For example, should the result call for a target to explode, the character cannot throttle back to just blistering. (See Throttling the Power Level, below.)

Exploding Head

Should the damage taken from pushing cause a Critical Wound, the psionicist's head explodes.

Psionic Power Level

On a task success psionicists then check their attained *power level* using the procedures on page page 97. The psionic task-specific formula is reproduced below:

Psionic Power Level = Staged (1D10)
+ Psionicist's (Psionic Asset)
– Target's (Willpower Asset)

A successful task check does not guarantee an effect on the target. The psionicist may have insufficient power to cause any effects at all. This occurs when the target's asset is greater than the psionicist's plus the *staged* die roll. The effects of an Outstanding Success on the task check double the resulting power level.

Task resolution can use the empathic power level in two different ways. Sometimes it is translated point for point into a unit of measure, such as range of effect in meters, or

Power Level Table

Power Level	*Stage of Success*
≤ 1	No effect
1-9	Basic Success
10-17	Stage Two
18-27	Stage Three
28-36	Stage Four
37-45	Stage Five
46-54	Stage Six
55-63	Stage Seven
64-72	Stage Eight
73-81	Stage Nine
≥ 82	Stage Ten

number of kilograms affected, etc. At other times, it is used to determine Stages of Effect, with each nine full points equaling one additional stage beyond basic success, and each extra stage indicating another creature detected, or another sense appealed to, etc. The exact effects depend, of course, upon the specific skill being used, as explained in the individual skill descriptions.

Target resistance is captured in the target's Willpower asset. If the target's Willpower has been reduced through a Willpower Drain attack, nothing is subtracted from the power level (including the controlling attribute). Dark psionicists often will Drain the Willpower of their victims prior to the main empathic assault.

Staged D10

When computing the Power Level, the player (or the referee in secret) rolls a 1D10. This roll is *staged*, meaning that a result roll of 10 allows the player another 1D10 roll. Each roll made adds to the result. There is no limit to the number of 1D10 rolls as long as the player continues to roll a 10. For example, when checking for the attained Power Level, the player rolls a 10 and so rolls again. The second result is also a 10, so the total is 20 and the player rolls yet again. The third roll is a 7 for a total roll value of 27.

Throttling the Power Level

Players should note that the Stages of Success will manifest unless intentionally throttled. The player declares throttling prior to making any psionic skill checks. Further, area effects cannot be limited to the opposition when pushing. Therefore a psionicist's unexpectedly good die rolls when projecting fear, for example, can cause her Project Emotion attack to affect her friends.

Other Worlds & Places

The universe of ***Conspiracy Rules*** is one of innumerable prime dimensions originally spawned at the beginning of time. Earth's universe is one of those prime dimensions and is a portion of a greater meta-universe—*meta-verse* for short. The following discussion provides background to players of psionic specialists. Note that this knowledge is not generally available to characters unless they have partaken in empathic discipline training.

The Meta-Verse

The meta-verse is composed of an infinite multitude of pockets of reality. Each pocket is a dimension having its own reality complete with physical laws and existence. This reality of Earth is in one of these dimensions, the prime Earth plane. The familiar laws of physics that govern this dimension are for the most part understood by humans with the boundaries between these dimensions generally and insurmountably inflexible. While most humans have experienced only this dimension, there are rare exceptional humans and other sentient creatures that have experience or knowledge of the other dimensions that comprise the multi-verse. Psionics allow humans to experience the other dimensions of the multi-verse and bridge the boundaries between these worlds. In simple terms, the multi-verse consists of the following:

- Prime Dimensions
- Quantum Dimensions
- Elemental Dimensions
- Proto-Dimensions
- The Astral Dimension (Interstices)

Meta-Physics

A description of the meta-verse with its myriad dimensions and proto-dimensions set within the context of the Interstices is not possible using the standard three-dimensional context used in the familiar prime Earth plane. The meta-verse can be thought of as a series of bubbles floating on soapy water. Some not-well-understood turbulence has caused these bubbles (dimensions) to form within this water. The large bubbles are the prime dimensions. Smaller bubbles attached to a prime dimension are pocket-dimensions, little miniature versions of the prime

Meta-Verse Dimensions

Dimension	*Description*
Prime Dimensions	like the Prime Earth dimension.
Quantum Dimensions	Degenerate pocket dimensions relying on the focus of psionic "observers".
Elemental Dimensions	Degenerate pocket dimensions consisting of elemental forces and energies.
Proto-Dimensions	Degenerate prime dimensions where physics may be quite different than the parent prime dimension.
The Astral Dimension (Interstices)	The "interstitial" dimension within which other dimensions are contained, that is, the space between the dimensions.

dimensions and intertwined with their larger counterpart. These smaller bubbles formed at the same time as the prime dimensions and largely share physics—some, but not all— with their larger counterpart. Small bubbles can also form away from a prime dimension. These are also called pocket-dimensions, but their physics may be incompletely developed and possibly unstable. When a dimension's physics are not completely developed, the dimension is considered *degenerate*. Prime dimensions can be degenerate, but that is not usually the case since degenerate physics is a cause for breaking the dimension down into smaller pocket-dimensions. A properly skilled psionicist can move their body or their consciousness through and between these bubbles.

Quantum dimensions are like the bubble's shadow or reflection—intimately joined, very similar, but not quite the bubble. These are also formed only when a psionic observer applies their intention to it. The Interstices is the water itself between the bubbles. There is no easy analogy for the elemental dimensions except that the stuff in the bubbles is the result of capturing something different within it when it was formed. The laws of physics in the elemental dimensions are well developed along one thread, their elemental energies, but extremely less developed in other areas of physics.



The Prime Dimensions

Before the birth of time, the Interstices were a swirling sea of chaos. At some point, a fiery cataclysm gave birth to our prime dimension. Time itself had not yet been born as wars of physics were fought with our familiar laws of physics the victor, firmly established within our bubble, and Time, as a foundation of those laws, was born and marched extremely fast in its infancy. Our early universe was nothing like the one we know today. It was highly energetic and inconceivably chaotic. It was hotter than the core of the hottest star, but no stars yet existed. This primitive universe did not last long. In less than a hundred millionth of a second, causality was established, quarks were formed, and the time-space continuum collapsed to the four dimensions that we know today (three spatial and one temporal). This early turbulence caused a myriad of pocket-dimensions to form around our prime dimension—the red-headed step-children of our prime dimension. The physics in these pocket dimensions took different paths, but some where the walls between the prime and pocket dimensions were weaker took one an aspect extremely similar to the prime parent. Within our prime dimension the universe began to expand, matter began to coalesce from the chaos and stars began to form. The rest is history.

The prime dimension of Earth is self-consistent: entropy is never reversed and, for better or worse, time always marches in one direction. But Earth's prime dimension is not alone. Other prime and pocket dimensions were spawned from the primordial chaos of the Interstices. These other prime dimensions, which mathematics only begin to describe, evolved their own universes, fought their own wars of physics, and developed physical laws with little semblance to those in the Earth universe. The forge of chaos does not burn the same way twice; that is why it is chaos. This divergent evolution lead to vast differences in these alternate realities.

The differences between the prime dimensions were striking but so were the life forms that they bore. Some of these life forms, dark beings, rose to power and so dominated their universe that they began looking into ways to expand beyond. The dark beings learned of other prime dimensions, but even the most powerful inter-dimensional aliens find it difficult, if not impossible, to travel from one prime dimension to another, and when they do, their physical manifestation makes them extremely vulnerable in the new dimension—the only reason that the prime Earth dimension has not already been overrun. These dark beings prefer to influence the sentient beings to act as agents in the targeted dimension to get them to do their work for them.

Quantum Dimensions

Quantum dimensions are incomplete representations of a dimensional space-time, such as a prime dimension or a proto-dimension. They are projections or reflections of a specific parent dimension in which space and time are scaled relatively. Each prime- and proto-dimension



(such as the prime Earth plane) has a finite but very large number of potential quantum dimensions associated with it. Within these reflections, the three spatial and one temporal dimension have a different scale relative to the parent dimension representing compression or stretching along that dimension.

Quantum dimensions spring into existence only when a psionicist wills it. Once formed by the psionicist's intent, they can be maintained with any sentience giving it attention. To do so the sentience must experience the quantum dimension from within it. Once all sentient beings have departed the quantum dimension, the dimension collapses into uncertainty. Any objects left in the dimension fall through into the timelessness of the Interstices.

When a psionicist creates a quantum dimension from the potential of the multi-verse, they direct the level of stretching or compression, the scaling factor, of the map to the parent dimension's space or time. This scaling factor is relative to the time-space of the parent dimension. The amount of stretching or compression behaves a lot like quantum electron states—hence the name. Like the electron orbitals discovered by the first quantum physicists, the quantum dimensions have no in-between. This means that some quantum dimensions compress time or space by a factor of 25 and some by a factor of 50. But none compress by a factor of 30 or 40 or anything else between 25 and 50.

Player should keep in mind that the highly scaled quantum dimensions are used by more powerful and potentially hostile sentient beings. Also, the higher the distance compression, the smaller the dimension, as experienced by beings passing through it, will be, and so the higher the likelihood of encountering an entity which happens to be hanging around. So how does a being enter a quantum proto-dimension if it springs into existence when the psion wills it? The psion attaches to the one that is already in existence; or the hostile entity does so from its location. The use of quantum dimensions and their use in ***Conspiracy Rules*** is discussed under the Dimension Walk skill.

Elemental Dimensions

The proto-dimensions that empathic specialists occasionally draw upon for sorcerous effects are actually fragmentary dimensions called *elemental* dimensions. They get their name from elemental concepts, typically energies, that usually dominate their warped physical laws. The manifestation of sorcerous effects appears a lot like magic, hence these specialists are often called empathic sorcerers. The use of empathic sorcery is dependent on the game setting and skills for accessing these dimensions available to characters is detailed in game setting books.

Proto-Dimensions

Unlike the prime dimensions, the proto-dimensions were not created in the fiery explosion. Unlike quantum dimensions they are not formed by the psionicist's intent. The vast majority of the proto-dimensions were formed as the prime dimensions were tossed around in the Interstices. Like a ships on the ocean, the passage of each dimension through an interdimensional sea leaves a vast wake. In this wake—a wake made up of waves of possibility in a sea of chaos—the proto-dimensions were formed. They are irrevocably bound to the prime dimension that spawned them; like echoes of the sounds, which gave them birth. Proto-dimensions are reflections of their prime dimension's reality given form. How they get their definition, their flavor, is not understood.

Not all proto-dimensions are attached or associated with prime dimensions. It is not clear if this type of proto-dimension was once attached or not. Its prime dimension may have collapsed, it may have been formed independently, it may have lost its prime dimension association through unknown mechanics. One may never know.

The fundamental physical laws in most proto-dimensions are not always the same as those of their parent dimension. The physical laws within a proto-dimension may not be stable—their governing laws might change over time. For example, some proto-dimensions dispense with such niceties as causality. Their past is as flexible as the future and constantly in flux. In others, there is no past as we know it, much less an immutable, self-consistent one. These types of proto-dimensions are hostile to humans' mental health, since humans rely on causality and history for self-reference.

Generally proto-dimensions are difficult to explain. Many have tried to explain the proto-dimensions, but none of the models they use is completely accurate. For example, the notion that our dimension is a great sphere surrounded by a sea of tiny proto-dimensional bubbles does not explain how a psionicist walks through the dimensional barriers.

Instabilities make inter-dimensional travel a risky proposition at best, but they are only one of the dangers which face a dimension walker. The environments found in

many of the proto-dimensions are nothing like Earth's. Seas of lava, skies of chlorine, and mountains of methane ice wait to mercilessly slay the unprepared dimensional walker. As if that were not enough, the proto-dimensions are also the home of mysterious, malevolent, and powerful entities, their almost as powerful lieutenants, and often, their hordes of minions.

Types of Proto-Dimensions

Of the proto-dimensions with which humans will become familiar, there are three broad categories. These categories are provided as a rough indicator of the sophistication of the proto-dimension. They are not too tightly defined, so it is possible for an individual proto-dimension to sit in a grey area between one category and another

Fragmentary Proto-Dimensions: The fragmentary proto-dimensions are the most unnatural of proto-dimension types, and are in some senses proto-proto-dimensions. They can be quite small and are always very strange. At best, the fragmentary dimension defies most, if not all known physical laws, and typically having a single dominating characteristic with descriptions consisting of a few sentences.

Not all fragmentary dimensions are reflections of the universe in an odd medium. Fragmentary proto-dimensions do not have to resemble anything in this universe, except in the most general fashion.

There are usually no native life forms in a fragmentary proto-dimension, but occasionally they are populated by life forms of an elemental nature, or creatures that have been transplanted there from other proto-dimensions and have managed to survive, including the hapless human—or other sentient being—who has been stranded there.

Closet proto-dimensions are a subset of fragmentary proto-dimensions. They are extremely small proto-dimensions created by "pinching off" a small volume of space-time, and isolating it as its own separate "bubble." This can be accomplished only by extremely powerful psionic or technological powers, and is not something characters typically can accomplish. Such closet proto-dimensions can normally only be entered from one location, usually the point from which they were originally "pinched off". If the entrance to such a pocket proto-dimension is sealed from the outside, it makes an excellent "prison cell", because once the entrance is sealed, it cannot be unsealed from the inside. The physics of pocket proto-dimensions prevent occupants from leaving, except through the entrance, even when using the most powerful Dimension Walk skills.

Halflands: The halflands are like fragmentary proto-dimensions, but a little more developed in terms of mirroring their parent's physics. They are a better simulation of their prime-dimensional parent's reality than the fragmentary dimensions, but even so, they would never be confused with their parent universe. Halflands are narrow in scope, typically, and quite often exhibit a bizarre form of reality. These sub-real and often surreal qualities will remind many characters of scenes from their nightmares.

There are often life forms to be found in the halflands but they are rarely sentient. Often they are mindless killers (either living or otherwise), and of a form suitable to the physics of their proto-dimension. Other times native life forms are little more than replicas of some Earthly life form, an exact duplicate physically but somehow degenerate. Occasionally other, alien life forms have moved in and proceeded to dominate the environment. These invaders can be sentient or not, but have been thoroughly assimilated. See Assimilation below.

Alien sentients treasure halflands for use as bases from which to stage operations in the prime Earth dimension. Often a particular halfland will be selected for its "assimilation" effect.

Splinterlands: The splinterlands are consistent, permanent domains representing what can be a very refined simulation of its parent dimension. They are still inferior to their prime dimension in terms of consistent reality, but are as close of a simulation as can be found in the proto-dimensions. The accuracy of this simulation causes the splinterlands to be the most real of the proto-dimension types. While the other types of proto-dimensions can be thought of as little more than a weird environment, the splinterlands are usually as well developed and complex as their parent prime dimension.

Some are so real they can be confused with a particular location or environment. For example, a splinterland proto-dimension whose parent is the Earth dimension will have terrain very similar to that found on Earth and perhaps small life forms looking surprisingly similar to Earth-based wildlife.

Splinterlands, instead of being defined by their environment only, as the other types of proto-dimensions tend to be, are often defined by the events that have occurred there. These events usually involve strong psionic events in the proto-dimension whose effects remain as a kind of residue. The physics of the proto-dimension often changes to adapt to this residue.

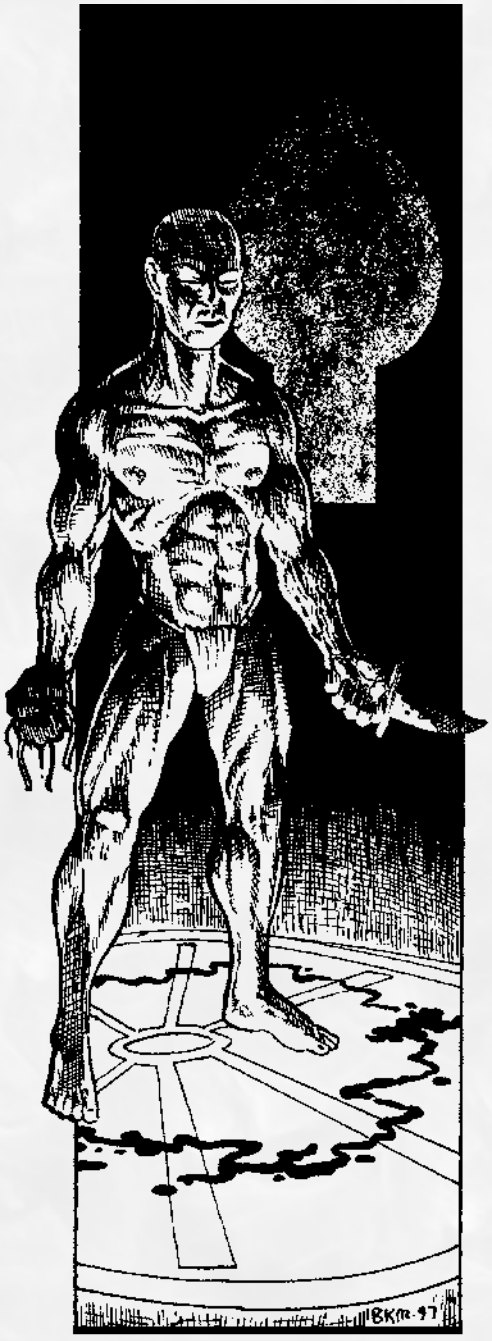
Many splinterlands have been discovered, conquered, and exploited by the Dark Ones and their minions. The vast majority of splinterlands "near" the Earth dimension were once primeval Earth-like places—forests, jungles, and prairies—until the hostile aliens found them. The remarkable splinterlands are the ones which have not been overrun by these alien beings.

The Astral Dimension: Interstices

The Astral Dimension, also called the Interstices, is the remains of the sea of disorder, which birthed the dimensions. At the end of time, when all dimensions cease to exist, the Interstices will remain. The Interstices permeate all of the dimensions, i.e., the Interstices and the dimensions coexist in the same metaphysical volume. The school of the mystics claims the Interstices are to the multi-verse

what the empathic self is to the physical self. The mind-based schools claim that the Interstices are a projection of empathic reality, versus physical reality, and when beings enter the Interstices, only their empathic projection is real. Travelers taking their physical bodies into the Interstices lose their internal reference to their physical self and suffer all the ill effects that may cause. Astral Travelers leave their bodies in a source dimension and maintain their physical reference through the use of their Silver Cord. Physical-reality based travelers without this physical reference eventually go insane.

Not really a dimension, the Interstices permeate all that exists, the dimension of Earth, other prime dimensions, and the myriad proto-dimensions. Interstitial travelers can view locations within any dimension—given the right conditions—including proto-dimensions. These locations appear to interstitial viewers as ethereal, shadowy overlays on the gray nothingness that is the Interstices. Mystics refer to the Interstices as the Astral Dimension or Plane, as the medium for their astral travels. The difference between astral travel and interstitial travel is the way in which the Interstices are experienced. When Astral Traveling—using your consciousness only to enter the Interstices—characters perceive the Interstices as a vast star-filled sky full of bright lights and dark shadows—a mystic realm. Interstitial traveling involves actually moving the physical body into the Interstices using Dimension Walk for example. When entering the Interstices in this way, the dimension appears as a grayed-out shadow world with a decided lack of sensory input.



This model of the meta-verse makes the Interstices seem like the stuff between the dimensions, prime or proto-, but they actually overlap all the meta-verse, simultaneously coexisting everywhere. The Interstices can be thought of as the glue holding the meta-verse together, and make up the chaotic sea from which prime dimensions, the proto-dimensions -- quantum and elemental—are formed. They also are the chaos that receives back the dimensions when they are destroyed.

The Interstices are not a proto-dimension in themselves, but their physics is similar enough to allow characters to physically travel to them, often to their doom—the Interstices are not kind to humans. Whether traveling mentally or physically, no interaction with the observed dimensions is possible.

Portals, Gates, & Tunnels

Access to other dimensions is through inter-dimensional travel using one of three principal means, which differ slightly in operation:

Portals: Portals are psionically-powered doors between dimensions. Psions create portals using their talents and manipulate them to form bridges between two dimensions. Machines or other alien mechanisms that can manipulate psionic energies can also open portals. Portals can be used for various purposes and are the basis of gateways. Portals begin life as sub-microscopic points—discontinuities— and require power to be enlarged and manipulated—psionic power—through psionic beings or technological means. In both cases a sentient intent is needed to make the potential portal manifest. For psionic beings this is the crux of the dimension walker skill. Portals will revert to their microscopic size (actually point singularities) when psionic power is removed. Note that once these singularities have been created, they can never be destroyed—at least no way of doing so has yet been discovered.

Gateways: Gateways are powered portals that have been anchored to both dimensions. Gateways operate by directly connecting two dimensions with portals through the use of dimensional *anchors*. The portal is the same type of portal used in the Dimension

Walk skill. To power the portal, an energy source is connected to one anchor on one side of the portal or the other. A psionicist then opens the portal in the gateway. Once opened, the gateway remains open without the psion's concentration until closed or sealed. To use a Gateway, one simply walks through the portal in much the same way one does with the Dimension Walk skill.

Tunnels: Another very rare means of inter-dimensional travel is the tunnel. Tunnel is a misnomer as most *tunnels* are large and appear unbounded. The name refers to the breach between two dimensions, where the realities actually overlap. It also is based on where they were first encountered—underground, literally in a tunnel. Physical travel in one direction takes the traveler to one dimension and travel in the other direction leads to the other dimension. The tunnel is permanent like a gateway and can only be closed with a release of overwhelming energy—like a megaton explosion.

Tunnels are formed when the walls between two dimensions are "worn thin". That is, innumerable portal discontinuities (created and closed portals) have collected into one region, where they merge and open into another dimension. Travel across the boundary in this case may not even be noticeable. They usually occur naturally wherever the meta-verse boundaries have taken a beating—large numbers of sentient beings suffering, psions generating large numbers of portals, etc.—where opening portals is much easier and the natural (or unnatural) psionic energies attract portal discontinuities together. Travelers are in one dimension one minute and in another the next and may not be able to tell the difference, as the region around the boundary usually adapts to its neighbor continuously so that a smooth transition takes place.

A variant of the tunnel is the *trap-door*. The trap-door tunnel allows passage in only one dimension. After passing through it is impossible to step back to the original dimension. Such tunnels are indistinguishable from normal tunnels. Trap-door tunnels can trap non-psionic dimension walking beings in other dimensions.

The Properties of Proto-Dimensions

Humanity has, for all its existence, lived on the Earth and has trouble imagining things being very different. A few trips into the proto-dimensions tend to correct this deficiency. Out in the multi-verse, assumptions held absolute, simply are not.

Quantum Dimensions: Quantum dimensions share many of the same characteristics as their parent dimension. Both dimensions will have the same discontinuity and physics shift, if any. Environmental effects and assimilation will be the same in quantum dimensions as they are in the dimensions to which they are linked.

Size and Shape: Dimensions come in all shapes and sizes, but their actual extents and their perceived extents are not always the same. Some seem almost as large as a universe, with planets, stars, and even galaxies. Others are as small as a broom closet. In general, prime dimensions are spatially infinite in one or more dimensions. For example, the Earth prime dimension is infinite in three dimensions (as far as we can tell).

Curvature: Many dimensions (especially proto-dimensions) are infinite in one or more dimensions and often feature a curvature where it curves back on itself. This curvature is not part of the terrain, but part of the spatial fabric instead.

One can consider our dimension to be a two-dimensional plane (that is, no curvature). Then other dimensions would have planes shaped into other geometries: spheroid, cylindrical, toroid, etc. While the Earth's prime plane is a plane, its extents are infinite. Some proto-dimensions have discrete boundaries, for example a square, a disk, etc. This is just an analogy since human observers experience three dimensions.

Some, if not most, proto-dimensions have no dimensional space at all, or geometries so alien to the human mind, that just experiencing it is fatal to mental health.

Dimensional Barriers: Dimensions with finite spatial extents that do not have curvature have boundaries at their edges. These boundaries or *barriers* can literally be walls. Depending on the contained reality they can appear as black or reflective walls or manifest in other forms.

There are walls that appear to be made of a grey, rubbery plastic which will yield a centimeter or two if pushed, but are impervious to damage. Others appear to be made of stone or rock and can be chipped at but never penetrated. Mining for some distance into the wall will return the miners to a different part of the dimension. Still others have a quasi-organic alien look and will ooze bilious fluids from any cut or hole made in them. Whatever the form for the barrier, it is physically impossible to cross.

Correspondence and Skewed Travel

Correspondence and skew impact travel between dimensions. Correspondence is the mapping of one point in a dimension to a point in another dimension. Correspondence with a quantum dimension features discrete scaling and has no associated uncertainty. Dimension walking to a quantum dimension is not skewed. It depends on the relationship between the two dimensions. Skew is the distance and direction from the mapped point at which the portal actually opens. Skew can be intentional or not and is used by dimension walkers to control where they come out in the target dimension. Skew is a result of moving between the dimensions and is based on quantum uncertainty.

Discontinuity

Discontinuity represents the probability potential that the dimension shares the same reality basis as the Earth prime dimension. The higher the discontinuity, the larger the difference is with the Earth prime dimension. This quantity



is based on several factors, including probabilistic distance from the Earth prime dimension and external factors driving the dimension closer or farther from Earth's dimension.

Generally, the higher the difference in dimensional discontinuity, the harder it is to open a portal between the dimensions. See the Dimension Walk skill for more information.

A dimension's discontinuity can shift due to an alien invasion or subsequent departure. It can also shift as a result of other catastrophic events. For example, the Earth prime dimension Big Bang drastically changed its discontinuity. Discontinuity ratings for prime dimensions are always very high since it is very unlikely (not probable) that they ever shared a common reality basis. It is for this reason that the Dark Ones seek alternate paths between the prime dimensions through proto-dimensions.

Physics & Reality

Each dimension has its own reality, complete with physical laws, objects, and relationships. These realities are distinct and, within the dimension, immutable—take gravity for example. As objects pass from dimension to dimension, they are operated on by the dimension's reality. The objects *adjust* to the new dimensional reality. What happens to the object and how is up to the destination reality. This adjustment is called *assimilation*.

Assimilation

Physical laws are properties of the dimension's reality, not of the objects in that reality. Assimilation is the process by which objects and beings from one reality adjust themselves to another reality. PCs and their gear will tend to retain the influence of Earthly physics for a time, but if they stay in the other dimension long enough they will become assimilated with that dimension's physics. It will probably not be a pleasant experience or, in many cases, a survivable one.

Inter-dimensional Travel

The most convenient method of travel between the dimensions and Earth is by means of the Dimension Walk skill, but there are other methods. Before diving right in, the referee should understand some of the historical background behind the skills and methods of inter-dimensional travel.

The First Dimension Walkers

Empathic abilities in humans seem to ebb and flow with the ages. In some ages empathic ability is very strong, in others it is non-existent. Through the history of mankind, reports of travels to "other worlds" are quite common. The myths of other worlds, such as the Land of Faerie, Paradise, etc., each with their required means of getting there, are offset with myths of the less attractive domains, Jotunheim, Hades, etc. Tales abound of the dominance over mere mortals by supernatural beings, often with their own domains, the giants of Jotunheim, Hades the god, and the Lucifer of Hell.

Early travelers to these dimensions most likely got there by accident, by passing through natural portals or other gaps in the inter-dimensional fabric. Most travelers were trapped in those domains or were killed instantly as they crossed over into hostile dimensions. In mankind's primeval past, disappearances like that were a part of life.

Other Worlds

Those catching glimpses of other worlds shared their experiences and were either revered as divine purveyors of truth or were condemned as devil-worshipping spewers of lies. Occasionally circles of believers would develop around these anointed. Cults, religions, even whole societies rose and fell on their beliefs in the other worlds. Over time events became the seeds of legends. Many tales were told of those who were whisked away by magic spells



carried off to the realm of the gods, or kidnapped to serve in the faery Seelie Court.

Mystic traditions formed around some of these inter-dimensional travelers. Their followers would undertake vigils and vision quests in hopes of seeing "the lands beyond." Of course, in most cases, neither the voyagers nor their followers had the power to breach the inter-dimensional barriers, and so they never saw the proto-dimensions again. Sometimes these mystic schools would develop into primitive religions, and the proto-dimensions would provide the images for heavens and hells.

Only very rarely would the early dimensional walkers have the empathic abilities necessary to return to the other dimensions. More rarely still, they were able to gather a few followers who were also able to dimension walk. Shamanic traditions routinely tell of travel to other worlds.

The First Darklings

Just as the first dimensional travelers leaked into the dimensions, there were things—sometimes humanlike, sometimes not—that seeped into this universe. In recent times, these interlopers have a difficult time entering the dimension of Earth. For reasons not completely understood the pathways to Earth were almost completely closed to them. But in the past, the ability for otherworld denizens to enter the prime Earth dimension was not as difficult. Hence the legends of Unseelie fae, monsters of legend, mythical creatures, etc.

Humanity's encounters with these extra-dimensional beings were rare, but not soon forgotten. Passed down from generation to generation these events became the basis of a body of myth and legend. After several generations of telling, there was very little of the original truth left in these tales. Some were modified by early poets and storytellers to make a better tale, such as the story of Beowulf or the tale of St George and his battle with a dragon. Others were commonly used by various religions to illustrate some moral lesson. The form that alien interlopers can take reminds us so much of the devils and monsters of primitive legend because they *are* the devils and monsters of primitive legend. The monsters of our myth and our nightmares are dimly viewed reflections of an unspeakably horrible reality.

Some psionic schools of thought hypothesize that Earth's discontinuity relative to other dimensions allows alien sentients entrance to this dimension. But psionic schools believe that the dimensional fabric is weak due to a degradation in the human psyche—effectively that we invited these things in.

Dimension Walkers Now

The current dimension walkers have it far worse than their predecessors. The victory of science over religion has strictly defined what is and is not real. Modern tales of visiting other worlds are dismissed as careful delusion, chemically-induced hallucination, or pure fabrication. Descriptions of travel to other dimensions were dismissed out of hand. The victory of science is so complete that even religious institutions that should be more open minded scoff at the stories a dimension walker might tell.

Generic Psionic Skills

Psionic Skill Cluster	*Base Difficulty*
Foreboding (PSI)	Easy
Human Empathy (PSI)	Easy
Animal Empathy (PSI)	Easy
Computer Empathy (PSI)	Easy
Empathic Healing (PSI)	Average
Project Emotion / Thought (PSI)	Average
Dimension Walk (PSI)	Difficult
Willpower Drain (PSI)	Difficult

But far worse than merely being disbelieved or condemned of being in league with the devil is the possibility of being overheard by the agents of the Dark Ones— its minions. Minions will recognize the traveler's descriptions, and their Dark Master will not suffer the dimensional traveler to live.

Learning Psionic Disciplines

Characters can acquire the generic psionic skills presented in ***Conspiracy Rules*** the same way as the mundane skills. During character generation and during play—for example, in the down time between sessions.

Psionic Skills

Psionic skills come in two flavors: generic and specialist. The generic psionic skills are available to all characters with a PSI rating greater than zero and who have the opportunity to learn them during character generation or during play. Specialist psionic skills are defined in the game setting and are best described in the setting book. Their acquisition and improvement by characters is defined in the game setting as well.

Generic Psionic skills

Generic psionic skills are listed under the Empathy cluster in the skill lists. They include the psionic skills shown below.

Foreboding ***Psionics—PSI***

The Foreboding skill is the ability to receive impressions of events before those events actually take place. Sometimes this precognition happens days before the events occur, while other times, it is merely a second's worth of warning. Often such prescience manifests itself as a dream, although it is just as likely to be a waking hunch. The exact results are left to the referee's discretion, based upon story situation and the Power Level of the Foreboding task result.

Human Empathy ***Psionics—PSI***

Characters using the Human Empathy skill just seem to have 'a way' with people. The Human Empathy skill allows a character to perceive the mental and emotional state of other humans. This sense of another's wellbeing usually manifests itself as a 'gut' feeling or mental flash of inspiration, and can be used to better understand their desires or emotions.

What the referee reveals from this link depends on the attained Power Level. Basic success reveals the presence and basic emotional state of one person within a sphere centered on the sensing character and with a radius, in meters, equal to the character's attained power level. Each additional Stage of Success allows the empathic character to improve that information as follows:

- The radius of the sphere can be doubled for each allocated Stage of Success.
- An additional person can be sensed for each allocated Stage.
- The level of mental activity can be increased per Stage of Success, proceeding from emotional state, to surface thoughts, to deeper thoughts.
- Any combination of the above.

Note that the referee may impose additional levels of difficulty based upon specific situations.

Animal Empathy ***Psionics—PSI***

The character has always had the ability to care for and get the best from animals. The Animal Empathy skill is an additional 'sense' that allows a character to perceive the mental and emotional state of animals. It is not as such an ability to 'scan' an animal, as it is rather a 'gut' feeling about what the creature's current state of mind is, or what is foremost in the creature's mind. Similarly to Human Empathy, the information the referee gives to the psionicist is dependent on the attained Stage of Success.

Computer Empathy ***Psionics—PSI***

The character has always understood technology—no, I mean <u>really</u> understood. The Computer Empathy skill represents a character's ability to 'sense' the flow of data within a computer or computer network. Using this ability allows the character to react more quickly and smoothly to changes in the data flow, making computer tasks much easier. The following Stage descriptions are cumulative:

<u>Basic</u> success means the psionicist can sense the interior workings of the single computer that is being touched, revealing any interior damage or any problem areas in its information flow.

<u>Stage Two</u> success allows the character to empathically 'read' any data the computer is accessing without looking at the display, and which lowers the difficulty rating of all computer tasks by one level.

<u>Stage Three</u> allows the character to sense the interior workings of any one computer to which her own is connected, or to 'read' all data directly accessible by the computer being touched, even data that is not presently being processed.

<u>A Stage Four</u> success means the character can 'read' any data being accessed by a computer that is in communication with the one being touched.

<u>Stage Five</u> allows the character to empathically 'read' data stored

within a distant computer connected through a network.

Stage Six means the character can perform computer tasks at two levels of difficulty lower (i.e., +2 levels) than normal.

Empathic Healing ***Psionics—PSI***

The character has a recuperative effect on those around them. The Empathic Healing skill represents a character's ability to improve the healing rate of both oneself, and their companions. This is not the ability to instantly repair physical or mental damage, but rather mitigate the effects such damage has on recovery of the injured. It is likely that a character with Empathic Healing will also have a similar level of skill in Human Empathy, as this allows them to be better 'attuned' to those they are attempting to help.

The empathic healer must first establish an empathic link with the victim using the appropriate 'Empathy' skill, such as Human or Animal Empathy. Empathic Healing allows characters to improve the healing rate for wounds they have taken. Basic success lowers a wound's healing time by one day, and each additional Stage of Success further lowers that time by another day to a minimum time of one hour. Only one Empathic Healing test can ever be performed for each wound level and location. If an Empathic Healing test on a wound is a failure, then that wound cannot be empathically healed by that psionicist. Another empathic healer could try, though.

Project Thought ***Psionics—PSI***

The Project Thought skill allows the character to communicate their thoughts to another empathic sentience. After establishing an empathic link, a successful Project Thought task check allows the psionicist to instill thoughts or images into others' minds. While this skill doesn't easily allow one to intentionally impart information to another person or animal. The ability provides the intention behind the mental words to be transmitted. It is likely that a character with Project Thought skill levels will have a similar level of skill in Human Empathy, as this allows them to be better 'attuned' to those they are attempting to contact.

Project Thought requires a pre-established empathic link in order to be effective, using Animal Empathy for animals and Human Empathy for people. Only simple thoughts may be communicated to animals ("climb the tree" or "attack the man to the left" for example). With human targets, the amount and quality of information communicated depends upon the power level of the empathic character's attempt.

Basic success means that a single, simple sentence may be communicated (as with animals).

Stage Two success allows the psionicist to project a ghostly (semi-transparent, two-dimensional) vision.

Stage Three makes this vision opaque and three-dimensional.

Stage Four adds auditory hallucination.

Stage Five makes any hallucination appeal to all senses.

Stages Six through Ten successes allow the psion to exert an increasing level of control over the target, eventually making the target behave like a puppet.

Players should note that when the target's Willpower level reduces the power level of a Project Thought attempt to zero (0) or less, the target will recognize the thoughts as originating from someone else. Players should also note that some alien creatures achieve significantly better results on low empathic power levels when Project Thought is part of their intrinsic nature.

Psyche Surgery: This is not a cascade skill of Project Thought; it is a *use* of Project Thought, which when blended with Psychology provides psions a way of treating a target's psychological problems where they live—plunging deep into the subconscious to help victims solve their own mental mishaps. The Psyche Surgeon makes herself known in the subject's subconscious, and take such subjects into the ultimate "role-play". Together the subject and the psion traveling through the murky corridors of the subject's *id* to confront the horrors that lurk there. This practice can be used to treat mental illness, catatonia (such as leading a



lost mystic back to conscious control), phobias, and emotional disturbances. It cannot help purely physical ailments such as brain damage or epilepsy.

Psyche Surgery is used in the same way as Psychology, but is much faster. With this skill, psionicists use their Human Empathy to go to a subject's subconscious, then use an average of the Project Thought and Psychology skills to help cure a subject's problem. The difficulty of the skill test depends on the severity of the problem and the amount of ego identification the subject has invested in it (all negotiated by the affected player and the referee). For instance, to cure a person of claustrophobia, a psionic psychiatrist builds a mental scenario of enclosure, and helps the patient defeat it. The mental experience of this success strengthens the patient's resolve and self-confidence, and drains away the fear. This would be an Average [(Project Thought + Psychology) ÷ 2] test.

On the other end of the scale, curing a psychotic paranoid megalomaniac (like Adolf Hitler) would require digging deep into the patient›s memories, personality and childhood, and would take many lengthy sessions of Difficult: [(Project Thought + Psychology) ÷ 2] tests, since the patient's self-image is literally built on delusions. A successful treatment would occur through constructing a different personality for the subject. The difference between Psyche Surgery and Hypnosis is that Psyche Surgery assists subjects to form their own opinions and permanent emotional patterns; Hypnosis is faster and more brutal, impressing foreign thoughts on the subject's subconscious. However, Hypnosis can be used to compliment Psyche Surgery, particularly in rough cases. Psyche Surgery in the hands of enemies can be used for evil purposes being as frighteningly effective for brainwashing.

Project Emotion ***Psionics—PSI***

The Project Emotion skill allows a character to use an empathic link to instill emotions in other creatures. In order to use this skill, the psionicist must first establish an empathic link using either Animal Empathy for animals, or Human Empathy for humans, etc.

The success level of the contact established serves as a limiter for the quality of emotion projection. Basic success with this skill means the target must pass an Easy [INT] task check to avoid acting out the emotion, such as running or cowering if frightened, arguing or fighting if angry, etc. Each stage of success beyond basic increases the difficulty of the target's Reasoning test by one level.

Players should note that similarly to Project Thought when the target's Willpower reduces the power level of a Project Emotion attempt to zero (0) or less, the target will recognize the emotions as originating from someone else. Players should also note that some sentient aliens achieve significantly better results on low empathic power levels when Project Emotion is part of their intrinsic nature.

Dimension Walk ***Psionics—PSI***

Psions typically use Dimension Walk to travel between locations that are geographically far apart (including other planets) or to enter other dimensions or proto-dimensions. With this skill psionicists can create portals of varying duration, depending on the quality of their attained Power Level. In every case, the portal is centered upon the character that opens it. Opening a portal requires concentration; so that if



Dimension Walk Detection

Situation	*Task Difficulty*
Dimension Walk same dimension	Average
Extended Dimension Walk in the same dimension	Difficult
Dimension Walk to another dimension	Difficult
Extended Dimension Walk to another dimension	Formidable

Situation: The farther and longer you go the more impact it has on the dimensional fabric and the more noticeable it is. The term "same dimension" indicates a portal was opened to a Quantum Proto-Dimension to travel to another location in the dimension the psion starts in. The term "another dimension" indicates that a portal to a non-Quantum proto-dimension was opened. This case applies to all instances of interaction with the target dimension where information is transferred to the psion: actual transfer, observing, or other interaction.

Task Difficulty: the difficulty of a Dimension Walk task check that the psion must pass to avoid being detected. The referee implements the effects that detection has on any alien sentiences in the area.

the character is surprised, or if he takes damage during the Phase in which he tries to open the portal, he must roll an Average [Willpower] task check to proceed. If successful, he can then attempt to open the portal.

Basic success brings into existence a portal just large enough for the creator, who is instantly drawn into it.

Stage Two success allows the portal to be held open for one full Combat Phase after the creator passes through it.

Stage Three success allows the portal to be held open for two full Combat Phases after the creator passes through it.

Stage Four allows the creator to hold the portal open for a number of Combat Phases equal to their Dimension Walk skill level (not asset).

Stage Five through Nine result or better doubles the number of Combat Phases that the creator can hold the portal open, i.e. their Dimension Walk skill level (not asset). For example, a Stage Seven result allows the creator to hold the portal open for a number of Combat Phases equal to 2 x 2 x 2 x Dimension Walk skill level (i.e. 8 x Dimension Walk skill).

Stage Ten success allows the creation or destruction of a permanent portal (anyone may pass through a portal that remains open).

No user of Dimension Walk can enter, look into, or otherwise observe or manipulate a proto-dimension unless the user is familiar with that proto-dimension. This means that the user must either have been taken to that proto-dimension by someone or something else, or a complete enough psychic impression must have been transferred to the user by means of Project Thought or a similar empathic means. One visit is enough, and the visit can be voluntary (during empathic training) or involuntary (kidnapped by minions, etc.). The user must remain at least five seconds in the proto-dimension in order to gain a sufficient psychic impression to be able to return.

Although human psionicists primarily use Dimension Walk for 'rapid transit', they use it sparingly—at least the ones that are still alive—because opening portals draws the attention of powerful sentient aliens. With each use of the Dimension Walk skill, the player must also roll to avoid detection by an alien menace (see the Dimension Walk Detection table).

Willpower Drain ***Psionics—PSI***

Humans with full mental faculties can be very hard to attack and subdue with empathic attacks. The Willpower Drain skill is an attack on the mental resistance of the target. Once the resistance is lowered sufficiently, the target is then susceptible to follow-on empathic attacks. The normal opposed empathic task is used to determine the attained power level. The Stage of Success is the amount by which the Humanity Stress level is lowered. Once at level zero (0), the target adds no resistance to the power level check.

Basic Success: the attack is not detected.

Basic Failure: the attacker must wait for a number of hours before trying again, typically 1D6 hours. To detect the attack, the target must pass a Difficult [Willpower] test.

Outstanding Success: double the power level per the normal rule.

Critical Failure: attacker must wait for much longer before trying again (1D6 days) and the target senses the attempt.







All Fold into One
by Jason L Blair

Nick's fingertip bounces off his arm, tap-tap-tap*, like the nervous tic of a teenager waiting for his prom date. The veins throb, aching for a fix; little dots speckle the creases of his gangling arms. One of the dots, puffy and red, shows the early signs of infection. His eyes, turned upright toward a dark corner of the street, flicker like a poorly-seated incandescent bulb. His foot, as spastic as his hand, has worn a half-moon depression into the dirt-caked earth. Every time he thinks about tipping back in the plastic lawn chair, he stops himself. Even through the haze, he knows he'd just fall over.*

The boy's been clean for three days. Involuntary. A lifetime to a user. His buddy, Trip—his actual name—went out sixty-eight hours ago. "I'll get it," he said. "Sit tight. I'll get it."

Sixty-eight hours ago. Nick hasn't seen him since.

Short, controlled breaths. Nick closes his eyes, just for a second, before the image of teeth force them open again.

He remembers. He remembers Trip in the doorway, this is the house on Crescent where they were staying. Trip was in the doorway, it was the afternoon but the sun was on the other side, coming through the western windows, and the man was shoving a fistful of cash into his pockets.

"I'll get it," he said. Nick remembers. "Sit tight."

He started sweating, not from sick but something else. Nick did, that is. Nick started sweating and saw the face, the angel's face and it said that word the angels say. "Evacuation." Such a pretty word.

Nick stumbled out. "When Trip gets back, tell him where I've gone," he said. The angel shoved him with its shiny black arms. Then came the tunnel, then came the light. The trains don't run in this part anymore but their homes are still open. Then came the nice cold floor and the man with the tattered coat.

"You got food?" His breath smelled like disease.

"No, man, no," Nick said, his head flat against the stone. "No food."

Nick hadn't been hungry in days. Or weeks.

His sweat glued his cheek to the floor and it hurt to pull it up. He looked around then, saw the people. All the people. The ones with white skin, black skin, no skin. He asked if they needed help. No answer, only screams.

Then came the stairs, and the light. The sun light. Nothing covered the sun. Nothing could.

The plastic chair threatens to topple from under him and Nick rights himself. Even through the haze, he keeps his balance. He closes his eyes but the teeth, so long and so yellow, hot with disease.

He remembers. Trip was standing in the doorway. And there were screams.

Screams.

And the black leather angels with the masks came, with the clubs came. They beat against his back and pushed him out into the light. The tunnel, the train, the man, the men, the screams. Teeth.

He remembers Trip in the doorway. And then the teeth. And then the screams.

When did the angels come? Was it then? Was it right then?

Nick remembers the doorway, then the tunnel, then the smell of disease, and teeth. Then the angels. The angels were in the tunnel. The teeth were in the tunnel.

Trip. Trip was in the tunnel.

"I'll get it," he said. "Sit tight. I'll get it."

The club, an explosion of pain across his back. Red sweat against the cold stone floor. The pain of sitting upright.

"Evacuation!" The angel yelled. Its eyes burning into Nick's. "Get out! Get out!"

The flash of light. The sun in the tunnel. The sun coming to life in the tunnel. And then the screams. Trip, yelling, "I'll get it! I'll get it!"

Sixty-eight hours ago. Sixty-eight minutes ago. They all fold into one.

Nick picks at the red, puffy dot on his arm. He closes his eyes, just for a moment, but the teeth pry them open again. The teeth. And Trip's face. Exploding in the light. The dark angel dragging them up the stairs, into the sun.

The teeth, then the people. The smell of disease.

Around him, two dozen bodies lay, face down. Dark angels too. Some with teeth. Some with clubs. Nick looks up at the corner of the street, in darkness. Sixty-eight minutes ago, there was light. And these people, all these people, were still alive.




TASK RESOLUTION



TASK RESOLUTION

Players and the referee should role play interactions wherever possible. But sometimes an element of chance applies. Important actions requiring a level of chance in the outcome are resolved using the roll of a die. Each such action is expressed as a specific task, and the die roll determines whether the player attempting the task was successful or not.

Definitions

In order to understand task resolution and how target numbers are determined, the following provides definitions for important terms and concepts. See the Task Resolution Definitions table.

Attribute: These numbers quantify the character's inherent physical and mental qualities. At their most basic level, attributes represent the raw potential of a character. The attributes are Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Agility (AGL), Intelligence (INT), Education (EDU), Charisma (CHR), Psionics (PSI), and Social Standing (SOC). Character attribute values range between 1 and 15, with 15 being the highest human capability and 10 being the normal unaugmented human limit. Attributes for non-humans can be considerably higher.

Skill: If attributes represent the inherent qualities of a character, skills represent their abilities. Each skill represents a body of knowledge about a specific type of activity. The higher the skill level possessed by a character, the better that character is at performing that task. Skill levels have no upper limit (although in practice, one would rarely see a skill climb higher than 10, and most tend to be 5 or less).

Controlling Attribute: When performing an action, or using a skill, one of the character's inherent qualities, as captured in her attributes, will generally be more appropriate to the task than another. The determination of the appropriate controlling attribute is central to the concept of roleplaying your character. How a player describes their actions helps the referee determine which attribute best fits the situation. Remember that the referee is the final authority for choosing the controlling attribute (although players are free to make suggestions!).

Default Controlling Attribute: For those who would prefer not to deal with deciding which attribute is most appropriate to a given situation, a simplified rule is available. Each skill has a default controlling attribute associated with it. To play with the simplified controlling attribute rules, simply assume that the listed default attribute is the only one to include in the task check. Prior to playing, the referee and players should agree on how to decide on a controlling attribute.

Asset: Once a player declares her action, and has determined which skill and controlling attribute govern the situation, the two must be combined. The term asset is used to refer to the sum of a skill level and the appropriate controlling attribute.

Target Number: The target number (TN) is the number the player must be roll on a D20. The referee determines the TN based on whether the performing character possesses the appropriate skill or not. If the character has the requisite skill, the roll is made against the asset (the sum of the skill and its controlling attribute).

Unskilled Action: If the character has no level in the required skill, the unskilled penalty applies (see "Unskilled Actions" on page 99). For an unskilled task, the roll is made against the controlling attribute, but with an increased difficulty level.

Success / Fail Roll Results

Success / Fail	*1D20 Result + DMs*
Success	1D20 ≤ TN
Failure	1D20 > TN
Outstanding Success	1D20 ≤ TN – 10
Critical Failure	1D20 > TN + 10

Difficulty Level: Usually tasks are attempted at one of five levels of difficulty. An Easy task is a roll versus four times (4x) the attribute or (in case of skill use) asset. An Average task is a roll versus twice (2x) the attribute or asset. If the referee considers the task to be Difficult, the check would be rolled versus the unmodified attribute or asset. In special circumstances the attribute or asset is divided further, such as for tasks that are Formidable (one-half) or Impossible (one-quarter). In extreme circumstances, situational modifiers may cause the referee to create further difficulty levels: More Impossible at one-eighth, Even More Impossible at one-sixteenth, etc.

Difficulty Shift: When conditions or circumstances warrant it, the referee may need to modify the base difficulty for a task. This modification is called a difficulty shift and is annotated as a positive or negative number. Negative numbers (-1, -2, etc.) indicate that the current difficulty should be shifted to a harder difficulty level. For example, a -2 shift causes an Average difficulty to be shifted to Formidable. Positive numbers (+1, +2, etc.) cause the current difficulty to become easier. A +1 shift of a Difficult task means the task is Average. Most difficulty shifts are cumulative.

Dealing with Fractions: When the result of a die roll must be halved, quartered, etc., any fractional values are to be rounded down. (After all, modern life can be pretty bleak.) For example, for an Impossible [Stealth] test (one-quarter of the asset) when the character's asset for Stealth is 7, the quarter rating will be 1.75 (7 ÷ 4 = 1.75), rounded down to a target number of one (1).

Outstanding Success: If, when making a task check, the roll is 10 points below the target number the result is an outstanding success. An outstanding success may decrease the amount of time spent at the task, increase the amount of information gained, or have some other beneficial effect. The referee determines the exact effect, based upon the specific task and the situation at the time (although players are free to make suggestions!).

Catastrophic Failure: On the other hand, it may be that the task failed horribly, resulting in a catastrophic failure. When the task check roll is at least 10 points above a task's target number, the result may be a catastrophic failure. The player rolls a D20 again, and if this second roll is above the task's target number, that is, the roll would have failed again, the character has failed catastrophically. If the result is at or below the target number, the result is a normal failure. For example, with a Stealth asset of 7, a character attempting a Difficult [Stealth] task check has a target number of 7. If the player rolls a 18+, she rolls again to check for a Catastrophic Failure result. On the second roll, a roll of 8+ (normally a failure) indicates that the task failed catastrophically. If the player rolled a 7-, the final result is a normal Failure and no catastrophic consequences are applied.

Automatic Success/Failure: A natural roll of 1 on 1D20 always succeeds, and a natural roll of 20 always fails, regardless of skill level. This gives characters a small chance of success even at the absolute worst of times, and of failure even at the absolute best of times. Both these are intellectually satisfying, and bring an element of tension to the simplest of situations. Some tasks will not require a task check. The referee can declare these tasks to automatically succeed if the character has any level in the skill, including default skills at level 0; or to fail if the character has no chance whatsoever.

Power Level: The task check indicates a success or failure at the attempted task, but does not address how well the task was executed. For this the character makes a Power Level determination. The Power Level table indicates the levels available based on a governing asset. The character makes a Power Level check and looks up the result on the table. The resulting Stage of Success is then used to guide the effectiveness of the task completion. See "Power Level" on page 100.



Task Resolution Procedure

Step	*Description*
Step 1: Declare Actions	The character or characters when acting together first declare their actions. The declaration should be stated in terms that assist the player or referee in setting the asset or attribute needed to complete the task.
Step 2: Define the Target Number	With the asset known, the referee determines the base difficulty level and all the difficulty shifts that apply.
Step 3: Set Task Difficulty	The asset and the difficulty shifts are used to set the final target number. The target number is the number required from a roll on a 1D20 to indicate success or failure in the task.
Step 4: Check for Success	The player then rolls a 1D20 and compares the result with the target number. The level of success in the roll is noted for its impact on the outcome, for example a Catastrophic Failure or Outstanding Success, see below.
Step 5: Interpret Results	The referee then interprets the roll result to describe the outcome of the task. If additional resolution is needed, for example from an Outstanding Success result, the player may have to make more rolls, such as a Power Level determination.

Task Checks

Actions in ***Conspiracy Rules*** are the things that the player's characters do—the stuff that needs getting done. Some things that need to be done are no-brainers: tasks that are obviously easy to do or obviously impossible. These are adjudged by the referee for their effects. The results of some actions are needed for theatrical or story effect and can also be adjudged directly by the referee. Other actions are better resolved using role play between the players or between the players and the referee standing in for a non-player character (NPC). Sometimes the outcome has a measure of uncertainty in it. For these cases, the referee will require a task check.

The Task Check follows five steps based on what the character is attempting to do:

Controlling Attributes

Attribute	*Description*
Strength (STR)	Any action that relies on brute strength, or the raw physical power of the character.
Constitution (CON)	Prolonged actions, or resisting the effects of fatigue fall under constitution.
Agility (AGL)	Actions that require hand-eye coordination or precise control are agility tasks.
Intelligence (INT)	Actions that require quick thinking or figuring out something new fall under Intelligence.
Education (EDU)	Actions which require drawing on retained knowledge. Most occupation tasks fall under this category.
Charisma (CHR)	Actions which involve interactions with others are governed by Charisma.
Psionics (PSI)	Actions involving the use of the empathic disciplines.
Social Standing (SOC)	Actions involving the character's perceived stature within the current social setting.

1: Declare Actions

When the referee requests it, players will declare what actions their characters will attempt. Some of these actions will require a task check. Because of the stresses and uncertainties of combat, almost all actions performed in the combat sequence (going tactical) require task checks. This resolution is called a task, task check, test, or sometimes an attribute check or skill check. The referee identifies the governing skill and controlling attribute if the character has not already done so, and then performs the steps to resolution. In the combat sequence the actions available to characters are specific and limited (see "Combat" on page 103).

2: Define the Target Number

For a character to succeed in an attempted task check, a number rolled on 1D20 must be equal to or less than a target number (after any modifiers). Often the base target number will be modified by the situation the referee describes, the player's description of their character's actions, and the base level of difficulty for the task at hand.

Controlling Attributes

Characters perform tasks under several broad categories, each represented by one of the character attributes: Strength, Constitution, Agility, Intelligence, Education, Charisma, Psionics, and Social Standing. To perform a task, the player describes the action she wishes her character to perform. The player and the referee then agree on which of these broad categories will govern the performance of that task. The following definitions should help make that determination:

Asset

When a skill is required to perform the task, the target number is made up of the character's skill level plus the controlling attribute. When the character's inherent qualities govern task success, the character's attribute only constitutes the base target number. For example, when the character is walking along a ledge, the referee may require a check against the character's AGL attribute to keep from

losing his footing. If the player wants to leap over a wall using a somersault, the referee will require a task check versus the player's Acrobatics asset (Acrobatics plus AGL).

Note that when the character does not have a level in the required skill, the attribute alone is used with penalties (see "Unskilled Actions" on page 99).

Combined Skills

In many cases, two assets are necessary to perform a task. In this case, the lower of these two assets possessed by a character is used to determine the target number. Combined skill tasks are phrased in the format Difficulty ["asset and asset"].

For example, the referee may decide that repairing a tank's fire control system is a Difficult [Computer and Electronics] test. In this example, we have a character with a Computer asset of 8 and an Electronics asset of 12. Even though she has a high Electronics ability, her ability to understand the entire fire control system is limited by her understanding of its computing functions. Thus, she would use the lower of the two: her Computer asset. If a character has no skill in the combined-skill task, then the unskilled penalties apply.

Alternative Skills

In this case, the task requires only one of two or more possible skills. For one of these tasks, the character uses the highest of the listed assets to compute the target number. Alternative skill tasks are phrased Difficulty ["asset or asset"].

For example, determining if an animal is dead or alive is an Easy [Biology or Medical] test. Because either skill is sufficient by itself, the character uses the higher of the two. In some cases, the referee may wish to assign differing difficulty levels for different alternative skills. Average [Computer] or Difficult [Electronics] means the same task may be performed using either asset, but using different difficulty levels.

Averaged Skills

In some cases, the referee might rule that two skills complement and "feed off of" each other, so the two skills are averaged (add the two assets together and divide the total by 2). No more than two skills should be averaged together for any one task. If a task seems to require more than two skills averaged together, pick only the two most relevant. The format for averaged skills is Difficulty ["average of asset and asset" or "asset + asset ÷ 2"].

For example, a character may be attempting to pore over old records to discover the cause of the plague that killed the population of Athens. Such a task could be described as a Formidable [average of Medical and Research] test, as expertise in either of these skills helps the other. Medical knowledge helps the character to interpret the records, while the Research skill helps her to know where to look for the information she seeks.

3: Set Task Difficulty

The referee assigns each task a difficulty to reflect how simple or hard it is to accomplish the feat. There are five difficulty levels, plus one for automatic success. Referees should be careful to not make task difficulty levels too difficult for their characters. Other circumstances, such as coordinated group actions; lack of the required skill or

Task Difficulty Levels

Difficulty Term	*Target Number**	*Definitiion*
Automatic Success	Asset ≥ 0	An everyday task should be an Automatic Success for characters with any level of expertise in the appropriate skill. This is what makes a skill level of 0 valuable. The default level (of 0) is used to indicate the very most basic level of expertise. (See Default Skills on "Default Skills" on page 74.) It can guarantee success at such tasks without costing a character a lot of experience points, thereby representing a basic knowledge in the area.
Easy Tasks	4 x Assett	The next step up from Automatic Success is an Easy task roll. As such, it should be used for situations in which there is very little legitimate risk. Most occupational tasks fall into this category: installing wiring, diagnosing a viral flu, stalking an unwitting prey through typical city streets at mid-day, etc.
Average Tasks	2 x Asset	The term "average" is perhaps misleading in this case. An Average task does not represent the run-of-the-mill variety, but rather one at which there is an average amount of difficulty. This is why detonating an explosion by radio is considered an Average task—with a bit of caution it can be carried out without extensive trouble, but it requires more than a beginner's skill to accomplish.
Difficult Tasks	1 x Asset	If a task is truly difficult to complete, not many people will be able to do so. The Difficult level task represents that situation. Even fairly high-ranked characters will fail a Difficult task frequently.
Formidable Tasks	½ x Asset	Tasks at this level of difficulty are troublesome for all but the most skilled of characters. They are the sorts of things that should be attempted only by an expert.
Impossible Tasks	¼ x Assett	Impossible tasks are attempted only by the truly desperate, or the truly heroic. Even the fittest and best-trained characters have trouble accomplishing deeds of this level.

* Asset (skill plu attribute) or Controlling Attribute as appropriate.



training; or opposition by another character or object can further modify the difficulty. See the Task Difficulty Levels table, below.

Group Efforts

So far, the rules have concentrated on a single character attempting to perform a single action. For some actions, it is possible and even preferable for more than one person to work together to achieve a goal. The referee must make a determination as to whether combined effort will be additive or parallel. The referee has the final call on which method is more appropriate to a given situation.

Additive Effect: When the efforts of more than one character working together would produce direct benefit, their controlling attributes are added together with the higher of the character's skill levels.

Parallel Effect: When two or more characters work together, the highest controlling attribute can be combined with the highest skill level before making the attempt. Doing this requires that all characters involved remain focused on the task for the entire duration.

Opposed Tasks

Characters will often find another character attempting to thwart their actions. Whenever two characters are acting at odds against one another, it is called an opposed task. Opposed tasks are resolved as follows.

Both opposing parties roll their tasks as normal. If one character succeeds while the other one fails, then the one who succeeded is the clear winner of the contest. Otherwise, the character who succeeds by the most (if both succeed) or fails by the least (if both fail) is the winner. If the characters tie while in tactical mode the contestants are locked into the contest and try again in the next combat phase. Otherwise, the task is unresolved and it is up to the referee to settle the issue.

Unskilled Actions

Characters attempting to complete an action for which they have no skill level assigned and have not received a default level of 0, modify their difficulty level by -1 difficulty shift—Easy becomes Average, Formidable becomes Impossible, etc. The asset to use is the governing attribute. This penalty does not apply to Attribute only tests and checks where no skill is used, only to skill checks where the character has no skill.

Default Skills

Characters may be familiar enough with a skill to avoid the penalty for having no skill. This level of skill is called the default skill level and is indicated with a numeric value of zero (0). Characters having a default skill level do not suffer the unskilled penalty described above.

Enabling Tasks

In some cases, one particular skill enables a character to "unlock" a crucial difficulty in a problem, and thereby make the problem easier. For example, a character is trying to find the opening to an underground chamber in a ruined and long abandoned underground garage. The referee decides that Observation is the relevant skill and that the task difficulty is Impossible. However, knowledge of construction may make it easier to know where this sort of entrance might be located. Therefore, the referee has the player make an Average [Construction] test first. Success on this roll means the character has enough architectural knowledge to help, and this will reduce the difficulty of the main task to Formidable. In this example, the Construction asset was used as an enabling skill, because its use enabled the follow-on task to be done with an easier probability. This sort of task description would be written as Impossible [Observation] (Average [Construction] to enable).

Unless otherwise indicated, success in an enabling skill task shifts the difficulty level by +1, but under certain circumstances the referee might rule that difficulty is reduced by more than one difficulty level.

Crews and Teams

Enabling skills can be performed by a crew or multiple team members working as part of an integrated whole. Note that the crew or team must have previously been established before the task check. For example, the referee could rule that the Navigation skill could be used by a dedicated navigator crew member to enable Large Watercraft piloting by a captain or helmsman.

Additional Difficulty Shifts

The referee may choose to describe tasks more or less difficult than the five categories. Simply multiply or divide the character's asset by larger, smaller, or intermediate numbers. For example, a "Very Formidable" (not quite Impossible but more than Formidable) task might require dividing the asset

by three (3) instead of two (2) to determine the chance of success. An intermediate task between Difficult and Average might multiply by 1.5, etc. These partial difficulty shifts allow the referee finer control of task checks with a consequence of the players doing additional math.

4: Check for Success

The test for a success is dependent on the roll of a 1D20 and comparison to the final target number. Sometimes there will be dice modifiers (DMs) that change the rolled result. These are set by the referee based on the circumstances of the task. When the modified roll is less than or equal to the target number, the task is a normal success. If the roll is 10 less than the target number, the task outcome is an Outstanding Success. If the roll is greater than the target number, the outcome is a normal failure. Similarly to the outstanding success, a Catastrophic Failure results when the roll is greater than 10 over the target number (and another success check must be made).

5: Interpret Results

In the case of combat, the results of the player's actions will have further effects based on success or failure (for example, hitting the target). Additional effects include Catastrophic Failure, Outstanding Success, Power Levels and Stages of Success, and Combat Resolution. *To take the fight to the them*, combat is central to the game, so combat resolution, especially dealing with wounds and damage, is a more complex task check and is dealt with in the Combat section see page 103.

Catastrophic Failure

When the initial 1D20 result indicates a Catastrophic Failure, the failure may not be a critical one. An additional task check is performed using the same difficulty as the original task check, that is, the same target number. Success in this roll indicates a normal failure. Failure of this roll results in a Catastrophic Failure. Catastrophic Failures should result in spectacularly bad outcomes for the failing character. However, what the actual effect should be is entirely up to the referee.

Outstanding Success

Outstanding Success results when the D20 roll is 10 greater than the target number. Outstanding Success results, like Catastrophic Failures, should also be spectacular. The actual effect should be beneficial to the performing character, but varied according to the nature of the task. Generally the effects should be doubled, extended, or otherwise improved if another spectacular effect is not called for. See the Power Level below for outstanding success effects on skill results. Also see Combat for effects of outstanding successes on combat results.

Power Level

Sometimes characters need to know how well they accomplished a task. The power level gives a goodness factor to normal task checks. To perform the task check, the character makes a test for success using their skill asset or attribute normally. The character then makes a power level check at the request of the referee. Note that the referee may make this check to keep the true nature of success from the character.

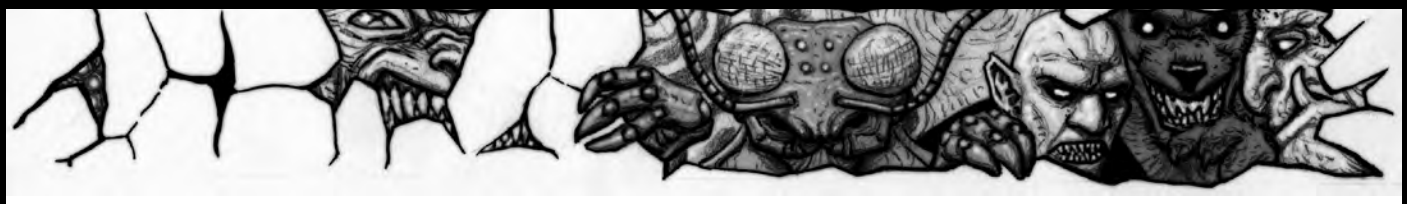
Power Level = 1D10
+ PC's asset or attribute
– Target's asset or attribute

The power level uses the formula given below. The referee will provide any opposed skill assets or attributes for the character's target. A single D10 is rolled to add to the power level. An outstanding success on the task check indicates that the power level is doubled and is indexed on the Stage of Success table to get the final result. The resulting Stage of Success is interpreted by the referee into a result. Note that the power level should only be used when the actual result needs to be "graded" and not when the referee just wants to apply theatrical effects. Players should note that an unopposed power level does not have the target's stats subtracted.

Stage of Success

Power Level	*Stage of Success*
≤ 1	No effect
1-9	Basic Success
10-18	Stage Two
19-27	Stage Three
28-36	Stage Four
37-45	Stage Five
46-54	Stage Six
55-66	Stage Seven
67-78	Stage Eight
79-90	Stage Nine
91-100	Stage Ten
> 100	(1)

(1) For values greater than 100 (wow!), use a Stage Ten. Then subtract 100 from the power level and consult the table again. Add the stages together. For example for a power level of 155, add Stage Ten to Stage Seven (from the 55-66 row) for a final Stage Seventeen!



Lights of the City
by Jason L Blair

I don't remember what the city looked like before. None of my generation do. Crib memories, maybe, baby memories. Flashes of light amongst blur and cloud. But I don't need to remember what the city was once to know what it doesn't have now.

Hope.

Desperation courses through the city, seeping into every open wound, and rolling into every sewer grate, dripping the sins of its population into the outflow. Outside: demonground. No one dares to speak its name. "The dark land." Or "the outside." Or "the other place."

You can see darkness in everyone's face. It weighs them down, pushing their shoulders toward the earth, and keeping their eyes from ever daring to glance toward heaven. The lights of the city are the closest thing to divinity we can afford; the embrace of another, however fleeting, the closest thing to redemption you can trust.

Every time a mil-car rolls past, we are reminded that we are caged. We accept this because of the dark land, the outside, the other place, and what is contained there. Not that it's really contained. They just say it's contained. "We are safe in the metroplexes" they promise. Yet someone I know through someone I know disappears and panic ripples through the sector. Eyes wide for the creeping darkness, and sprawling shadows, and the evil that lives inside. "Safe" is just a euphemism for "not dead yet."

There is a reason they call it "demonground." There is a reason we hide. But unlike the others, the citizens who cling to each other for warmth and safety and false hope for tomorrow, we do not hide hoping we will never have to engage the so-called minions. We do not live simply to live. We hide so that we may strike first. We live to hunt.

Inside the dark land, the outside, the other place, our quarry lies waiting for us. But here, inside the city, under the glaring eyes of the streetlamp gods, and the passing mil-cars and the promises of safety, we wait for them.

Every time someone I know through someone I know disappears, we ready our weapons and we ready ourselves. We wait, just beyond detection. We seek. Sometimes we find, sometimes we pretend we didn't find.

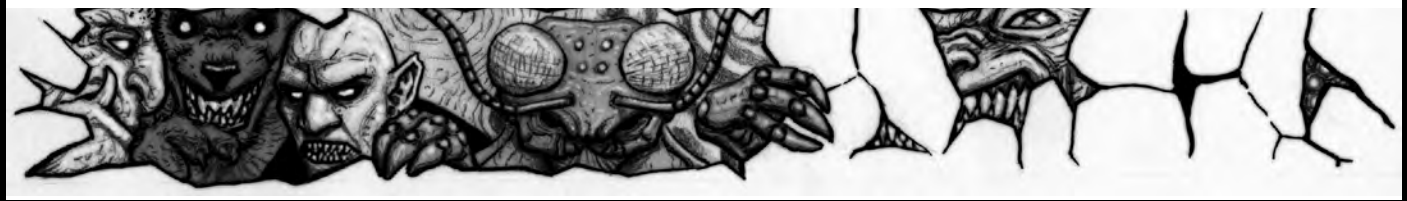
When I was young, when I first joined the hunters, I was told the truth about the demonground. I was told to never be afraid. That fear is the lure; they can smell it on the wind. Some erase fear from their souls. They harden into stone, to where their connection to humanity is no longer what drives them. For most, they hunt because that is all they can do. For others, they hunt to redeem themselves, to redeem humanity.

I never lost my fear. I knew better. Fear is our connection to our souls; it keeps us human. I use fear, as my lure, to bring the minions to me. And then I show them who needs to be afraid.

Every time someone I know through someone I know disappears, I release the slightest trickle of fear onto the wind. Let them come. Because I will not simply survive. I will not simply hide in the shadows, hoping they will pass. I will lunge from the darkness, strike at their hearts, but I will not revel in my victory. Not until the hunt is done.

Not until every last one of them, every last dark land, outside, other place is driven from our world, will I celebrate. But once that is done, I will rejoice. The cries of my victory will echo throughout the heavens, and the promise of salvation will not come from God or the lights of the city. But from within. From within us all.






COMBAT



COMBAT

In Conspiracy Rules, the most expert characters rely heavily upon careful investigation and thorough planning before making their move. Even the experts make mistakes sometimes and sometimes the situation calls for firepower. That's when good combat skills become extremely important.

The Combat Turn

The combat turn provides a structure for ordered interplay during modern fast-paced combats. ***Conspiracy Rules*** uses two methods of resolving a combat turn. The abstract combat turn has a duration that is up to the referee. The detailed combat turn is 30 seconds long and is divided into six five-second combat phases.

Abstract Combat Turn: A combat turn doesn't always have to be broken down into discrete phases, however. Some encounters, such as long car chases with sporadic gunfire for instance, may be better handled by treating the combat turn as a whole. In such a case, the players tell the referee what their characters intend to do during the turn. The referee then determines the activities of the NPCs, resolves fire, and tells the players what their characters see and hear as a result. In many cases, however, it is important to preserve a more rigorous division of time and action.

Detailed Combat Turn: A character may perform one action per combat phase, and each action is considered to take the entire phase to complete. An action is a precisely defined activity as listed below. Characters may act in more than one combat phase depending on their Hesitation rating (see Determining Initiative, below).

Combat Movement

Movement and relative positions of figures during combat can be handled in many different ways, depending upon the exact situation being represented. In some cases— for example, those involving only a very few figures—characters' changing positions can be kept track in the players' heads, as the referee describes them. In slightly more complicated situations, a rough sketch on paper can often serve well enough. Even more complex combats can be represented with counters or miniatures on a more detailed map. Any convenient scale can be used; movement rates and weapon ranges in this book are listed in meters.

In general, humans move at one of four different rates: crawl (2 meters), walk (8 meters), trot (15 meters), or run (30 meters). Burdened characters travel half this fast. Note that crawling characters are considered prone. Creature movement uses the same convention to describe their movement rates. Some creatures fly or swim and the movement rates for those activities are indicated in the creature description.

The Grid System

All maps in Conspiracy Rules are executed with a square grid to help measure movement and firing ranges. Equipment and character movement rate and range stats are given to support two different scales of grids, one for large-scale, outdoor combats and another for smaller scale

combats such as inside buildings or in alleys. The outdoor grid uses squares representing eight (8) meters on a side. Obviously it is fairly easy for people to move about a square this large without interfering with one another.

The indoor grid is used for smaller areas, and generally includes more detail of the contents of such areas—a two meter grid is used for these. At this scale, each person occupies a single square. Theoretically, it is possible for more than one to occupy a two-meter area, but it would be difficult for both of them to conduct any sort of activity without interfering with each other.

These grid sizes have been chosen to make them as easy as possible to use with the movement rates and ranges in Conspiracy Rules. For example, when using the two-meter grid, a human character can crawl one grid square, walk four, trot eight, and run 15 in each action. When using the larger grid, the same character could walk one, trot two and run four squares per action. It would take four actions worth of crawling to move one square on an eight-meter grid.

It is completely possible to move and fire diagonally through a square as well as orthogonally (straight up and down or from side to side), but the diagonal distance is greater. This can be represented fairly accurately by counting a square as being half again as long diagonally as it is orthogonally. In other words, a two meter square counts as three meters diagonally, and an eight-meter square counts as 12.

Detailed Combat Turn Sequence

Combat is an important and seemingly complex process but, the capability for characters to deal damage to the forces of the dark is integral to the Conspiracy Rules concept. Determining when and where shots hit, and the effects of damage and fatigue can seem, at first, an overwhelming task. A summary is provided to assist players in resolving a combat (see the Combat Turn Sequence Summary table for details).

Determine Initiative

Each character determines the order of their actions in the combat phase based on their current Initiative rating. Initiative ratings range from 1 to 7 with 1 being a low Initiative value, meaning that the character is slow to recognize the need for action, select the next course of action, and start to perform it. An Initiative of 7 indicates that the character is amazing in their ability to react to threats during combat. A character's Initiative value may change as a result of the conditions, such as, being wounded, dazed or stunned, being burdened, etc. When determining the Initiative for a turn, the current value applies for the entire turn, even though Initiative may change as a result of actions in the phases.

Basic Turn Sequence

The six phases of a turn are numbered in reverse order, with phase 6 coming first, phase 5 second, and so on. In each phase all characters with an Initiative equal to or greater than the phase number may conduct an action. In phase 4, for example, all characters with Initiatives of 4, 5, and 6 conduct actions.

Combat Turn Sequence Summary

For each Combat Phase:

Determine Initiative

Declare/Resolve Current Actions

- **Movement**: Move your character the declared movement distance.

Resolve Fire Combat

- **Declare Targer**: Declare the target and number of shots to fire.
- **Fire Weapon**: Determine the mode of firing that you will make.
- **Hit the Target**: Determine if you hit your target.
- **Hit Location**: Determine where on the target your fire hits and note the Armor Value there.
- **Penetration**: Determine if the hit penetrates any armor at the hit location.
- **Apply Damage**: Deduct damage to characters, creatures, and vehicles as a result of fire weapon damage.

Resolve Melee Combat

- **Declare Type of Attack**: Determine what type of strike the character is to make: unarmed or armed. Also declare if the combat is lethal.
- **Hit Difficulty**: Determine your base to-hit difficulty.
- **Apply Modifiers**: Apply difficulty modifiers due to the target's defensive actions.
- **Hit the Target**: Roll the melee task check.
- **Apply Damage**: Roll damage and apply to the target.

Do Other Actions

- **Other Actions**: Determine the difficulty and the time it takes to perform other actions.

Actions in each phase are conducted in a specific order. Characters with the same Initiative as the phase number go first, followed by the next higher Initiative, followed by the next, and so forth. The referee will moderate this flow of actions by calling out Initiative numbers in the order in which they act. When a character's Initiative number is called, the responsible player tells the referee the action the character is conducting, as in "firing at the creatures in the doorway."

When an NPC's turn comes to act, the referee will announce that NPC's action provided it is detectable to the characters.

Basic Initiative Order

Phase 6+:	6+ acts					
Phase 5:	5 acts	6+ acts				
Phase 4:	4 acts	5 acts	6+ acts			
Phase 3:	3 acts	4 acts	5 acts	6+ acts		
Phase 2:	2 acts	3 acts	4 acts	5 acts	6+ acts	
Phase 1:	1 acts	2 acts	3 acts	4 acts	5 acts	6+ acts

Advanced Initiative Order

Phase 10:	10 acts.*
Phase 9:	9 acts.
Phase 8:	8 acts.
Phase 7:	7 acts.
Phase 6:	6 acts.
Phase 5:	5 acts, 10 acts.
Phase 4:	4 acts, 8 acts, 9 acts.
Phase 3:	3 acts, 6 acts, 7 acts.
Phase 2:	2 acts.
Phase 1:	1 acts.

The effect of this sequence is both to limit the number of actions a character can perform to his or her Initiative rating and also to regulate the sequence of actions in a turn. A typical turn proceeds as shown in the Basic Initiative Order table.

Note that this not only means that high Initiative characters may attack more frequently in a turn than may lower-Initiative characters, it also means that if they choose to move, they can usually move farther. This does not mean that high Initiative characters could run faster in normal competition, only that they can in a combat situation because they hesitate less. Even lower-Initiative character have the option of choosing movement as a repetitive action, however, and thereby may move as far in one turn as a high-Initiative character.

Advanced Initiative Turn Sequence

When using Advanced Initiative, the number and order of actions that a character may conduct in a turn are still determined by the character's Initiative. The total time for a Combat Turn is still 30 seconds, all the phases are assumed to complete within that time.

Sequence of Actions

Actions in each turn are conducted in order based on Initiative number. The characters with the highest current Initiative number go first, followed by the next highest Initiative, then the next, and so on. Each set of actions grouped by Initiative number is called a phase. Thus, there is the Initiative 5 phase where all characters with current Initiative of 5 may act, followed by the Initiative 4 phase, and so on.

Not every phase needs to be used in every turn. When every character has acted, the turn is over and a new turn begins.

High Initiative Characters

Characters with a current Initiative higher than 5 receives an extra action each turn. Their action is conducted in the Initiative phase equal to one-half of the character's current Initiative number (rounding fractions down).

For example, a character with an Initiative of 7 would conduct one action on phase 7 and another on phase 3. Once such high-initiative characters receive wounds to reduce their current Initiative to 5 or lower, they lose this second action. In the example of our Initiative 7 character, a Slight wound (-1 to Initiative) would still allow two actions: one at 6 and one at 3. However, a Serious wound (-3 to Initiative) reduces the character to only one action per combat turn, at phase 4. If the character took this wound during phase 6 or 5, he would lose his second act immediately, and would not get his second action that turn.

Burden Effects on Initiative

The amount of weight carried by characters may affect their current ability to perform actions. Load includes the weight of armor worn by the character plus the weight of equipment and weapons carried on their person. See the Burden Effects table, below.

Wound Effects on Initiative

The effects of wounds on a character's initiative are based on her current wound level. The effects are cumulative and as given, below.

Scratch wounded: No effect on Initiative, but may deprive a character of an action when first hit.
Slightly wounded: Reduce Initiative by one (–1)
Seriously wounded: The character's Initiative is reduced by an additional one (–1), total of –2.
Critically wounded: Critically wounded characters have their Initiative reduced to one.

A character whose Reaction is reduced to 0 or lower may not act at all. The Reaction and Hesitation as adjusted by wounds are collectively called the current Initiative, as opposed to the character's permanent Initiative when fully healthy.

Wounds have other effects on conducting actions. Scratch wounds, knockdowns, and stun results can deprive characters of a turn's action, although they do not change their Initiative numbers.

NPC Initiative

NPC Initiative depends on how the NPCs are generated. A detailed NPC as created by the referee using the character generation rules receives an initiative rating according to the character generation rules. Simplified or archetype NPCs receive an initiative rating according to their described experience level (i.e. NPC Type).

NPC Type	*Initiative*
Elite	5
Veteran	4
Experienced	2
Novice	1

Agility and Weapon Bulk

If two characters have the same Initiative and are conducting actions at the same time that may interfere with each other (such as firing at each other), the character with the highest AGL goes first. However, for purposes of this determination, subtract the Weapon Bulk rating of each character's weapon from that character's AGL. If the tie persists, determine order randomly.

Repetitive Actions

A character deciding to do the same thing for an entire turn may conduct that action in every phase of the turn. All repetitive actions are declared at the beginning of each phase, regardless of the Initiative of the characters conducting them. However, characters who interrupt their repetitive actions in the middle of a turn may not take any other action until their next regular opportunity to do so in the action sequence; and, if that next action is in the same combat turn, the character can only go prone or duck behind cover.

Ambush

An ambush consists of one or more characters attacking an enemy force from previously undetected positions with the element of surprise. On the basis of this surprise, the ambushers get one free single-phase combat turn, that is, one combat phase. After this free combat phase, players return to the normal Initiative turn sequence.

Opportunity Fire

Characters can conduct overwatch by declaring opportunity fire. When using opportunity fire, characters can attack out of their normal Initiative turn sequence. When a character has spent his immediately previous action aiming at a person or location, she may conduct opportunity fire as her next action. Any time an enemy passes through the character's aimed line of sight, the aiming character may immediately fire on that enemy using normal aiming rules, regardless of the combat phase. The fire is resolved as if it happened simultaneously with the enemy movement. If the target was visible at the beginning of the aiming character's action, the first shot fired counts as an aimed shot; otherwise all individual shots are considered quick shots. In the case of automatic fire, no shots count as aimed fire.

Characters may fire opportunity fire in a phase in which they would not normally be able to take an action. Once they fire opportunity fire in such a phase, however, they may not do so again until they conduct an additional aim action.

A character who conducts opportunity fire is considered to have taken an action for that phase and may not take another, even if it is his or her normal turn to do so. In the next phase the character is still considered to be aiming at the same point until she or he takes some other action.

A player may only conduct opportunity fire once during a phase.

Burden Effects on Initiative

Burden Level	*Effects*
A Normal load or less.	Initiative is not affected.
Loads between one and two times normal load.	The character is burdened and has her Initiative reduced by one for as long as she carries that load.
Loads between two and four times the normal load.	The character has his Initiative reduced to one (1) for as long as he carries that load.
Loads greater than four times the normal load.	Characters cannot carry this much weight and still act in a tactical situation.

Panic

Whenever characters are knocked down by wound damage or surprised in combat, there is a chance that they will panic. This is not blind panic which sends them running, screaming away, but which rather causes them to freeze momentarily.

To determine if a character panics, roll 1D6. If the result is greater than that character's Initiative rating, the character panics. A panicked character may not conduct any action for a number of phases equal to the amount by which the die roll exceeded the character's Initiative. However, a character panicking for more than one combat phase may choose to go prone at any time and can dive into local cover



if available. In this case, the character remains there until able to act again.

Rout

Characters on foot who are charged by a vehicle (not a bicycle) or running horse within 100 meters (that is, they are about to be run over by something large and fast) must each check for a rout. Any character who fails the roll does not hesitate; instead, he or she runs away from the direction of the charging vehicle or animal. Subtract 1 from the rout roll of any character holding a weapon with a good chance of stopping the attacker, if that character is prepared to fire it. For example, a character has a polearm versus cavalry or a rocket launcher against a car.

Fear

Fear ranges from a nagging dread to the raw, terrifying, primal horror that lurks within all humanity. After all, being eaten alive is far more horrifying than being shot.

First and foremost, fear effects should be role-played. If game mechanics are deemed more appropriate, the referee can use the following for the effects of fear. The referee sets the level of fear in the situation and the fear test difficulty level. The fear level is largely determined by the fearfulness of the creature. If the fear situation has an appropriate setup, an atmosphere that has the characters half-frightened out of their wits before they encounter the creature, the referee can increase the level of difficulty. If the characters know what they're going to see or have seen it before, the referee may lower the difficulty level.

The Fear test is made using the character's current Willpower asset. Alternatively, characters may use Initiative as a total skill level, if their Initiative is higher than their Willpower skill. In this case, use INT as the controlling attribute.

Success allows the character to act normally. Failure means that the character is frozen in place with terror, unable to do anything. A terrified character may use his actions to test again, at one level of difficulty lower, hoping to snap out of it and do something. Outstanding Success allows the character to take one free action immediately, even out of phase, to react to the situation. Catastrophic Failure means that the character is panic-stricken and can only flee for his life; if flight is impossible, the character curls into a fetal position, whimpers, quivers, and is otherwise totally useless. A character suffering the effects of Catastrophic Failure can test to remove its effects once the source of the fear is gone (Easy: Willpower or Initiative) or if a friend motivates him—"Snap out of it!" Slap! (Difficult: Willpower or Initiative).

This test is made in addition to the normal Panic test, if the situation calls for a Panic test as well.

For example, Donna is following her teammates into some storm drains against her better judgment. Toni and Brick are leading the way when a were-gator leaps from a side passage onto Brick driving him to the ground. Donna has never before experienced a were-gator. The referee rules that the creepiness of the situation calls for a Difficult [Willpower or Initiative] Fear test. Donna fails this test and stands helpless in her horror. The next phase, while the were-gator mauls Brick, Toni screams at Donna to run as Toni prepares her bayonet. Donna tries to recover from her Fear with a Difficult [Willpower or Initiative] check enabled by Toni's screams, but fails. Toni turns as the were-gator charges her. Toni passes her Panic test and rolls for rout. With the +1 for the fixed bayonet, she passes that also, but Donna fails the rout test, turns and moves her full run rate away from the menace. Toni is left alone to meet the charging monster.



Character Actions

A character may only perform one action per combat phase, although some actions can be combined. Players decide each of their characters' actions only when it is actually time for the character to act. Possible combat actions are explained below.

Fire a Weapon

Firing a weapon consists of firing one or more rounds in a combat phase. The number of rounds fired in a phase is determined by the fire mode and the weapon's rate-of-fire. The ROF for each weapon is given in the Gear section (see page 267). The fire modes are described as follows:

Non-Automatic Fire: Also called semi-automatic fire (SA), non-automatic fire represents all fire that is not burst or suppression fire. This includes all non-numeric weapon ROF codes.

Burst Fire: For Selectable or Fully Automatic weapons, Burst fire is rapidly firing short bursts of bullets at a selected target. As with Quick Shots (see Aiming, below), Burst fire allows for multiple trigger pulls in a phase, but again at a decreased accuracy.

Suppression Fire: Suppression Fire is automatic fire representing the action of firing as much lead as possible at a single location or area. Such firing is done to pin or isolate one or more targets as much as to hit them directly. When a character uses the Suppression Fire action, all five bursts must be fired.

Aim

Aiming improves the chances of hitting a target. It is done immediately before firing. Aiming at a target or area also enables characters to fire at any target which moves through their line of sight in a later phase. In effect, the firing character is waiting for the target to appear before taking a shot (see "Opportunity Fire" on page 106).

In game terms, when a character aims in the phase immediately prior to firing, she receives +1 difficulty modifier to make her To Hit Roll easier. Note that the bonus gained from aiming is only valid for the first single shot or burst fired at the target unless such a bonus is allowed by mounted equipment. Also, characters attempting any action other than firing while aiming negate the bonus. Shots that are not aimed are called Quick Shots. Shots fired in a combat phase after the first are all considered quick shots.

Reload

All small arms have a magazine (Mag) listing which consists of a number and, in some cases, a letter code. This shows the type of feed device used for ammunition in the weapon and the number of rounds in it. The most common form of feed device in small arms is a box magazine which attaches through the stock or pistol grip. Weapons with no letter code after their feed value are fed by box magazines, each of which contains the number of rounds shown.

One reloading action is sufficient to detach an empty box magazine and insert a full one.

Other forms of feed devices are noted by letter code as explained in the Weapon Reload Types table.

Ready/Change Equipment

The Ready/Change Equipment action can consist of putting down your rifle and taking out a knife, drawing a pistol, linking two ammo belts together, readying a radio to transmit, etc. Weapons must be prepared and ready before being used.

Melee

The Melee action constitutes either an armed attack with a melee weapon or an unarmed or hand-to-hand attack. The Melee action can be combined with a Walk or Trot action with no penalty.

Character Actions Summary

Fire a Weapon	The character fires a weapon at any target that is within line of sight or that has been within line of sight at some point during the current phase. With some weapons, this actions can be combined with a walk or trot.
Aim	Aiming improves the chances of hitting a target. It is done immediately before firing. Aiming at a target or area also enables characters to fire at any target which moves through their line of sight in a later phase. In effect, the firing character is waiting for the target to appear before taking a shot.
Reload	It generally takes one combat phase to reload a weapon, although some weapons take longer (and thus require several reload actions to finish).
Ready/Change Equipment	This can consist of putting down your rifle and taking out a knife, drawing a pistol, linking two ammo belts together, readying a radio to transmit, etc.
Melee	This constitutes either an armed attack with a melee weapon (which may be combined with a walk or a trot) or an unarmed or hand to hand attack. There are four types of unarmed attacks: strike, grapple, escape (any of which may be combined with a walk or a trot), and diving blow (which may be combined with a walk, trot or a run).
Move	The character will move at the rate that the player declares: Crawl, Walk, Run, Sprint
Go Prone / Stand Up	A crawling character is prone. A prone character may stand up at any time, either as an action by itself or as part of a walk, trot, or run action. Standing up cuts the distance moved in an action in half.
Drive / Ride	The character is a passenger in a vehicle or riding a mount, such as a horse.
Mount / Dismount	Get in or out of a vehicle (on or off a mount such as a horse).
Talk	During combat, players will often want to discuss their plans. But for realism's sake, the referee is encouraged to keep these discussions to a reasonable length and complexity.
Combined Actions	Various actions can be combined. However, doing so can cause a penalty on the action.

Move

Movement during combat can be resolved in whatever detail the situation warrants. In many cases, no map is needed-long-range sniping between parties on foot, for instance. In others, the referee can do well enough by just drawing a map and positions on a piece of paper. If greater detail is needed, the referee can make a map beforehand, and the positions of characters and vehicles can be represented by pins, drawing on plastic overlays, counters, or miniature figures. Any scale may be used; movement rates and weapon ranges are given here in meters.

Combat movement rates are expressed in meters moved per five-second combat turn. Vehicles and animals have unique combat movement rates listed with the specific vehicle or animal description. Combat movement rates are given in meters per Combat Phase.



Humans: In general, humans move at one of four different combat movement rates: crawl (2 meters), walk (8 meters), trot (15 meters), or run (30 meters). Burdened characters move at half this rate. Note that crawling characters are considered prone.

Creatures: Animals, beasties, and darklings have their own stats for movement. When more than four movement numbers are given, the extra numbers are for swimming or flying (see "Creatures" on page 149).

Vehicles: Vehicle and animal movement rates are detailed in lists. Ground vehicles have a duel movement rate which represents their safe On-Road and safe Off-Road movement. For watercraft, the second number listed under the "Speed" column is the boat's combat movement.

There are number of types of movement a character can attempt in their action:

Crawl: The character moves two meters in a prone position.
Walk: The character moves eight meters.
Trot: The character moves 15 meters.
Run: The character moves 30 meters.

Go Prone/Stand Up

A crawling character is prone. A prone character may stand up at any time, either as an action by itself or as part of a walk, trot, or run action. Standing up cuts the distance moved in an action in half.

Drive/Ride

This action represents the operation of all of the different types of vehicles (aircraft, ground vehicles, spacecraft, and watercraft) and riding animals (horses, mules, camels, etc.) Driving/Riding may not require a task check depending on the circumstances. The drive/ride action may be combined with Fire, Ready/Change Equipment, Reload, and Talk. If combined with Fire, Ready/Change Equipment, and/or Reload, an appropriate task check may be required with a –1 difficulty penalty.

Mount/Dismount

Mounting/Dismounting includes getting in or out of a vehicle, and on or off a mount, such as a horse. The Mount and Dismount actions are distinct and take a combat phase to perform.

Talk

Since each action is only five seconds long, players should not say more than one sentence or so during a combat phase. Note that while talking can be combined with most other actions, it cannot be combined with firing.

Combined Actions

Characters can combine some actions at the cost of fully executing both actions. The action descriptions on page 108 detail some actions that can be combined. The following sections provide more detail on combining certain actions.

Movement and Fire

Movement by either the firing character or the target reduces the chance of scoring a hit.

Advancing Fire: Characters may not fire while crawling or running. No aimed fire is possible while walking or trotting, but characters may fire quick shots or bursts. For purposes of controlling recoil, however, a walking character's Strength is reduced by one (1) and a trotting character's Strength is halved, round fractions down.

Fire From Moving Vehicles: Characters may not conduct aimed fire from a moving vehicle. They may fire quick shots or bursts at one level greater difficulty than normal.

Fire From the Saddle: Characters firing while mounted on a draft animal or saddle horse do so the same as dismounted characters, with two exceptions. First, their movement category is based on the movement of the animal. Thus, characters on running animals may not fire at all. Second, the marksmanship skill used to determine the chance of hitting with single shots is either the character's appropriate weapons skill or Riding skill, whichever is lower.

Target Movement: If the target is moving 30 meters or more in the current phase, characters conduct fire as if the range were one greater band than the measured distance.

Movement and Readying Weapons

Characters may reload a box magazine or strip clip while walking or trotting. Characters may reload individual rounds while walking only. Loading anything else cannot be done while moving. Characters may also either draw or put away a weapon while walking or trotting, only. To do both requires two phases. Players should note that when combining the Ready/Change Equipment action with movement, total movement is halved.

Fire Combat

Fire combat can be conducted at considerably greater distances than any sort of melee combat. Fire combat spans the use of long-range high-explosive shells causing huge amounts of blast damage to a thrown knife. However, typical fire combat involves the use of firearms.

Ready to Fire

At some point prior to shooting the weapon, the character must have taken one or more actions to ready that weapon. The character can do this prior to 'going tactical' by drawing weapons drawn prior to the engagement, but if not, the character must spend a phase readying their weapon.

Two Weapons

A single character can fire only one weapon at a time. Characters may wield more than one weapon, but in a single combat phase they can only fire one weapon.

Ammunition

To fire a weapon, it must first be loaded and every time it fires, it uses ammunition. Characters must take a Reload action prior to firing if the weapon has no ammunition in it. Players should keep track of the ammunition their characters are carrying. Forms for small arms are provided to record magazines and rounds fired. Write down by each magazine the type of bullets loaded and mark off the excess rounds so you know the number of bullets loaded. When a magazine is loaded into a weapon, simply circle it and mark off bullets as they are fired.

Fire Modes

There are two general varieties of fire combat: direct fire and indirect fire. Direct fire is conducted by characters who can actually see their target and who fire in a direct line toward it with the intention of obtaining a direct hit. Further fire modes apply for direct fire: a non-automatic fire mode and three automatic fire modes, burst, spray, and suppressive fire. Indirect fire has two modes: self-directed and called fire modes. For the most part, only certain heavy weapons—grenade launchers, mortars, howitzers, and intercontinental ballistic missiles—are capable of indirect fire. Indirect fire will "scatter" from its designated impact point. Direct fire weapons with a blast radius require the actual impact point to be known in order to place the center of the blast pattern (see "Deviation" on page 118).

Declare Target

When a shooter fires a weapon, she declares the object, being, or aiming point at which she will shoot—the target. Each shot fired must have a target. When firing indirect fire the shooter must declare an impact point for the round. If the shooter cannot see the impact point, a penalty for scattering the actual impact point is increased. If using called fire, the ability to see the impact point can reside with a forward observer (see "Called Fire" on page 117) negating the scatter penalty.

Target Range

The range to the target impacts several aspects of fire combat. There are five ranges for direct fire: point-blank, short, medium, long, and extreme. The value printed in the range column of the weapons tables is the weapon's short range in meters. Medium range is twice short range, long range is twice medium, and extreme range is twice long range. Point-Blank is a special case, and is essentially less than 2 meters—arm's length of the target. Characters that do not know the range to their target may be surprised when range difficulty modifiers—or the max range of the weapon—prevent them from hitting their intended target (see Range Difficulty Modifiers, below).

For indirect fire the weapon must have an Indirect Fire Range (IFR) rating that can reach the target. The character can still declare fire at target out of range—knowingly or not—but the rounds fired will fall short at the IFR range and automatically scatter (see Scatter, below).

Direct Fire Mode

Direct fire is conducted by characters who can actually see their target and who fire in a direct line toward it with the intention of obtaining a direct hit. Additional fire modes apply for direct fire: a non-automatic, burst, spray, and suppressive fire. Indirect fire has two modes: self-directed and called fire.

Direct fire is one of the two most common forms of combat in the game—the other being melee. In direct fire, the target is visible to the firing character. Both small arms and heavy weapons use direct fire.

Small arms are rifles, pistols, machineguns, shotguns, and the like. Their two principal distinguishing

Weapon Reload Types

Type	*Reloading*
Mag (Magazine)	All small arms have a Mag listing (short for magazine) which consists of a number and, in some cases, a letter code. This shows the type of feed device used for ammunition in the weapon and the number of rounds in it. The most common form of feed device in small arms is a box magazine which attaches through the stock or pistol grip. Weapons with no letter code after their Mag value are fed by box magazines, each of which contain the number of rounds shown. One reload action is sufficient to detach an empty box magazine and insert a full one.
r (Revolver)	A revolver's feed device is a non-detachable revolving cylinder which usually holds six bullets. If loaded individually, three bullets can be put into the cylinder per reload action. If a quickloader is available (a circular clip holding six cartridges which enables all six to be dropped into the open cylinder at once), one reload action is sufficient to reload the weapon.
i (Individual)	Weapons with non-detachable magazines, particularly under-barrel tubular magazines, often have to be reloaded one shell at a time. Up to three bullets may be loaded into an individual-class feed device per reload action.
B (Belt)	The weapon, either a machinegun or automatic rifle, is fed by a belt usually containing from 50, 100, or 250 bullets. Two reload actions are necessary to replace a belt. However, if the machinegun has a two-person crew (gunner and loader), this requirement can be met by both expending one action reloading in the same phase. Two or three belts may be linked together if the weapon is not moved (i.e. if vehicle-mounted or firing from a dug-in position). Linking belts counts as an action, but can be done by the weapon's loader while the weapon is firing.
C (Cassette)	A cassette is a large, self-contained ammunition feed system which takes one full turn to replace.
P (Power Pack)	A battery pack assembly, belt pack or backpack, attached to the weapon used to provide it with power. These power packs must be recharged, and cannot be reloaded. Interchangeable power packs can be replaced in one combat phase.
S (Stripper Clip)	The most common form of feed device for period bolt-action battle rifles (Mauser KAR-98K, Mosin-Nagant M1891/30, etc.) and other breech loaded rifles with a non-detachable internal or box magazine. Each of which contains the number of rounds shown. One reloading action is sufficient to reload from a single stripper clip. To reload the stripper clip itself, it takes one action to reload three rounds. It may also be possible to reload a detachable box magazine from a stripper clip.
T (Tank)	Fuel and propellant tank assembly attached to the weapon used to provide it with fuel. These tanks must be refilled, and cannot be reloaded.

characteristics are that they are generally man-portable and they fire a simple non-exploding round of less than 20mm in diameter. Small arms fire is most effective against living targets, but it can be used against other types of targets, such as vehicles, for instance.

Heavy weapons fire rounds which are 20mm in diameter or greater, and which are capable of containing a significant explosive filler. Most heavy weapons in Dark Conspiracy are man portable. They include such things as grenade launchers, rocket launchers, and some antitank missiles. Other heavy weapons must be mounted on vehicles or heavy field carriages (things such as howitzers). Few combats will involve such large weapons, but rules for their use are included for those exceptions.

Heavy weapons use high-explosive (HE) and other similar ammunition to attack living targets and light vehicles, but some may have an array of specialized rounds for attacking armored vehicles or for other purposes.

In direct fire, the chance of hitting a target with individual shots is dependent primarily on three things: marksmanship, range, and recoil. The combination of these factors will produce a 1D20 chance of hitting a target. The person controlling the firing player rolls 1D20 for each round fired. Any die that has a result less than or equal to the necessary hit number means that the round it represents has hit the target. Any roll higher than the hit number means that round missed.

Quick Shots

Quick Shots represents rapid firing at a selected target. While Quick shots allow a character to pull the trigger of their weapon multiple times in a phase, the accuracy of such firing is decreased. Any shot that is made without being preceded by an aiming action is considered a quick shot. This includes shots at a target other than the one originally aimed at. Even if an aiming action is performed prior to fire, if more than one shot is fired in the phase, only the first counts as aimed—all subsequent shots are considered quick shots.

All quick shots are conducted at one level of difficulty higher than normal (i.e., an Average becomes Difficult, etc.).

Aimed Shots

Aimed fire represents a character taking time in their action to aim at a single target. The Aimed Shot allows only one shot in the active phase, but does negate the effects of the Quick-Shot difficulty modifier. Aiming is an action that takes place after one action has been spent aiming the weapon (see "Character Actions" on page 107). For an aimed shot to be allowed, the target must be visible in both the aiming and firing phases. Also, the player must declare the target being aimed at. While it is possible to aim at one target and then fire at a different one, the benefits of the aiming action are lost in doing so.

Laser Sights: Laser sights may be fitted to any small arm at additional cost. Laser sights may only be used at 40 meters or less, and have Ultraviolet and infrared laser versions. When used with non-automatic fire, laser sights allow up to three shots fired during a phase to count as aimed shots instead of only the first one—all other shots fired in the phase count as quick shots. For automatic fire, the laser sight allows the first burst to be considered 'aimed'. Note that the aim action is



still required to take advantage of this bonus. All other modifiers, such as movement by target, movement by firer, etc., still apply.

Reflex Sights: Modern telescopic sights provide a reticle that, if held on the target, ensures that the weapon is aimed. The effects of parallax are removed when using the sight allowing motion while remaining aimed, and modern sights are open enough to allow rapid aiming. Weapons fitted with reflex sights allow all shots fired at close and medium range to be considered 'aimed' and the Quick Shot difficulty penalty does not apply.

Fire Difficulty Modifiers

	All ranges
Quick Shot	–1
Targeted Shot	–1

Targeted Shot

Targeted shots (or "called shots") take aimed shots one step further, by specifying the intended hit location on the target. Only aimed shots may be targeted. When declared, the shooter can target his aimed shot at a specific hit location. The shooter adds a level of difficulty to the task in order to target a specific body part. If the shooter subsequently fires additional shots, any shots after the first—or the first three if using a laser sight—roll randomly to see what locations they hit. Subsequent shots do not suffer the targeting difficulty penalty.

Shooters can also target vehicles in this manner. The shooter must spend a phase aiming the anti-vehicle weapon at the vehicle prior to targeting a vehicle location. If successful, the firer may choose the area hit, which determines the armor coverage and the damage done to the vehicle given the weapon round penetrates that location.

Large-Caliber Penetrators

All API (armor-piercing incendiary), APFSDS (armor-piercing, fin-stabilized, discarding-sabot) and APFSDSDU (armor-piercing, fin-stabilized, discarding-sabot, depleted-uranium) rounds are large-caliber penetrators. These weapons each have three or four different Penetration values. If there are three values, the first is for both Close and Medium range, the second for Long, and the third for Extreme. If there are four values, they are for Close, Medium, Long, and Extreme, respectively. The damage column for these weapons is only for attacks against personnel and animals. Body armor does not reduce this damage rating. For damage against vehicles, roll 2D6 and add the total to the weapon's Penetration rating. The result is the attack's final Penetration value (see Vehicle Combat below).

Rate-of-Fire (ROF)

The firing character declares how many shots they will fire based on the number of times they press the trigger, the mode they are firing in (burst, spray, etc.), and the weapon's rate-of-fire (ROF).

When a character declares her fire, she declares the rate-of-fire for the weapon she's using. Rate-of-Fire (ROF) is a rating used to describe the effective cyclic rate of fire for a weapon. In games terms it is the number of rounds fired in a burst for Burst fire. The maximum ROF is this number of rounds per burst times five bursts in a combat phase and applies when using Spray and Suppressive fire. As a practical matter, however, no character may fire at more than three different targets in the same fire phase. Shotguns have special handling of ROF (see "Shotguns" on page 115).

All weapons in the game have either a reload rating (Rld) or a rate of fire (ROF) rating.

Weapons with a reload rating hold only one round in the weapon at a time, and once that round has been fired (one action), a number of action phases must be spent reloading before the weapon can be fired again. The reload rating defines how many reload actions are required. If the weapon is listed as having more than one loader as part of its crew, each loader must spend the indicated number of actions reloading. For each loader missing from the crew, add 1 to the reload rating for all other crew members.

Non-Automatic Fire Mode

Non-automatic fire mode is a firing mode where a trigger press results in a single round being fired with the number of rounds expended being equal to the number of trigger pulls. The weapon's design limits the number of times a round can be readied and fired in a combat phase.

Automatic Fire Mode

Automatic fire has an ROF number. How automatic fire is resolved is dependent on how it is conducted. Three automatic fire modes are: burst fire, spray fire, and suppressive fire. Shotguns use a modified automatic fire mode to resolve damage.

Burst Fire

Burst Fire mode (also called controlled burst) is an automatic fire mode where a single trigger press results in more than one round being fired, but not a continuous number of rounds. The number of rounds in a burst is defined by the weapon's ROF rating, for example ROF 3 has a three-round burst size. Each automatic weapon can fire up to five short bursts per fire phase, as limited by recoil and player judgment. As a practical matter, no character may fire at more than three different targets in the same fire phase (just as with individual shots).

Spray Fire

Spray Fire is an automatic fire mode where the shooter keeps the trigger depressed. When engaging in this activity, it is assumed that the character intends to continue firing until the weapon is empty. The weapon fires rounds at its maximum ROF rating and the maximum number of available trigger pulls. Rounds are automatically loaded and fired with the weapon continuing to shoot rounds until the weapon is empty or the shooter stops pressing the trigger.

Suppressive Fire

The last way to effectively use automatic fire is as a deterrent to enemy advance. This is also known as "covering fire" or "suppressive fire". The basic idea is to fill the air with enough lead to discourage the enemy from sticking their heads up into it. Suppressive fire can be applied as a series of short bursts, or even as full spray. In either case, there is no specific intended target. Any enemy that enters the Danger Zone of fire, runs the risk of being hit by Wild Fire. Through this effect, automatic weapons fire can be used to interdict movement or keep enemy troops under cover by simply firing through open doorways, over the tops of walls, etc.

Marksmanship Skills

Skill	*Weapons*
Archery	Although considered an archaic skill, archery includes the use of composite bows, longbows, etc. The method of shooting follows the direct fire procedure.
Autogun	The ability to fire automatic, crew served machineguns, automatic-firing large bore guns, and other large bore direct fire weapons firing in a flat trajectory.
Energy Weapon	Similarly to slug weapons described below, Energy Weapon cascade allows use of beam energy or pulsed energy weapons. Two cascades are Energy Weapon (Pistol) and Energy Weapon (Rifle). For heavier energy weapons, use the same skill as for iron throwers. For example, use Heavy Guns to operate the massive lasers mounted in spacecraft.
Grenade Launcher	This weapon category includes indirect non-automatic weapons, such as grenade launchers, mortars, and other portable high trajectory firing weapons.
Heavy Artillery	Indirect fire guns that shoot large projectiles use the Heavy Artillery skill to determine successful fire. Note that man-portable mortars and grenade launchers are covered by the Grenade Launcher skill.
Heavy Guns	Other heavy weapons must be mounted on vehicles or heavy field carriages, for example howitzers. This category includes artillery and field guns, heavy rocket launchers, tank main guns, and most shipboard weapons installations. Few combats will involve such large weapons, but rules for their use are included for those rare exceptions.
Remotely Controlled Vehicle (RCV) Operations	Some weapons are employed using remotely piloted vehicles (aerial, naval, and ground). These types of weapons required the special skill, RCV Operations.
Slug Weapon	This category of weapon consists of rifles, pistols, assault rifles, shotguns, and the like. Their two principal distinguishing characteristics are that they are generally man-portable and they fire a simple non-exploding round of less than 20mm in diameter. Small arms fire is most effective against living targets, but it can be used against other types of targets, such as vehicles, for instance. Generally, the Slug Weapon category uses the cascade skill of the same name. Players should note that the use of a crossbow requires the Archaic Weapons skill.
Tac Missile	Guided rockets and missiles that require the shooter to acquire the target, track it sufficiently to enable weapons firing, and in some cases guiding the weapon to the target use the Tac Missile skill.
Thrown Weapon	Characters can use Thrown Weapons in either direct fire—like a knife or dart—or indirect fire, such as a grenade. The mechanics are slightly different, but the same skill applies.



Automatic Fire Hit Procedure

After the players declare automatic fire, they determine the shot difficulty based on range and recoil. When declaring automatic fire considerations for other targets in harm's way must be taken into account. Each automatic fire mode has a Danger Zone where missed rounds can hit other targets—including friendlies—using a wild fire procedure.

Difficulty

For each burst fired, roll a to-hit task using the normal Direct Fire Hit Procedure for a single semi-automatic shot. At this point, you are only concerned with whether or not you hit the target. If successful, a single die roll is then made to determine the number of bullets from the burst that actually hit the intended target. To determine the number of hit factors achieved in the attack, roll a single die with a number of sides equal to twice the weapon's ROF rating (1D6, 1D10, 1D20). Divide the result of that roll by 2 (rounding down, minimum hits=1) to obtain the base number of bullets hitting the target. The actual number of hit factors achieved per burst may be reduced by range and/or recoil.

Spray and suppressive fire are essentially trying to direct a stream of bullets at one or more intended targets. The difficulty level of these tasks is dependent on how many intended targets there are. At short range, if only one target is declared, treat the task difficulty as any normal quick shot (a Difficult [Slug Weapon] task). Aiming and called shots are not possible with spray fire. For each range band beyond short, increase the difficulty of the task by one level. Also, for each intended target beyond the first, increase the task difficulty by one as well.

Range

Range can influence the effect of automatic fire in two ways. First, range will effect the difficulty level of the task by increasing the difficulty level by one for each range band beyond short (as per the normal direct fire rules). Secondly, on successful hits beyond short range, subtract one hit factor from each three-round burst, two hit factors from each five-round burst, and three hit factors from each 10-round burst for each range band beyond short. No matter how many hit factor penalties are applied to the burst, the result cannot be reduced lower than 1 hit factor.

Recoil

Recoil for automatic fire is calculated in the same way as for individual shots, but uses the Burst recoil, rather than the Single Shot recoil value. If the sum of recoils exceeds the character's Strength, reduce the number of hit factors per burst by the difference. For weapons with 10-round bursts, reduce the number of hit factors per burst by twice the difference.

Recoil using spray fire reduces hit factors on all intended targets the same as they would for bursts. Note: Recoil for full spray is not cumulative for subsequent seconds of firing. Since the trigger is never released, the initial recoil effect for the first second of firing is the only recoil to take into account. After that, it is simply a matter of directing the stream of bullets; much the same as one would direct the stream of water from a fire hose.

Danger Zone

Bullets that miss the intended target, don't just disappear. If there is another target near to the intended one—friend, foe, or innocent bystander—there is a chance that they will catch the stray bullet. When a shooter misses with fire—automatic or non-automatic—rounds that missed go somewhere. Where they end up is called the danger zone.

Once a player has rolled the number of hit factors for the intended target and noted how many rounds hit, any remaining bullets still need to be accounted for. Half of the remaining rounds are rolled as Wild Fire against some other target in the danger zone. The referee will determine these potential targets, beginning with those closest to the intended target. The Wild Fire checks are made at the next ROF level less than or equal to half the number of stray bullets. Thus, 11 stray bullets would be treated as a ROF=10 wild shot, as would 10 stray bullets; but 9 stray bullets would be treated as a ROF=5 wild shot.

For burst and non-automatic fire, the danger zone is an area two meters to either side of a line drawn between the firing character and the intended target, and including all potential targets which are within the same range band as the target. The danger zone for full spray is twice as wide as that for a burst fire, extending 4 meters to either side of a line between the firer and the intended target. Any bullets that miss the intended target are tallied up and half are applied as Wild Fire to another target in the danger zone the same as stray bullets are handled for short bursts above.

Wild Fire

Wild fire applies when characters take shots without aiming. Missed shots from directed fire, shooting blind (such as in total darkness or around corners), or suppression fire are examples of when this rule is applied.



Wild shots are always rolled as an Impossible [Slug Weapons] task at short range, and can be increased in difficulty beyond that by range. Remember that no matter how difficult the task gets, a roll of a 1 on 1D20 will always be a successful hit. When a hit is obtained, roll a die with a number of sides equal to the weapons ROF rating x 2. Divide the result of that roll by 4 to obtain number of bullets hitting the target. Note: Any targets that are lying prone or behind cover are yet another level harder to hit.

Targets in a burst or non-automatic fire Danger Zone are attacked using one-half (½) the shooter's skill level (added to the controlling attribute to get a final asset). The difficulty for wild fire shots is Impossible. Only missed bursts and non-automatic shots can hit Danger Zone targets.

All targets in a spray fire Danger Zone are attacked using the shooter's normal marksmanship asset using the normal difficulty for Spray fire (for example, Difficult at Close range).

For shotguns, targets in the Danger Zone at close range are attacked using half the shooter's skill level, as above. Targets in the Danger Zone at medium range are attacked using the shooter's full marksmanship skill level. The difficulty level is Impossible. Again only missed bursts and non-automatic shots can hit Danger Zone targets. Automatic shotguns using spray fire follow the spray fire wild shot procedure given above.

Wild shots are usually rolled by the referee and are based on the shooter's skill. Players would do well to consider what lies beyond the nasties they aim for.

Shotguns

Shotguns may fire either slugs or buckshot rounds using automatic or non-automatic fire.

Slugs: Shooters fire slugs in the same way as any other small arms fire, using the ratings provided on the small arms chart for the weapon.

Buckshot: Shooters may only fire buckshot at short and medium range. Buckshot may not be fired at long or extreme range. At short range, each shot is treated as a normal single shot, but it does 9D6 damage. At medium range, each shot is treated as a 10-round short burst of automatic fire (Roll 1D10 for number of hit factors, rounding down and subtracting three hit factors for being at medium range). Each hit factor does 1D6 damage. Buckshot has a penetration of Nil at all ranges.

Full Automatic Shotguns: Automatic shotguns are capable of automatic fire (ROF=5). Treat this weapon exactly as you would any automatic weapon when firing short bursts to determine the number of hit factors (remember to include all modifications for range and recoil to the hit factor total). When applying damage, however, each hit factor is resolved as if it were a single hit from a shotgun, as explained above. (Thus when firing slugs, apply 4D6 of damage per hit factor, when firing buckshot at short range apply 9D6 of damage per hit factor, etc…)

Indirect Fire Mode

When firing indirectly, the number of rounds that can be fired is dependent on the number of 'trigger pulls'. Most weapons capable of indirect fire use one of the non-automatic modes with a reload wait between rounds. However, some weapons, such as an automatic grenade launcher, use the automatic fire mode. When this is the case, the number of rounds is calculated directly from the ROF and the number of Bursts the shooter declares. Each round has a separate impact point determined based on the location of the first impact point in the phase. Subsequent rounds cannot be corrected until the next firing phase (self-corrected fire) or the next phase after a correction action. (See "Indirect Fire" on page 117.)

Hitting with Direct Fire

Three primary factors affect the character's ability to hit a target: marksmanship, range, and recoil.

Marksmanship

When a player declares fire at a target, the character must have the weapon ready and the skill to use it. The specific weapon drives the skill that enables its use. Characters with no skill in a particular weapon suffer double the Unskilled Actions penalty—two levels of difficulty shift (–2, harder) instead of one. Players should note that a default skill level allows a character to use a weapon, but with little, if any, expertise. Some weapons have different modes of fire based on its rate-of-fire (ROF). Weapons capable of indirect fire have an Indirect Fire Range (IFR) specified in it listing.

Characters have the list of skills shown in the Marksmanship Skills table available to them to use certain type of weapons. The weapon listings detail the skill required to operate the weapons (see "Firearms" on page 247).

Small Arms Expertise

A character can specialize in a specific firearm. By spending a number of skill points, the character can reduce the effects of weapon recoil and an automatic miss. For each skill point a character spends, she can take a level of expertise. A character can take up to three levels, and achieved levels of expertise do not change the skill level with the weapon class (pistol or rifle). The benefit to the specialization is less chance to automatically miss and extra "STR bonus" for controlling recoil.

For instance, Vanna has STR 5, AGL 7, Small Arms (Rifle) skill of 5, and has spent 1 skill point to purchase a Level I expertise with her AK74. Her skill is listed as "Small Arms (Rifle) 5: AK74 I". Her skill with all rifles, including AK74s, is 5, but she gains two benefits when firing an AK74. First, if she fires with quick shots at a short range target and rolls a 17 she will hit despite the auto-miss rule. Second, her adjusted STR of 6 (her own 5 plus expertise bonus of 1) is sufficient for her to handle the recoil of two shots from the AK74 without fire penalty.

Target Obscured

If the target is partially obscured (in brush, fog, mist, light smoke, etc.) attempts to hit it with direct fire are made at one level greater difficulty than normal.

Small Arms Expertise

Level of Expertise	*Skill Point Cost*	*Automatic Miss Range*	*Recoil Bonus*
None	0	17-20	0
Level 1	1	18-20	+1 STR
Level 2	4	19-20	+2 STR
Level 3	9	20	+3 STR

Firing at Riders

If the target is a rider on an animal, motorcycle, or bicycle, attackers must declare whether they are firing at the rider or the mount. In either case, fire is resolved normally, but if a single shot misses its intended target it has a 10% chance of hitting the other. In the case of automatic fire, misses are rerolled for additional hits in the danger zone as noted below, but half of all such additional hits are taken on the secondary target—mount or vehicle.

Multiple Modifiers

All modifiers to the number of dice rolled or the range at which fire is delivered are cumulative. However, when firing single shots (aimed shots and quick shots), all rolls of 17 or higher miss the target and all rolls of 1 hit the target, regardless of the character's skill level or any modifications to it. Characters taking a weapon expertise can improve the automatic miss results (see Small Arms Expertise, above).

Range Difficulty Modifiers

A character must succeed at an Average task versus the appropriate marksmanship skill to hit a target with aimed, direct fire at short range. At medium range it becomes a Difficult task. At long range, the task becomes Formidable. At extreme range, the task becomes Impossible. Players should remember to always round fractional ranges down. Point Blank range is easier with the difficulty set at Easy.

Characters firing quick shots at extreme range will be checking versus one eighth their marksmanship skill level (marksmanship quartered for range, and halved again for a quick shot).



Range Difficulty Modifiers

	Point Blank	*Close*	*Medium*	*Long*	*Extreme*
Non-automatic	+1	Average	–1	–2	–3
Burst	+1	Average	–1	–2	–3
Spray	N/A	Difficult	–1	–2	–3

Rifle Scopes

Sniper rifles come with a scope fitted to them, and other rifles may be purchased with a scope attached, for an additional price. The printed range on the appropriate tables is for a rifle without a scope. If a scope is mounted, add 15 meters to the printed range figure when conducting aimed shots. In addition, aimed shots at extreme range are conducted as if at long range for purposes of hit determination. Note that scopes have no effect on quick shots.

Point-Blank Range

Firing a weapon at point blank range is performed at one difficulty level easier than at short range. However, in order to fire at point-blank range, the firer must close to Melee combat ranges, and the attack may be thwarted by any Melee "Block" action (armed or unarmed). A point-blank attack that is blocked, automatically misses the intended target, and becomes a Wild Shot. A point-blank attack that is not blocked (either because the intended target is unwilling, or unable to respond) is rolled as the appropriate Direct Fire task: Quick shots are Average: Small Arms, Aimed shots are Easy: Small Arms. Because of the proximity of the target, aimed shots are also considered targeted shots (without penalty), allowing the firer to select hit location. Because of the attendant decrease in difficulty level, the likelihood of achieving outstanding success at this range increases dramatically.

Recoil

Every round fired down range applies a force back against the shooter. This recoil force is a function of the weapon's design, the ammunition the weapon fires, and the use of stabilization devices, such as bipods, tripods, and vehicle mounts. The effects of recoil are cumulative for each round or burst fired by the weapon. Weapons are rated versus ammunition and stability mounts for automatic (BRST) and non-automatic (SS) operation, if the weapon is rated for both.

With each shot or burst fired, the weapon's recoil rating is added to the phase's cumulative recoil. When the cumulative recoil is greater than the shooter's Strength, the shooter must increase the difficulty level of the Small Arms task check (–1, more difficult).

In addition, the ability to control the burst also causes the damage to be modified based on recoil as well. For each range band beyond Medium Range (Long and Extreme) the base number of damage dice is reduced by one (1). For example, once the cumulative recoil is greater than the character's strength, the Base Damage is reduced by 1 for Long range and 1 more for Extreme range. The minimum number of damage dice due to recoil is always one (1). However, penetration can reduce this number to zero (0).

Bracing Pistols: Pistols may be steadied by using both hands and bracing yourself. This may only be done while stationary and it reduces the printed recoil value by one (1).

Single Shot (SS) Recoil

A non-automatic fire weapon rating that is cumulatively added for each trigger pull. Once the cumulative SS recoil is greater than the shooter's strength, the shooter must apply the effects of recoil to the task difficulty and to the base damage (see Recoil, above).

Burst (BRST) Recoil

An automatic fire weapon rating that is cumulatively added for each burst fired. Similarly to the SS recoil accumulation, once the cumulative BRST recoil is greater than the shooter's strength, the shooter must apply the effects of recoil to the task difficulty and to the base damage (see Recoil, above).

Automatic Miss

A roll of 17-20 results in an automatic miss regardless of task difficulty level. Characters can reduce the effects of the automatic miss rule by taking a weapon specialization (see "Small Arms Expertise" on page 116).

Indirect Fire

Indirect fire is generally fired at a target that the firing character cannot see, in which case the shooter is directed by a forward observer who can see the target. Only weapons with an indirect fire range (IFR, listed on the weapon chart) may use indirect fire. There are rifle grenades, grenade launchers, howitzers, and mortars.

Called Fire

In order for indirect fire to be possible, the firing character or gun crew must be in communication (usually by radio) with a character (called a forward observer) who can see the target. The target is actually a stationary position; it can be a building but not a moving vehicle (although it can be the place where the forward observer believes the vehicle will be when the fire hits). Before fire begins, the forward observer must talk to the firer for one turn. After fire has begun, the forward observer may want to call in corrections to make the fire more accurate. The same restrictions on both characters' actions apply as with other communication; in particular, the firer may not fire the weapon during the conversation.

Indirect Fire Difficulty Level

Conducting indirect fire is a Formidable task versus the Heavy Weapons or Heavy Gun skill of the firing character or of the forward observer, whichever is less. Indirect fire with a rifle grenade or handheld grenade launcher (M203) is one degree more difficult—an Impossible task.

Rate of Fire Table

Fire Mode	*Max Number of Rounds/ Bursts*	*Notes*
Non-Automatic Fire		
SA, SAR	5	Semiautomatic (SA) and Single Action Revolvers (SAR) weapons may fire up to five shots per action phase. Each squeeze of the trigger fires one round, and the force of its firing automatically recocks the weapon (SA) or the trigger pull cocks the weapon prior to releasing the hammer (SAR).
DAR, PA	3	A double action revolver (DAR) cocks its hammer with the first part of the trigger pull, then fires with the second. This makes the trigger pull somewhat harder than in a semiautomatic pistol. Pump action (PA) refers to shotguns, and involves working a lever between shots to eject the spent cartridge and chamber a fresh one.
LA, BA	2	Lever Action (LA) and Bolt Action (BA) weapons can fire one round per phase. Each time a round is fired from one of these weapons, the bolt or lever must be worked to eject the spent casing and chamber a new round. But this can be done in the same phase in which the weapon is fired.
SS	1	This weapon can only fire one round and then must be reloaded. Single shot weapons take on combat phase to reload unless otherwise indicated.
Automatic Fire		
ROF 3	5	Weapons with a number instead of a letter code are capable of fully automatic fire as well as semiautomatic fire—unless otherwise indicated in the weapon stats. The number shown is the number of bullets in a typical burst from the weapon. Each automatic weapon can fire up to either five individual shots or five bursts per fire phase.
ROF 5	5	
ROF 10	5	
Shotgun Fire		
Shotgun	Per non-automatic mode above	Use the weapon's non-automatic ROF for rounds fired and apply the "shotgun" ROF for damage
Automatic Shotgun	Per automatic mode (ROF) above	Use the weapon's automatic ROF for rounds fired and apply the "shotgun" ROF for damage

Deviation

If the round deviates, the referee determines the distance and direction from the target of the impact point. First the referee rolls 1D20 for distance of deviation. For grenade launchers and rifle grenades, the result is multiplied by 2.5 meters. For mortars and howitzers, it is multiplied by 5 meters. If the indirect fire weapon is firing at greater than half its indirect fire range, double the result of the deviation roll.

After determining distance of deviation, the referee rolls 1D20 and consults the Scatter Diagram on this page to determine the direction of deviation.

Direct Fire Deviation: Certain weapons, such as rifle grenades and grenade launchers deviate if they miss, when fired in direct fire. The die is rolled for distance and direction in the same way as for indirect fire as noted below; the distance die roll is multiplied by one meter. Heavy guns firing high explosive rounds that have missed their intended target, check for deviation like guns and howitzers but with a deviation multiplier of 2 meters. The location is the center of the high explosive blast pattern.

Autofire Heavy Weapons: Heavy weapons that fire high explosive rounds automatically deviate. The first round fired is deviated normally, but subsequent rounds will deviate from this point and not the original target point. To move the initial impact point, the shooter must stop and declare they are correcting fire. A blast pattern is placed at the initial impact point. For each subsequent round fired—ROF times the number of trigger pulls—determine its deviated impact point relative to the initial impact point, and place the round's blast pattern at that location. Targets within the blast pattern are attacked, by concussion or shrapnel.

Corrections

If the shot doesn't hit, the forward observer may call in corrections. After each correction, add 2 to the chance of a hit and subtract 2 from the die roll for distance of deviation if the round misses. Thus, four corrections would raise the chance of a hit by 8 and would lower the deviation die roll by 8. A deviation roll of less than 0 is changed to 0. There must be at least one additional shot after each correction before another correction is possible.

Accuracy

There is a maximum limit to the accuracy of indirect fire. The maximum chance of a hit is 14; for rifle grenades and handheld grenade launchers, the maximum chance is 10. In addition, the deviation distance roll may never be reduced by more than 10; for rifle grenades and handheld grenade launchers, the roll may never be reduced by more than 6.

Subsequent Shots

If a shot hits, subsequent shots will continue to deviate around the target because of the maximum limits of indirect fire accuracy. If a shot does not hit, subsequent shots will deviate around the initial impact point—not the target. In both cases, the deviation distance roll is reduced by 10 (for most weapons) or 6 (for rifle grenades and handheld grenade launchers).

Self-Observed Fire

Firing characters may act as their own observer if they can see the target. This is done if the target is out of the weapon's direct fire range or if the weapon is a mortar with no direct fire capability. The rules above apply except that there is no delay for corrections; fire is corrected automatically after every shot until a hit is scored.

Indirect Fire Deviation

		½ Range		Full range	
Weapon	***Marksmanship Skill***	***Difficulty***	***Deviation Multiplier***	***Difficulty***	***Deviation Multiplier***
Grenade	Thrown Weapon	Difficult (Throw Range for grenade sized object)	1 meter	Formidable (Twice the Throw Range for grenade sized object)	2 meters
Rifle-grenades and Hand-held Grenade Launchers	Heavy Weapons	Impossible	2.5 meters	Impossible	Double the total deviation
Subsequent Rounds		Impossible	1 meter	Impossible	Double the total deviation
Guns, Howitzers, Heavy Mortars (82mm+)	Heavy Gun	Formidable	10 meters	Formidable	Double the total deviation
Light Mortars (82mm–)	Heavy Weapons	Formidable	10 meters	Formidable	Double the total deviation
Subsequent Rounds		Formidable	5 meter	Formidable	Double the total deviation

Thrown Weapons

Any hard object can be thrown at a target. Hitting the target with an object weighing one kilogram or less, at a distance less than or equal to a character's throw range (as calculated in character generation) is a Difficult task versus the Thrown Weapons skill. Long range is twice the normal throw range and requires a Formidable check versus the Thrown Weapons skill. If the thrown object weighs more than one kilogram, the character's normal throw range is divided by the weight of the object to determine an adjusted throw range.

For example, Augustus has a normal throw range of 18 meters. He has a Difficult task versus Thrown Weapons to hit a target within 18 meters with a one kilo weight, or within six meters with a three kilo weight, or within 4½ meters with a four kilo weight, and so on. He can hit a target within 36 meters with a one kilogram weight if he succeeds at a Formidable task versus his Thrown Weapons skill. If he wanted to throw a six kilo weight, it would be a Difficult task up to three-meters away, or a Formidable one up to six-meters distance.

If a thrown object hits, it causes damage points equal to the throwing character's Strength divided by 2 plus the object's weight in kilograms rounded down [(STR/2) + weight]. Thrown objects have an armor penetration of Nil. Players should note that damage from a thrown object—except knives and axes—is a fixed number of damage points and is not Staged Up. A throwing knife or axe will inflict it's listed damage dice, regardless of the range or the Strength of the thrower. Thrown knives and axes also have Nil penetration.

Like other ranged weapons, a roll of 17-20 results in an automatic miss.

Hand Grenades

Like other thrown weapons, hand grenades are thrown at specific targets. The basic procedure for doing so is exactly as described under Thrown Weapons, above.

If the throw misses, roll for distance and direction of deviation in the same manner as for indirect fire, but multiply the distance of deviation die roll by one meter if within normal throw range, or by two meters if within long range. The total deviation may never be greater than half the distance to the target. Thus, if a grenade is thrown at a target 20 meters away, it cannot deviate more than 10 meters.

A character may throw additional grenades at the same target to increase chances of hitting. If the target does not move, add 2 to the thrower's Thrown Weapons skill for all grenades after the first.

Referees may alter the chances of a hit based upon other factors. For example, a referee might reduce the difficulty level by one for throwing a grenade at a large target like a semi truck, or increase it by one for trying to toss a grenade through a seconds tory window.



Chemical Grenades and Rounds

Occasionally, characters will find smoke or tear gas grenades to be useful or perhaps they will find them being used against them. Smoke and tear gas can also be delivered in rounds from some indirect fire weapons. When a chemical round explodes, the cloud released has a width equal to the round's listed burst radius, and its length is four times that distance. A chemical grenade with a burst radius of 12, for instance, would release a cloud 12 meters wide and 48 meters long. This cloud begins at the point of impact and extends downwind.

If characters are within the burst radius when the round explodes, they have a chance of suffering damage from fragmentation. However, as this burst is designed to spread the chemical cloud and not specifically to cause damage, the explosive force is less than with true explosive rounds. To reflect this, fragmentation damage is restricted to 1D3 points of damage (not staged), with a penetration of Nil, and it hits only one random location on a character. (See "Explosions" for an explanation of explosive damage effects, and the Human/Animal Hit Location Chart for hit location procedure.)

Smoke

Smoke is intended to obscure vision—it causes no damage of itself. Smoke can be generated by rounds of HC (hexochloroethane) or WP (white phosphorus, which can also cause burns). During the turn in which the round lands, not enough smoke is emitted to have an effect. For the next six combat turns, however, enough smoke is in the air to obscure visibility. On the seventh turn, the smoke has thinned enough to be of no effect once again. Smoke can also be generated by normal fires.

Tear Gas

As with smoke, a tear gas round has no effect during the turn in which it bursts. For the next six combat turns, however, it can cause temporary choking and blindness. When characters first come into contact with tear gas, they must make a Panic check. If they fail this check, they must flee the cloud and spend one combat turn (not phase) recovering. Also, during each combat turn that characters are in contact with a tear gas cloud, they must succeed at a Difficult [CON] test to avoid being overcome by the gas.

PCs who fail the Constitution check are temporarily blinded and incapacitated by coughing (disoriented, confused, and only able to move at a crawl). They remain incapacitated for 20 turns (but need make no further checks for panic or incapacitation). Characters who pass both rolls may function normally.



Explosives And Demolitions

Explosives, in addition to providing the bang for high explosive rounds, are used to demolish structures and breach barriers.

Types of Explosives

For simplicity's sake, these rules deal only with the two most common types of explosives: dynamite and plastic explosive. The units used in these rules are the quarter kilogram stick of dynamite and the one kilogram block of plastic explosive. All demolition effects are resolved in terms of the number of demolition points (DP) used. A stick of dynamite has one DP; a block of plastic explosive has six. Plastic explosive is flexible and may be molded to any shape desired or broken into smaller charges of one or more demolition points. Several sticks of dynamite and/or blocks of plastic explosive may be joined to form larger charges.

Setting Charges

Each demolition charge takes 15 minutes (30 turns) to emplace. A demolition charge is defined as one or more sticks of dynamite and/or blocks of plastic explosive connected to each other, up to a maximum weight of 10 kilograms. Additional explosives may be attached as extra charges, but they require additional time to emplace. If several larger charges are emplaced, several characters may work on emplacing them simultaneously.

Setting a charge requires a detonator, and may require fuses or electrical wire. A character must have a demolition kit, or must have improvised the required parts. Improvised fuses/detonators will have a mishap on a D10 roll of 8+. Such a mishap is a hangfire (5-10 on 1D10) or a complete dud (14 on 1D10). A hangfire will detonate 1D10 phases later than expected; a dud will not detonate at all. The referee will make these rolls secretly.

Setting a charge is an Average task versus Demolitions skill, with failure indicating that the charge does not go off when triggered, and catastrophic failure indicating that the charge goes off while being set.

Radio Detonation of Explosives

Detonating explosive by radio is a risky business, not because it is hard but because it is so easy (some electrical blasting caps can be accidentally detonated by induced current from radio signals). Rigging an

explosive to be radio detonated requires an explosive charge, a standard electrical blasting cap, and a radio detonation receiver (all with the charge), plus a broadcast unit to send the required signal. The task is Difficult: Demolitions or Electronics given proper equipment, Formidable: Demolitions or Electronics given improvised equipment. Ordinary failure means the charge does not detonate. Catastrophic failure means the charge detonates prematurely (at a time determined by referee).

Improvising a radio detonation receiver or transmitter from a normal radio is a Difficult: Demolitions or Electronics task. The task becomes one level more difficult without an electronics tool set.

Tamping

Tamping consists of covering a charge so that the force of the explosion is contained and directed in toward a structure. Tamping must be done with dense or heavy material, such as rocks, sandbags, steel plates, etc. Tamping generally adds five minutes to the time required to set the charge, but the referee may increase this time requirement for difficult tamping jobs. (It is very difficult, for example, to tamp a charge taped to the side of a free-standing girder.)

Concussion

It requires progressively larger quantities of explosives to produce a linear increase in concussion. To determine the concussion of a charge, consult the Demolition Table. This lists demolition points and their corresponding concussions. In reading the chart, you will notice that there are several gaps in the listing of demolition points. The DP value listed for a given concussion is the minimum number of DPs required to achieve that value.

Burst Radius

Once the concussion of the explosion has been determined, determine the maximum concussion radius of the explosion the same way as for a high explosive round, as described in the Explosive Damage section, below. This maximum radius of concussion is also the primary burst radius of the explosion. The secondary burst radius is twice this.

Unlike a high explosive artillery round, a demolition charge does not contain the material necessary to produce a large quantity of fragments, but these are usually produced by the destruction of the object being demolished. If the demolition charge is simply lying on the ground, it does not produce fragments.

Penetration

The base penetration of a demolition charge is the same as its concussion value, but is modified by its means of emplacement. If the charge is tamped, its penetration is doubled. If the charge is simply lying on top of or leaning against a structure (as in the case of a thrown satchel charge or stick of dynamite) its penetration is halved. Unlike other explosive rounds, the listed penetration value of a demolition charge is its actual penetration—do not add a roll of 2D6 to it.

Breaching Barriers

Breaching a barrier basically means blowing a hole in it. Demolition charges can be used to breach walls, armor plate, embankments, etc. To determine the size of the breach made by a demolition charge, first determine its maximum penetration. To do so, divide the penetration value of the charge by the armor value constant of the material of the barrier. This constant is listed on the Armor Equivalent table. The result is the number of millimeters penetrated by the charge.

Hit Location

Once a round or burst has hit a target, i.e. a successful task check, the character determines where the hit impacts on the target. For melee combat, unless the attack calls for a specific body location, the hit location is randomly rolled. For personnel and animals the Hit Location Table provides a random method of locating the hit on the body.

Armored Locations

For small arms fire, the hit location is important in determining the number of damage dice used in determining wounds. The location has an armor value (or none as the case may be) that is used to subtract from the DAM number of dice to result in the Base Damage.

If the target is wearing body armor and the bullet strikes a protected body part, the bullet may not be able to penetrate the armor. Flak jackets and Kevlar vests protect both the chest and abdomen. Helmets partially protect the head. If a round hits the head, roll 1D6. The bullet strikes a steel helmet on a roll of 13, a Kevlar helmet on a roll of 14.



Armor Equivalent

Material	Millimeters per Armor Value 1	Armor Value Constant
Armor plate	5	0.2
Sheet steel	6	0.16
Reinforced concrete	25	0.04
Concrete and bricks	35	0.03
Stone, packed earth, wood	50	0.02
Loose dirt	250	0.004

On any other result, the round misses the helmet and strikes an unprotected body portion of the head.

In vehicle combat the Vehicle Hit Location Charts provide a multi-step method to find the location. The armor at the vehicle's hit location must be penetrated prior to inflicting any damage. (See "Vehicles" on page 277.)

Cover

Characters and vehicles may hide behind obstacles as protection from fire. If the obstacle covers the hit location, the shot has no effect unless it is able to penetrate the obstacle. The Armor Values of Cover table gives the armor values of common types of cover. Obviously, damage dice absorbed by cover do not cause blunt trauma injuries against the target character. For non-armored vehicles, an Armor Value of 1 is typically given for doors, etc. This value applies to cover from small arms and is treated like body armor.

Demolition

DP	Concussion / Penetration*	DP	Concussion / Penetration*
1	3	*13*	13
2	4	*15*	14
3	5	*18*	15
4	6	*32*	20
5	7	*50*	25
6	8	*72*	30
7	9	*96*	35
8	10	*128*	40
9	11	*162*	45
11	12	*200*	50

* Penetration is modified by placement. Tamped = Pen x 2. Laying or leaning against = Pen x 1/2

Explosion Stats

Yeah, it's math. If you are not interested in using or maintaining basic math skills, then use the Demolition Table and look for the closest entry to the desired Concussion/Penetration value or the desired number of Damage Points. Otherwise you will have to use the High Explosive Stats Formula to calculate specific numbers below. You can use a spreadsheet to calculate a wide range of values similar to the Demolition table.

The following formulas can be used to calculate the concussion value of a given demolition charge and the size of charge needed to achieve a given concussion. To determine the concussion of a charge, divide the DP value of the charge by 2, extract the square root of the result, and multiply by 5. To determine the number of demolition points needed to achieve a given concussion, divide the concussion by 5, square the result, and multiply that result by 2.

High Explosive Stats Formulae

To Calculate	Formula
Concussion (C) for a given number of Damage Points (DP)	$C = 5 \times \sqrt{\frac{DP}{2}}$
Damage Points (DP) for a given Concussion (C) value	$DP = 2 \times \left(\frac{C}{5}\right)^2$

Causing Wounds

When a shot hits a target, it's damage causes wounds. The type and nature is dependent on the weapon, how it was fired, and the target's armor. Characters have several methods of receiving wounds. Hey, it's a dangerous world, right?

Knockdown

Characters who suffer more points of damage in an action phase than their current AGL are knocked down and may not conduct any other actions for the rest of the current combat turn. Concussion damage counts the same as gunshot and fragmentation wounds for determining knockdown, but burn damage and cumulative poison damage do not.

Stun

Any damage to the head, including burn damage, has a chance of stunning a character. To avoid stun, roll 1D6 and add the damage suffered from the wound. If the result is less than or equal to the character's CON, the character is unaffected. If the result is greater than the CON attribute, the character is stunned and remains unconscious for a number of combat turns equal to the amount by which the total exceeded the CON attribute.

For example, Mongo suffers a 3 point wound to the head and rolls a 6, for a total of 9. His CON is 7, so he is stunned (unconscious) for two combat turns. Not surprisingly, stunned characters are also considered to be automatically knocked down.

Quick Kill

The use of the Quick Kill rule should be agreed upon between players and the referee prior to play. The referee should only allow this rule to be used against non-player characters and beasties. One recommendation is for player-characters who suffer a killing shot to increase the wound level of the head or chest to at least serious if unwounded or critical if already serious. This increase in wound level is in addition to the normal damage inflicted by the shot.

There are two means for the quick kill: fire combat and melee combat.

Fire Combat: Any Aimed shot which hits the chest or head may constitute a killing shot. The player rolls a 1D10 and if the roll is less than or equal to the damage (DAM) value of the shot, the shot instantly kills the target—except on a roll of 10 exactly. If the hit was scored on an area protected by armor, roll versus the remaining damage value of the round. For automatic fire, aimed shots are only possible with laser or other sights.

Melee Combat: An Outstanding Success, or a natural roll of 1, in an Armed or Unarmed Melee Combat attack roll cripples the body area that is hit by the damage. If hit in the head, chest, or abdomen, an NPC is dead or critically wounded. Since surprise attacks automatically hit, roll anyway to see if the hit is an Outstanding Success (Average [Unarmed or Armed Martial Arts]).

Hit Location Table

Die Roll	*Biped* and Prone Biped***	*Quadruped****
1	Head	Head
2	Right Arm	Forequarter
3	Left Arm	Forequarter
4	Chest	Forequarter
5	Abdomen	Chest
6	Abdomen	Chest
7	Right Leg	Abdomen
8	Right Leg	Hindquarter
9	Left Leg	Hindquarter
10	Left Leg	Hindquarter

* Biped: Table assumes front/rear shot. For side shots, far side hit equals near side hit. For hits concentrated on the upper half of a body, roll 1D6, instead of 1D10. For hits concentrated on the lower half of the body, roll 1D6+4.
** Prone Biped: Table assumes top shot (shooting down onto target). For side shots, far side hit equals near side hit. For front shots, a leg or abdomen hit equals a miss. For rear shots, a head, arm, or chest shot equals a miss.
*** Quadruped: Table assumes side shot. For front shots, roll 1D6, instead of 1D10. For rear shots, roll 1D6+4.

Weapon Damage

All fire combat weapons do their listed damage at all ranges. The damage value of each weapon is listed in its stats (see the Equipment chapter) and is the number of D6 rolled. Some weapons have a damage value of 1. In this case, roll the die and subtract 1 from the result, minimum of 1.

Some weapons fire exploding rounds. These weapons have a damage rating consisting of two separate listings: concussion and burst (see Explosive Damage, below for explanation of these two values). Damage from these rounds is dependent on the target's range to the impact point, the center of the blast.

Melee weapons do damage according to their stats. This involves a number of dice or points and sometimes a bonus for the attacker's strength attribute (STR).

Armor Types

Four types of armor are rated against different weapon types. The first is ballistic armor that provides protection from slug-weapon rounds and shrapnel—rounds that rely on kinetic energy, including arrows, bolts, and thrown weapons. The second is melee-only armor, which consists of hard shells, steel mesh, or animal hides that protect from striking and slicing weapons. Melee armor provides ½ protection from bashing weapons, such as a club. The last armor is ablative armor used against energy weapons. The weapon's energy is expended on burning through the armor such that no energy penetrates to the body. Protection is received from energy weapons, such as lasers, plasma, and fusion weapons. Reflective armor is designed to disperse the energy from lasers, specifically. It typically offers no protection from other forms of weapons attack. In appearance, reflective armor is very shiny and mirror-like. Some high-tech armor has multiple components providing protection against multiple weapon types.

Armor Values for Cover

Cover	*Armor Value (AV)*
Sandbag (250 mm)	5*
2" wooden plank (50 mm)	1
Timber house wall (200 mm)	4
Cinderblock wall (300 mm)	9
Stone wall (300 mm)	6
Thick stone wall (600 mm)	12
Reinforced concrete	10**
Tree trunk (600 mm)	12
Brick wall (100 mm)	3
Thick brick wall (300 mm)	9

* Per Sandbag
** Per 250 mm thickness

Penetration and Armor

The penetration rating (PEN) is the rating used to describe the weapon and ammunition's capability to penetrate armor. It is used to determine the number of Base Damage dice during shot resolution. In vehicle combat, penetration is the capability of a round to defeat the vehicle's armor enough to cause damage to the vehicle. (See "Vehicles" on page 137.)

For small arms, the weapon's penetration rating (PEN) describes the number of Damage Dice lost per armor factor (AF) penetrated. Players should note that this PEN value is only applicable against body armor designated as giving protection from fire combat and non-armored vehicles.

Each weapon has a penetration rating that reflects its ability to punch through armor. This rating may consist of the simple notation Nil, indicating that the bullet will be stopped by any armor protection, or it may have up to three different numeric ratings. If so, the first rating applies to both short and medium range, the second to long range, and the third to extreme range. If a weapon's penetration drops to Nil at any range band, it remains unable to penetrate arm ranges (which is why no additional entries are charts).

The penetration value of a weapon is the nu damage dice it loses for each armor value that to penetrate. Multiply the target's armor protec weapon's penetration value and subtract the r the weapon's damage value. If the remainder i a positive number, the bullet penetrates and that many dice are rolled for damage. If the remainder is zero or a negative number, the round fails to penetrate.

Blunt Trauma

A small arms bullet striking a person packs force and will cause injury even if it does not target's body armor. This damage is called bl target suffers a number of points of damage damage dice (rounded down) absorbed by th damage is not staged up. Bullets that penetra some normal wound damage will still also ca trauma damage.

Laser Penetration

Most small arms lasers will have a penetration rating of Nil, which means they are stopped by armor values as low as 0. However, this only applies to rigid metallic or ceramic armors. Non-metallic or ceramic armors are treated as no armor by lasers, and are thus disregarded. Likewise, non-rigid metallic armor like chainmail is also treated as no armor.

Wound Levels

Wound Levels allow recording of damage received and applies to physical wounds. Physical wound levels consist of the following: Scratch Wounds, Slight Wounds, Serious Wounds, and Critical Wounds. Each hit location has these four Wound Levels with hit points allocated to them based on the character's attributes. As damage is taken by a character, the hit location and Wound Level is used to identify hit point boxes to mark off, indicating a wounded state. When a Critical Wound hit point is marked off the character falls unconscious and will die if not treated immediately (see "Wound Levels" on page 133).

Melee Combat

When the bullets run out, or when you are surprised, or just when you do not have a weapon handy, your adversary can be dealt the effects of mano-a-mano combat. With a weapon it is called armed combat; with your fists and feet it is called unarmed combat. Either way you have to get close and strike your opponent. Some prefer not to get that close, but fists do not run out of ammo.

Unarmed Combat

Characters must be within two meters of each other to make unarmed combat attacks. There are six types of unarmed attacks: strikes, kicks, grapples, escapes, strangling, and diving blows. Strikes and diving blows attempt to do damage to the target,





to grappling, except that once a secure hold is achieved, damage begins to be inflicted on the target. As with other actions, a character may make only one unarmed combat attack per combat phase.

Unarmed Combat Actions

The types of unarmed attacks and defenses are listed in the Unarmed Combat Actions table. The table shows the fight maneuver, its base difficulty, the governing asset, potential damage it causes, and any other notes that apply. In the table UCDR stands for Unarmed Combat Damage Rating.

Hand Strike

Characters execute a hand strike with the fist, elbow or other part of the arm. The base difficulty is Average [Unarmed Combat], while the damage is the Unarmed Combat Damage rating (UCDR) expressed as hit points. Targets can block a hand strike in which case they negate the attack and receive no damage. Players should note that the one standing opponent striking at another standing opponent is unlikely to strike the legs. For this reason, hit location is determined using 1D6 instead of 1D10.

Kick

Fighters execute kicks with their feet, knees, calves, or thighs. A kick succeeds with a successful Difficulty [Unarmed Combat] test and causes the UCDR damage dice plus 1D6 extra. Players should note that the leverage from the kick comes from having a part of the body on the ground. When the fighter is airborne, the fighter resolves a Leaping Kick instead. Players should note that kicks can also be blocked in which case no damage is caused.

Block

A defender may block hand strikes and kicks, including leaping kicks, with a successful Difficult [Unarmed Combat] test. Success means the target receives no damage from the attack. The defender can block the attacker in the attacker's phase, but loses her next action.

Leaping Kick

When the attacker leaves her feet in order to kick the target, the attack is a leaping kick. This kick causes the normal UCDR damage. Like the regular kick, the target can block a leaping kick where success negates the attack and the target receives no damage. Attackers using the leaping kick must recover after the strike. See Leaping Kick Recovery below.

Leaping Kick Recovery

After a successful or unsuccessful leaping kick, the fighter must recover or fall down. A successful Average [(Acrobatics + Unarmed Combat) ÷ 2] test means that the character lands on her feet and takes no damage. Failure means that the character has fallen ungracefully and must take 1D6 damage from the fall. Where the attacker lands relative to the target is determined by the referee, including whether the attacker ends up facing the target or not. On an Outstanding Success, the player decides where the character lands and their orientation relative to the target. On a Critical Failure, the attacker not only misses their attack, falls and takes falling damage, but the attacker loses their next combat phase action.

Dodge Leaping Kick

Agile defenders can see a leaping kick coming and maneuver out of its way. By passing a Difficult [AGL] or an Average [Acrobatics] test, the target negates the attack. Failure means that the leaping kick lands with all its normal damage. If the defender has a skill level in Martial Arts and achieves an Outstanding Success, the defender gets a free riposte, a free strike or combat throw attack. The defender can dodge a leaping kick in the attacker's phase, but loses her next action.

Aimed Strike or Kick

By increasing the difficulty level of a strike or kick, the attacker can choose the hit location of their strike. The target takes damage to the location chosen by the attacker.

Feint

By using a feint, an attacker can reduce the defender's ability to block or dodge an attack. On a successful Difficult [(Act/Bluff + Unarmed Combat) ÷ 2] test, the difficulty of the defender's next block or dodge is increased by one (-1, harder). Failure has no effect.

Resist Feint

Particularly observant fighters can tell an action is a feint and ignore it. By passing a Difficult [(Observation + Unarmed Combat) 2] test, the defender can nullify an increased difficulty level due to an attacker's feint success. Failure has no effect.

Grapple

Success at an Average [Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics] test means that the attacker and defender are grappled.

While grappling "damage" done by either character is calculated in the same way as for a strike—the UCDR in damage dice—the results of the attack are termed controlling hits. They are not actual damage, but rather a measure of the extent to which one character has physically controlled another using colorful move like a hammer lock, a bearhug, etc. Once a character has inflicted controlling hits on another character equal to or in excess of the defending character's STR, the defender is totally controlled and ceases struggling. The controlled character may not move, nor may the controlling character move without releasing control in which case all controlling hits disappear. Until that time, however, the target character may attempt to escape or may grapple with the original attacking character. If both characters use grapple attacks, the first one to achieve hits equal to the opponent's STR controls the other.

Players should note that for grappling, blocking is not possible. The attacker does not roll for hit location, and the damage dice are not staged to higher wound levels—the staged up hit points are added, but the not the increased wound levels. Also note that armor has no effect on grappling results or defense.

Grapple Escape

Once an attacker has enough controlling hits on their target, the target may attempt to escape the grapple. Once the defender succeeds at a Difficult [Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics] test, a number of hits equal to the defender's UCDR in damage dice are removed from the attacker's accumulated total. These damage dice are staged and the defender adds additional hits due to staging up, but ignores increased wound levels. If this number is less than the defender's STR, the attacker and defender are back into a grapple. If the defender reduces the number of controlling hits below zero, he is free of the attacker; and the attacker must make a successful grapple attempt to again entangle. Outstanding Success by the defender doubles the number of controlling hits removed.

Strangle

The Strangle action requires a successful Difficult [Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics] test, and is otherwise handled like grappling but with three main differences:

Unarmed Melee Actions

Maneuver	*Difficulty*	*Asset*	*Damage*	*Notes*
Hand Strike	Average	Unarmed Martial Arts	UCDR	
Kick	Difficult	Unarmed Martial Arts	UCDR + 1D6	
Block	Difficult	Unarmed Martial Arts	None	Negate attack; Lose action
Leaping Kick	Difficult	[(Acrobatics + Unarmed Martial Arts) ¸ 2]	UCDR	
Leaping Kick Recovery	Average	Acrobatics	Success: None Failure: 1D6 falling damage	Avoid falling down
Dodge Leaping Kick	Difficult	Difficult: AGL Average: Acrobatics	Success: None Failure: kick damage	Negate attack; Lose action
Aimed Strike or Kick	+1 Level	---	---	Damage chosen location
Feint	Difficult	[(Act/Bluff + Unarmed Martial Arts) ¸ 2]	None	+1 Difficulty Level Penalty to Avoid Next Attack
Resist Feint	Difficult	[(Observation + Unarmed Martial Arts) ¸ 2]	None	Negate feint
Grapple	Average	Acrobatics or Unarmed Martial Arts	UCDR as controlling damage	Controlling "Hits"
Grapple Escape	Average	Acrobatics or Unarmed Martial Arts	UCDR reduces controlling damage	Remove Controlling "Hits"
Strangle	Difficult	Acrobatics or Unarmed Martial Arts	UCDR	Similar to grapple, but damage is real
Strangle Block	Average	Acrobatics or Unarmed Martial Arts	Success: None Failure: Strangle damage	Negate attack; Lose next action
Combat Throw	Difficult	Acrobatics or Unarmed Martial Arts	2D6 falling damage	Target falls and is prone
Throw Recovery	Difficult	Acrobatics	Success: Limits throw damage to 1D6 Failure: Full damage Outstanding: No damage and returns to feet Critical: 4D6 damage	
Diving Blow	Auto-matic unless dodged	---	Hits based on attacker-defender comparison	1D6 + 2 x Attacker's CON > Defender's STR.
Dodge Diving Blow	Average	Difficult: AGL Average: Acrobatics	Success: None Failure: diving blow damage	Negate attack
Riposte	Formidable	Unarmed Martial Arts	None from attack. ½ UCDR in riposte	Negate attack

(1) The Strangle action may be blocked using the Strangle Block action.
(2) Body armor has effect if it covers the throat area.
(3) A character who becomes "totally controlled" becomes unconscious and begins to suffer damage to the head equal to the attacker's UCDR value every phase thereafter for as long as the hold is maintained. Garottes double the attacker's UCDR damage dice rating for strangling attacks.

If the hold is released before death ensues, the victim rolls to regain consciousness per the serious wound rules. Players should note that strangling UCDR damage is staged up and additional hit points applied, but increased wound levels are ignored.

Strangle Block

Characters receiving a Strangle attempt can attempt to block it. After the attacker announces the strangle attack, the defender can block it with a successful Average [Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics] test. If the block succeeds, the defender negated the attack and takes no damage. If the block failed the defender takes strangle damage. The defender's next action is consumed by the strangle block attempt.

Combat Throw

Experienced fighters can throw an opponent using their opponent's weight and balance against them. The attacker declares their action and must make a successful Difficult [Unarmed Combat or Acrobatics] test. Upon a success the attacker designates an adjacent two-meter grid square for the defender's fall. The defender takes 2D6 falling damage and is considered prone. Players should note that the defender can attempt a throw recovery to limit or avoid damage. Players should also note that when an attacker throws the defender over a precipice, the defender takes damage according to the resulting height fallen instead of the throw damage.

Throw Recovery

When an attacker makes a successful combat throw attack, the defender can declare she is attempting a throw recovery. The defender must pass a Difficult [Acrobatics or AGL] test to limit damage to a single 1D6 die. An Outstanding Success indicates that the defender has avoided all damage and returns to her feet. Given a normal failure, the defender receives the full 2D6 damage, while a Critical Failure doubles the damage taken to 4D6.

Diving Blow

Diving blows are attempts to throw oneself at an enemy and knock him or her down. Blocking a diving blow is not possible—the defender dodges instead—and armor and has no effect. A diving blow always hits unless it is dodged (see below). If the diving blow hits, either the attacker or defender is knocked down and suffers damage. The attacker takes two times his CON and adds 1D6. (2 x CON + 1D6)If this value is greater than the defender's STR, the defender is knocked down and suffers hit points equal to the difference. Otherwise, the attacker is knocked down and suffers hit points equal to the difference. Players should note that these are points of damage and not staged up damage dice. Defenders who are surprised use their CON for the comparison.

Avoid Diving Blow

If a character is surprised, for example, an unexpected attack from behind, the attack always hits. If not surprised, the defender may attempt to avoid the attack by passing a Difficult [AGL] or Average [Acrobatics] test. If this succeeds, the attacker is knocked down, but an outstanding success means the avoidance does not use up the target's action for the phase. A catastrophic failure means the avoider takes double damage from the attack. If the attack is not avoided, it automatically hits.

Riposte

After an attacker announces her unarmed combat action, the defender can declare a riposte action. The riposte combines a block or dodge action with a counter strike, kick, or throw. The defender must declare which when declaring the action. When the defender passes a Formidable [Unarmed Combat] test, the defender negates the attack and attacks the would-be attacker with a strike, kick, or throw. On a success, the defender causes one-half her UCDR in damage dice to the would-be attacker. Outstanding success results in the defender causing her full UCDR damage. In all cases, the defender's next action is consumed by a riposte action.

Hit Location

Hit location (if the attack succeeds and is not blocked) is rolled on the appropriate column of the Human/Animal Hit Location Chart (biped or quadruped). The die roll for hit location is not made for a surprise attack (an unexpected strike from behind) nor for an aimed attack. In both of these cases, the attacker is allowed to choose the hit location.

Armor Effects

Armor absorbs points of damage dice equal to its armor value from each strike attack and suffers no damage itself. For every two dice absorbed, one hit point is inflicted (round up) on the body part the attacker used to make the strike (right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg, or—in some rare cases—head).

Non-Lethal Unarmed Combat

Characters may find themselves in the position of striking their opponents with the goal of incapacitating them. Unarmed attackers must declare they are using non-lethal attacks before they resolve them. The unarmed character then conducts their attacks at the normal difficulty levels. However, accumulated damage is non-lethal and when a hit location, such as leg, chest, or head, reaches the Critical level that hit location is rendered unconscious and remains so for 2D6 minutes. All the non-lethal damage is removed once the defender is unconscious. To determine non-lethal

damage the attacker determines their damage dice normally, including staging up the damage. Players should note that when conducting a riposte, the defender must declare any non-lethal counter-attack.

Armed Melee Combat

Characters conduct armed melee combat with hand-held striking, cutting, and impaling weapons.

Melee Range

The size of a melee weapon determines the melee range at which characters can use it. The ranges are short and long where short is within 2 meters (adjacent two-meter grid square) and long being within 4 meters (next adjacent two-meter grid square). An attacker with a long-range melee weapon can attack a defender without the defender being able to attack back or riposte without closing to an adjacent grid square. In this case the defender can block the attack if she can.

Armed Melee Hit Procedure

An armed melee attack is a Difficult [Armed Martial Arts] task. In the case of a surprise attack, such as, an unexpected attack from behind, no roll is made; the attack automatically hits and the attacker selects the hit location. Players should note that different weapons require different Armed Martial Arts skill cascades with different levels.

Melee Weapon Modifiers

Some melee weapons add a modifier to the character's Armed Martial Arts skill, as shown on the Melee Weapon table. The attacker adds or subtracts this modifier to her Armed Martial Arts skill cascade—however, the minimum skill level is always one.

Blocking Armed Combat

If the target of a melee attack is also armed with a melee weapon and wishes to block a strike, the character can attempt to do so. However, the block action consumes the character's next combat action. A block requires a successful Difficult [Armed Martial Arts] task check. Success means the attack is blocked, but an outstanding success means the blocking character does not lose an action for the turn. Unarmed defenders can attempt to block an armed attack. The task difficulty is Impossible [Unarmed Martial Arts]. The defender's success negates the attack, but the defender takes 1D6 damage dice to the extremity that blocked the attack. Failure means that the attack lands normally. Outstanding Success negates the attack and the damage. Critical Failure means the attack lands normally, and the blocking body location takes the 2D6 damage dice.

Armed Riposte

The armed riposte combines a block action with a counter-attack. When the attacker declares their attack, the defender declares a riposte. If the attacker fails to land a strike or if the defender successfully blocks the strike, the defender gets to immediately counter-strike her opponent. On a successful Formidable [Armed Martial Arts] test, the defender determines hit location and damage normally. However given a normal success, the defender applies one-half the normal damage dice. Given an Outstanding Success, the defender applies the full damage to the would-be attacker. On a normal failure, the defender does not block the strike—if it hit—and receives normal damage.

Hit Location

The attacker rolls for hit location on the Hit Location table. The die roll for hit location is not made for a surprise attack—the attacker picks the location.

The referee may choose to mandate hit locations if the situation seems to warrant it. For example, if an injured character crawls up to an enemy and attacks with a knife, the attack is unlikely to hit the target anywhere but in the legs. Similarly, a character standing on the roof of a truck and swinging a short chain is not going to hit the leg of an opponent standing on the ground.

Aimed Attacks

By taking an increased level of difficulty, an attacker may attempt to specify the hit location on the defender before resolving his armed melee attack. Aimed attacks increase the strike attempt by one level of difficulty (-1, harder). For normal attacks this makes the task Formidable [Armed Martial Arts]. For a riposte, the difficulty is Impossible [Armed Martial Arts]. If the attack succeeds, the attacker chooses the location hit.

Melee Weapon Damage

Damage inflicted from a melee attack depends upon the type of weapon being used. The Melee Weapons table gives the damage inflicted by each type of weapon. Some melee weapons have a notation indicating that the STR rating or half the STR rating of the attacker is added to the total damage. This damage reflects added damage caused by heavy blows from stronger characters.

Armor in Melee

Armor absorbs hits equal to twice its armor value from each armed melee combat attack.

Non-lethal Armed Combat

Sometimes it's more important to knock someone out than it is to kill them. This can be done with most weapons, but is harder with edged weapons. Non-lethal armed combat is conducted in the same method as normal lethal combat, but the attacker must declare non-lethal blows prior to resolving them. These blows cause no real physical damage—any damage they cause is checked off as damage, but goes away after the victim is rendered unconscious. Once a hit location receives wounds at the Critical level, the defender falls unconscious and remains so for 2D6 minutes. Causing non-lethal damage is a normal Armed Martial Arts task with blunt weapons, such as, a club, nunchucks, quarterstaff, or tonfa. With edged weapons like the axe, garrote, hatchet, machete, sai, spear, or sword, it is one level of difficulty greater (-1, harder).

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod.	Damage
Axe	L	-2	1D6 + STR
*Bayonet**	L	+1	1D6 + ½ STR
Bottle	S	—	1D6 + 2
Brass Knuckles	S	—	1D6 + UCD
Chain	L	—	1D6 + ½ STR
Club	S	-1	1D6 + ½ STR
Garrote	S	+1	Special**
Hatchet	S	—	1D6 + ½ STR
*Knife****	S	+2	1D6
Machete	S	-1	1D6 + STR
Nunchucks	S	-1	1D6 + UCD
Quarterstaff	L	0	1D6 + UCD
Sai	S	+1	1D6 + ½ UCD
Spear	L	—	1D6 + ½ STR
Sword	L	—	1D6 + STR
Sword-cane	L	—	1D6 + ½ STR
Tonfa	S	+1	1D6 + ½ UCD

* When on rifle.
** Unarmed combat damage x 2
*** Including bayonet, when not on rifle.
STR = Strength attribute in terms of hit points
UCDR = Unarmed Combat Damage Rating in terms of hit points

Melee Weapons Specialization

Characters may focus on a particular melee weapon type and become expert at it. Characters gain expertise with a particular weapon through extensive practice and the expenditure of one or more skill points. Up to three specialization levels can be added in this fashion. The first level costs one skill point, the second four points, and the third costs nine. To represent this dedication, players designate the specialty weapon and level next to the Armed Martial Arts cascade skill on their character sheet. Characters can take multiple weapon specialties by spending the skill point costs and game time in practice. When a character specializes with a weapon, she receives the following added benefits:

Additional Damage: The character does extra damage with the specialty weapon. The character deals an amount of additional damage dice equal to her specialization level. For example, a level three specialization receives 3D6 additional damage dice.

Melee Weapon Expertise

Level of Expertise	Skill Point Cost	Damage Bonus	Riposte Modifier
None	0	0	0
Level 1	1	1D6	-2
Level 2	4	2D6	-4
Level 3	9	3D6	-6

Improved Riposte: The character has an improved chance of defending themselves with the weapon when she specializes in it. For each level of specialization, the character subtracts two times that level from her riposte roll. For example, a level two specialization subtracts 4 from the to-hit roll.

Other Damage

Characters can take other forms of damage, including: burns, explosions, falling, and poison damage.

Burns

Characters may suffer burn damage from exploding vehicles, flamethrowers and other pyrotechnic weapons, such white phosphorus grenades, and open flames. Characters come in contact with burning fuel by being inside or near a vehicle when its fuel tanks explode. The primary burst radius of an exploding vehicle is 1.2 meters. All characters inside the vehicle when it explodes are covered with burning gasoline.

PCs come in contact with burning fuel from a flamethrower if hit by a burst from such a weapon.

Characters come in contact with thermite or white phosphorus when they are hit by fragments from the explosion of one of these types of shell or grenade. Whether the character is hit and by how many fragments is determined exactly as for normal fragments, as explained in the explosion rules below, but if a character is hit by a fragment, burn damage is suffered instead of a normal wound.

Characters come in contact with open flames when moving through a burning structure or a grass fire, usually to escape, but perhaps to rescue a wounded companion.

Players determine the amount of burn damage by the temperature of the flame and the length of exposure.

Temperature: Thermite and white phosphorus cause 2D6 damage (staged) per second in contact with a body part. Burning gasoline causes 1D6 damage per second in contact with a body part. Moving through a burning structure or grass fire causes 1D6 damage per phase per body part in proximity to the flame.

Exposure Time: In the case of open fires, the exposure time is measured in terms of combat phases actually in close proximity to the fire. In the case of burning fuel, exposure time begins at the start of the combat phase immediately after the character was hit. Characters hit by burning fuel will instantly begin attempting to extinguish the flames. They will make one such attempt per second in the phase with a successful Average [AGL] test extinguishing the flames on one body part (character's choice of which body part). Characters will still suffer burn damage during the second in which they extinguished the flames.

For example, Sybil's attack chopper has been shot out of the air, and as Sybil crawls from the wreckage, the fuel tank explodes, spraying her with blazing fuel. She begins rolling on the ground in an attempt

to extinguish the flames, but in the first second she fails to extinguish any fires and takes 1D6 damage to each hit location. In the second, she manages to smother the flames on her head, but still takes 1D6 in all locations. In the third second, she extinguishes her right arm, then takes 1D6 damage to each location except her head (which was extinguished one second ago). At the end of the next second, she will take no damage to head or right arm, and so on.

A character who suffers sufficient damage to lose consciousness partially through a phase (perhaps after three or four seconds) will remain conscious until the end of the phase and can continue to work at extinguishing flames until then.

Other characters may help extinguish the burning character, making one attempt per second of the phase in the same way as described above.

Protection: Any sort of helmet will protect the head from an open flame. Blazing fuel will burn through a helmet, or its heat will be conducted through after one combat turn. The helmet may be removed and discarded in one second without need for an Agility check. Flak jackets and Kevlar vests will protect characters from open flames, but they will catch fire if contacted by burning fuel.

Explosions

Many types of ammunition do damage mainly by virtue of their kinetic energy, their impact, in other words. Of course, the holes that they create in their targets tend to have an important effect, as well. In this section, however, we will delineate the effects of explosions due to explosive ammunition, demolitions, or equipment explosions.

The power of an explosion is described by two ratings: concussion and burst. Concussion is the effect of the massive overpressure wave generated by the explosion, while the burst radius is the area filled with small, high-energy fragments, often called shrapnel. These jagged metal fragments can cause severe injury, but they lose energy quickly due to their eccentric ballistic shape, and thus do not travel anywhere near as far as a bullet.

Concussion

Concussion can affect part or all of the body, so the number of concussion damage dice called for are rolled and divided evenly among the various body parts. Simply divide the total damage dice received by the total number of hit locations—seven for humans (see the Hit Location Table)—and apply that many dice to each location. Apply left over dice to hit locations as instructed by the referee. Players should note the Hit Location Table footnotes regarding sides and allocating damage.

The listed concussion value for an explosion is the number of damage dice rolled if a character is in physical contact with the explosion—same two meter square. Characters not in physical contact, but within the same eight meter grid square as the explosion suffer half this concussion (rounding fractions down). Characters in an adjacent eight meter grid square receive one quarter of the original concussion value, rounded down, and so on until the concussion is reduced to 0. Players should note that all concussion damage dice are staged up.

Concussion Damage Example

*Range**	*Concussion Damage Dice*
Contact	30
Same square	15
1 square	7
2 squares	3
3 squares	1
4+ squares	None

* 8-meter grid squares

The following example table shows the reduction of concussion damage at successive ranges for an explosion with a concussion value of 30.

Cover: Characters completely under solid cover, such as behind a thick wall, completely inside a trench or foxhole, or inside an armored vehicle, do not suffer the effects of concussion. Characters under partial cover—partially behind a wall, in a foxhole, or in the hatch of an armored vehicle—or prone, halve the concussion value of any attack on them. Players should note that this does not apply to explosions that are in physical contact with the character, such as grenades dropped into their laps.

Burst Radius and Fragmentation

The burst rating for an explosion or explosive weapon is the primary fragmentation radius—an area saturated with a high density of fragments. The secondary burst radius, which has a lower concentration of fragments, is twice the primary radius. Primary and secondary burst radii are expressed in meters but are stepped in increments usable with the tactical grid system.

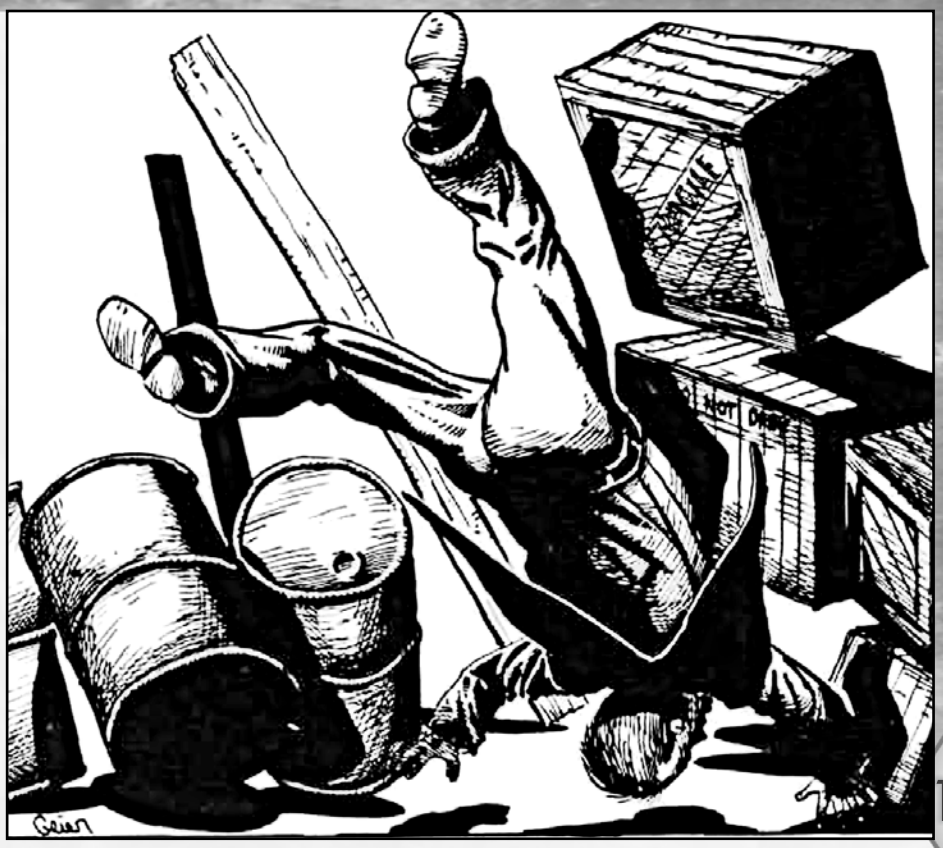
Hit Procedure: Roll 1D20 for each character within either the primary or secondary burst radius of an explosion. Characters within the primary burst radius are hit by multiple fragments on a roll of 16, a single fragment on a roll of 7-13, and no fragments on a roll of 14-20. Characters in the secondary burst radius are hit by multiple fragments on a roll of 1-4, a single fragment on a roll of 5-9, and no fragments on a roll of 10-20.

If multiple fragments hit a character, the player rolls 1D6 to determine the number.

Damage and Penetration: Fragments do damage as small arms fire. Fragments closer to the explosion are more

Burst Radius and Fragmentation

	1D20 Roll		
Burst Radius	*Multiple Fragments (1D6 Fragments)*	*One Fragment*	*No Fragments*
Primary	1-6	7-13	14-20
Secondary	1-4	5-9	10-20



dangerous than those farther away. Fragments in the primary burst area do 2D6 damage and have a PEN value of 1, that is, they expend 1 damage die per level of armor value (AV) struck. Thus, they penetrate AV1 and still do 1D6 damage. Fragments in the secondary burst area do 1D6 damage and will not penetrate armor (PEN = 0).

Explosive Rounds: When a high explosive round (HE, HEAT, etc., any round with a "C" penetration) hits a living target, apply number of damage dice equal to the round's penetration or concussion value, whichever is greater, and apply the entire damage rolled to the hit location that received the impact.

Penetration: All exploding rounds have a listed penetration value expressed as the minimum armor value of penetration. The actual penetration of the round versus vehicles is the listed penetration plus the roll of 2D6 (except for rounds with a listed penetration of Nil). For vehicles, the shooter compares penetration plus 2D6 to the armor value of the target vehicle and consults the Vehicle Damage tables for details.

Falling Damage

Characters falling or jumping from a height may take damage upon hitting the ground depending on how high they start. This damage is equal to 2D6 damage dice per meter fallen, and is distributed according to the hit location chart as follows. Roll three hit locations. The first location takes half the total damage points. The second location takes one quarter the total. The last location takes the remainder.

If the same location is rolled twice, it takes additional damage accordingly. It is possible for the same location to receive full damage.

Damage from falls can be reduced by Agility by rolling a number of D6 equal to the numerical value of the character's AGL and reduce the damage dice by that amount (removing damage points from locations at the character's discretion). Unconscious characters may not use their Agility in this manner, and characters who burdened may only use half their Agility (round down) in this manner.

Referees may adjust the total number of damage dice at their discretion to reflect factors such as soft surfaces (deduct several dice for landing in soft snow or mattresses, double the dice for landing on a metal picket fence or sharp rocks, etc.).

Falling off or out of a moving vehicle can also be damaging. If a character falls off or out of a moving vehicle, the character takes damage as it he fell one meter per 10 meters of combat move or 7 kilometers per hour of speed.

Poison

Some creatures, such as vipers, do little actual damage with their claws or teeth, but are able to inject poisons into their prey. Damage listings for these creatures are given in the form of a number followed by a small *p*, for poison, then another number. The first number represents the number of hits points actually done by the delivery system—the fangs, stingers, etc. If these hits are negated by armor, then no damage is suffered from the poison. However, if any damage does get through the armor, the target takes that damage on the round in which was hit, and on each succeeding combat phase the target also takes damage from the poison. The second number—the number following the *p*—is the damage that the poison inflicts and is always applied to the target's chest.

For simplicity's sake, poison damage is considered to continue until the character's chest wound level becomes critical. If the referee desires more realism, with correspondingly more complexity, each poison wound can be considered to cause damage for 10 phases (one minute), after which the toxin becomes dispersed enough to lose its potency.

HEALING

Characters use four levels of wound severity—scratch, slight, serious, and critical—to represent the way damage affects their body and actions.

Physical Wound Levels

The player marks off damage on their character's sheet in terms of hit points, starting from the Scratch level and continuing until reaching the Critical Wound level. If a character takes enough damage from a hit to immediately take a part of his body from unwounded to slightly wounded, the effects of a scratch wound are superseded by the effects of the slight wound. The effects on STR and Initiative are felt until sufficient healing has reduced the wound level to Scratch or unwounded (see below).

Healing and Wound Recovery

Each of the body's seven hit locations may be wounded to one of the four levels described above. In general, as wounded body parts heal, their wound level decreases through those levels in reverse order until they are no longer wounded—critical heals to serious, serious heals to slight, and slight heals to unwounded (healed). Scratch wounds are a special case, and are healed differently than more serious wounds.

Penalties caused by a wound level remain in effect until that wound level is reduced to the next level at which point penalties for the next level remain in effect.

First Aid

A character should have her wounds treated as soon as possible after she receives them. This is where first aid and the *Medical* (Trauma Aid) skill comes in. Any character can minister first aid to halt the loss of critical hit points, but successful application of the *Medical* (Trauma Aid) skill removes a number wounds equal to a Power Level using the Trauma aid asset. In order for Trauma Aid to be effective, it must be applied within 3 minutes of the time the wound was received. Effective Trauma Aid reduces critical wounds (stabilizing critical wounds) as shown in the Trauma Aid table. Trauma Aid has no effect on slight or scratch wounds, except to prevent infection. To administer first aid to damage caused by poison requires an antivenin auto-injector or a medical kit, which contains one.

First Aid Power Level = 1D10
+ Healer's [EDU + Medical (Trauma Aid)]
+ Patient's CON



First aid to stop loss of critical hits is an Easy [*Medical* (Trauma Aid)] or an Average [EDU] test. First aid to reduce critical wounds or speed healing requires a successful Difficult [*Medical* (Trauma Aid)] task check, but a medical kit must be available. If it is not, the task becomes Formidable. Conscious characters can attempt first aid on themselves. Players should note that the *Medical* (Surgery) skill can be substituted for Trauma Aid at a -1 difficulty level (harder). Also note that the attained power level is doubled for an Outstanding Success result. (See "Trauma Aid" on page 134)

Stabilizing Critical Wounds

Critical wounds must be stabilized immediately or the injured character will die. When rendering Trauma Aid—within the first three minutes—the healer can increase her effectiveness through the use of medical supplies. The medical kit is required or the difficulty is increased, but the use of blood plasma, strong sedatives, or a portable defibrillator each add +1 to

Wound Levels

Wound Level	*Description*
Scratch	Scratch wounds represent the initial shock of suddenly being hurt. The first time that a character takes damage during combat he loses his next action. Characters never suffer more than one lost action per 24-hour period for scratch wounds, regardless of how many they suffer in a combat. Players should note that the action loss for first damage can be avoided by succeeding at a Difficult [Initiative + CON] test.
Slight	A slight wound immediately reduces the character's Initiative rating by one (1) point. However, characters never suffer more than one Initiative reduction for slight wounds, regardless of how many they suffer. Slight wounds have no other effect on combat, although the referee may decide to penalize actions making use of slightly injured arms or legs. Characters have a number of Slight Wound hit point boxes equal to the Scratch level.
Serious	A serious wound reduces a character's effective STR by half (rounding the final STR rating down) and causes an additional immediate 1 point reduction of the character's Initiative rating for a total of two including the slight wound reduction. Characters whose Initiative ratings are reduced to 0 or less may not take any further actions during this combat. Characters have a number of Serious Wound hit point boxes equal to the Scratch level. Characters who suffer a serious injury must also succeed at a Formidable [CON] test to avoid losing consciousness. The roll must be repeated every combat turn in which the character attempts to conduct any activity. A serious injury to the head automatically causes loss of consciousness. Unconscious characters make an Formidable [CON] test at the start of each combat turn to attempt to regain consciousness. Finally, a serious wound to the leg or arm causes the character to lose the use of that limb until it is healed.
Critical	Critical wounds cause immediate loss of consciousness and initiate a loss of one (1) critical hit point each minute. Once all critical hit points have been marked off, the character dies. Medical attention can halt the loss of critical hit points. Characters have a number of Critical Wound hit point boxes equal to the Scratch level. Characters who lose consciousness due to a critical wound must pass an Impossible [CON] test with a negative die roll modifier for each critical hit point marked off. Should the Minion Hunter regain consciousness, her STR is halved again—one quarter original STR, round down. The character also immediately reduces her Initiative by three (3) for a total of five (5). Characters whose Initiative rating is reduced to zero (0) or less may not take any further actions during this combat.

the Trauma Aid skill level. These supplies can be used in conjunction with one another for a collective bonus. In a hospital or clinic setting, whole blood may be used instead of blood plasma, for a bonus of +2 instead of +1. In a hospital setting, doctors can use their Surgery skill instead of the Trauma Aid with no adverse impact on difficulty levels, but the doctor should treat the patient in an operating room. (See "Surgery" on page 134.)

Basic Healing Rate

A character without medical attention may heal from a slight wound level to unwounded in three days. To go from a serious to slight wound level takes four days, and from critical to serious takes one week. After spending convalescent time, the hit point boxes for that wound level are recovered. Players should note that healing of various body parts goes on simultaneously.

For example, on Monday, Pigeon is nearly eaten by a humongous sewer-dwelling alligator and receives a slight wound to his head, a serious wound to his chest, and a critical wound (3 hit point boxes) to each leg. Pigeon's roommate Tara administered first aid to stop the blood loss from the critical leg wounds. An ambulance team stabilized Pigeon's critical wounds by rolling a Basic Success, reducing the critical hits to one (1) each leg. Without medical insurance coverage and no surety income, Tara takes Pigeon home to recover.

Three days later, on Thursday, Pigeon's head wound has healed. By Friday, his chest wound has reduced to slight. On the next Monday, both critical wounds reduce to serious, and his slight chest wound reduces to unwounded (it has been three days since Friday). Four days later, on Friday, both legs reduce to slight, and Pigeon gets in a fight with his roommate, taking another slight wound to the head. By the next Monday, all three slight wounds have healed completely. Now Pigeon is totally ready to go out and get himself all messed up again.

Recovering Scratch Wounds

Scratch wounds require 24 hours to heal to an unwounded state. If a scratch wound is taken to a body part, and then further wounds to that body part during the day push that body part's wound level to slight, the rates and rules for healing from a slight wound are used. Slight wounds do not heal to a scratched state, they heal to unwounded without passing through the scratch wound level status, which is fully healed before the scratch wound.

Medical Care

Medical care and supervision will increase an injured character's basic healing rate. If a character is under successful medical care while healing, two days are trimmed from each stage of healing. In other words, critical wounds heal in five days, serious wounds in two days, and slight wounds in one day. (In the example above, Pigeon would have healed completely in eight days, rather than two weeks if he had a health care plan.)

Successful medical care requires two things. First, the caregiver must spend half an hour per wound level, per body area damaged, per day, tending to the wounds. For example, when Pigeon was first injured, he required four and a half

Trauma Aid

Power Level	*Stage of Success*	*Number of Wounds Recovered**
≤ 0	No effect	0
1-9	Basic Success	2
10-17	Stage Two	5
18-27	Stage Three	7
28-36	Stage Four	10
37-45	Stage Five	13
46-54	Stage Six	15
55-63	Stage Seven	17
64-72	Stage Eight	20
73-81	Stage Nine	25
≥ 82	Stage Ten	30

* Critical and serious wounds, slight and scratch wounds are unaffected. Double the Power Level on an Outstanding Success.

hours of care per day. When he reached only three slight wounds, only an hour and a half of care was required per day. Second, once per day the caregiver must pass an Average [*Medical* (Diagnosis)] test. If no medical equipment is available—a doctor's kit is minimum—the task check becomes Difficult.

Failure means that one of the two days' worth of time to be saved was lost. In other words, if the task is failed one day during the treatment period, only one day is saved from the normal healing time. If the task is failed twice, no days are saved. Failing the task a third time (or more) does not add time to the basic healing rate unless a catastrophic failure is rolled on this third check (or beyond). The referee has discretion to handle the doctor's catastrophic failure when diagnosing and treating a victim.

Treating Poison Wounds

Poison wounds can be treated just like regular wounds, with the exception that either a doctor's kit or an antivenin auto-injector is essential rather than optional and confers no bonus point to the task. Players should note that a successful first aid roll has the normal effect on wounds incurred and halts any further damage from the poison.

Adequate Diet and Shelter

If the referee decides that a wounded character has inadequate food or shelter, each wound level will require an extra day to reduce to the next level. These penalties are additive, meaning that a character with both inadequate food and inadequate shelter will take two extra days to reduce each wound level. For instance, imagine that Pigeon, in the example above, is hiding out in an abandoned warehouse and subsisting on nothing but water and a case of stale cheese crackers. This is certainly inadequate diet, so he'll suffer an additional day to heal each wound level. If the weather is cold, the heatless warehouse will also qualify as inadequate shelter, so Pigeon will require two extra days to heal each level. Now, instead of healing his slight head wound on Thursday, it will take until Saturday, the serious chest wound will take until Sunday to become slight, and the two critical leg wounds will take until the next Wednesday to reduce to serious.

Surgery

Surgery can reduce a critical wound drastically. Like any other medical care, it will usually be performed at a hospital, where all necessary equipment is available with quality postoperative care. But occasionally a character might have reasons for not going to a hospital for this care—insufficient money, hiding from the law, or being sought by assassins. In these cases, a friend might be asked to perform the surgery.

Surgery can only be performed by someone with a level 3 skill in *Medical* (Surgery), and it requires the use of surgical instruments. It is a Formidable [*Medical* (Surgery)] task to reduce a critical wound to serious immediately after the surgery—as opposed to the normal critical healing rate. The use of blood plasma and local anesthetic each add +1 to the surgeon's effective Medical skill, and are cumulative. If whole blood is used instead of plasma, it adds +2 to the effective skill level. A total or general anesthetic adds +3 if it is used instead of local anesthetic.

Only one surgery attempt can be performed per critical wound. Failure means that the wound remains critical. Catastrophic failure can result in extra healing time, loss of limb, or loss of life, depending upon the hit location receiving the surgery, the severity of the critical failure, and the referee's judgment of the situation as a whole.



Outlanders
by Jason L Blair

Jensen picked at the fresh cut with his fingertips. He worked his nails in, slowly separating the skin from the meat, until he managed to get in there up to his palm. He balled the corner of the beast's hide in his right hand, good and tight, and nudged the rest away with a long sharp blade. He worked it slowly, one inch at a time.

Mike found something less unsettling to put his eyes on. That wasn't the easiest thing to do in the outlands.

"Can't stomach it, eh, boy?" Jensen laughed.

"I'm fine. Just don't like seeing animals killed is all."

"But you like eating 'em, right? Love a good burger, do you?"

"I eat meat, yes, but—"

"But you don't like thinking of where it comes from." Jensen let loose a wad of dark spit. It spattered on the wooden slats of his hovel. Black dots, some big, some small, some streaming for a good foot or more, littered the floor of his place like some disgusting organic painting. "Typical."

Sarah knew better than to try to shy away. She kept her eyes fixed on that knife. She didn't trust the old man enough to look elsewhere.

"This part here," Jensen nudged a ball of fat with the point of his blade, "this is good stuff. Sizzle this in a pan, melt it down, drop some leg meat in there. Mm-mm. Worth twice the price, I tell ya."

"Where did your friend go? Do you know when our tire will be fixed?"

"Hanny won't take too long. Don't know what your rush is though. You're still miles from faceless meat and warm beds, my friend."

"It's past noon and if we get back on the road, we can make it there before sundown."

"Before sundown?" Jensen let out a big laugh. "You think they only come out at night? When the tellers talk about them being creatures of the dark, boy, they ain't talking about lack of sunshine."

Sarah moved in closer but then, wary of the man's cutting, backed away again. "What do you mean?"

"They ain't vampires, miss. They're demons. Satan's dogs. They live within the purifying flames. You think a little sunlight scares them?"

"They're not really demons though, are they? That's just—"

"Have you seen them?"

Mike straightened himself. "We've heard about them. A lot about them."

"Well, if you can look through your ears, I suppose you've seen them then."

Mike blanched. Sarah was fixed on the outlander; her eyes followed every motion of the outlander's hands.

"Let me tell you." Jensen flipped the animal carcass to its other side. He pointed at the half-moon gash in its neck. It looked like something had taken a chunk out with its teeth. But something big. Something with a bite the size of a human head. "What would you call something that can do this? Huh?"

He flipped the deer back over to his working side. "Demon. That's what I call it. And if you're fit to tell me Satan himself ain't leading the charge, well, I'll send you on your merry way, broken tire in tow. Cuz if they ain't demons, I guess you don't need me and Hanny's help."

The three looked up at Jensen, his eyes twitching with spite. Mike nodded.

"I guess you're right. Sorry. It's just—"

"Scary," Sarah finished.

"Scary?" Jensen whistled. "I guess that's one way to put it, miss. One way to put it."

A rattle from the front door. Hanny's massive head clanged against the pots that hung from the ceiling. The large man wiped his soot-caked hands on a greasy towel. His eyes drifted over to a ratty orange couch and the pile of discarded clothes and tools on top of it.

"Is our tire fixed?" Mike stood. He was already crossing to the door.

Hanny nodded. He hefted a wooden dowel from the trash. Jagged teeth shimmered in the harsh sun that rained through the cracks in the roof.

Jensen wiped the flat of his knife against his jeans. The blood and bits of fat smeared against the stained denim.

"I guess we'll be going then." Sarah tried to sound congenial. "Thank you for your help."

"Well, wait a minute," Jensen said. "Favors ain't free, young lady. We helped you, and Hanny and me reckon you owe us for our services."

"We don't have any money," Mike said, putting himself between the two men and Sarah.

"What's money gonna do us?" Jensen laughed. "Think they care about money?"

"They?"

"They need to eat." Jensen smiled. "They get hungry too."

Sarah bolted out the door. Mike followed. They rounded the back of the house toward the car. Sarah opened the driver's door and slid inside. The keys dangled from the ignition.

"Oh thank GOD!" Sarah gasped, turning the car over. The engine ground, metal against metal. She pumped the gas and jerked the shifter. It didn't budge.

Mike dove into the back seat.

"Gonna be hard to get anywhere after what Hanny done to your car, miss." Jensen came around the corner. The knife was gone, neatly sheathed in his boot; he tapped a shotgun against his leg as he walked. Hanny brought up the rear. The tree saw looked like a broken shiv in his oversized hands. "See, the deer is for us. We like wild meat. But the demons don't much care for game. They prefer more coddled prey. Suppler, I guess. Easier to chew."

Sarah tried to open the passenger door, yanking the handle futilely. She kicked at the door, breaking the window in the process. Seeing an out, she scrambled across the seat. Mike had opened the back passenger and was already out, ready to help Sarah through.

A shot rang, scattering hundreds of tiny pellets across the interior of the car. Sarah had been hit but couldn't really tell where. Her body locked in place. Her skin burned everywhere. She looked at Mike, weakly, and mouthed, "Run."

But the man stood, eying the two outlanders. Jensen held his gun on the boy while his partner rounded the car, swinging the tree saw lazily from his index finger.

"See? That's smart." Jensen loaded another shell into his gun. "No reason to die tired. Right, Hanny?"

VEHICLES



VEHICLES

Even though the use of vehicles is not as common as it was at the turn of the 21st century, vehicles are still plentiful. Characters will need vehicles to get to their adventure locations—riding or escorting vehicles may even be the adventure. As it is, with most characters there will also be combat involving vehicles. This section provides the necessary information on using vehicles for travel and combat.

Vehicle Travel

Vehicle travel includes strategic movement in the character's vehicles—travel between cities and countries—and tactical movement used during combat.

Travel and Encounters

Different adventure situations call for different treatments of travel and time passage. If a group is making a 200- or 300-kilometer trip from one city to the next, along a well-kept highway, for instance, the referee may simply have the players determine how long it takes to get there, based upon the exact distance and the speed of the vehicle(s) being used, and then consider the trip accomplished. On the other hand, the referee may decide to throw in an encounter to liven things up, or the adventure may call for a travel encounter. If the group is making a days-long trek across a rural stretch of broken ground, the referee may decide to cut down travel speed somewhat, to represent the necessity for more cautious progress, for scouting ahead, for vehicle maintenance, and the like. Generally, there will be more likelihood for encounter during such travel, simply because of the hazardous nature of the region. But in every case, the decision is left to the referee.

For long-range encounters or encounters with large parties, the referee may decide to use 30-second combat turns as the means of resolving the encounter. When greater detail is desired, combat phases can be used. The use of combat turns and combat phases is explained more completely in the Combat sections.

Vehicle Movement Rates

Each ground vehicle listing contains a pair of movement listings: *Cruise Speed*, which is how many kilometers the vehicle can effectively travel per hour, and *Combat Movement*, which is how many meters it can move per combat round. Additionally, each listing contains a pair of numbers: the first is a safe on-road movement rate; the second a safe off-road rate. Air- and watercraft have slightly different ratings, as explained later.

Movement rates for water vessels and aircraft are given in eight-meter increments moved per combat phase. When using a two-meter grid, multiply this number by four; when using individual meter measurement, multiply it by eight. Players should note that many water vessels have a movement allowance of 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, etc. When moving on the eight-meter grid, these vessels move an extra square every other phase.

Terrain and Travel

Vehicles can encounter all kinds of terrain during movement and this terrain impacts the rate at which movement is possible.

Operating Aircraft

The most difficult thing about operating aircraft is not the flying itself, but rather the takeoff and landing. Taking off or landing an aircraft each normally require an Easy [Pilot( )] skill roll unless complicated by mechanical difficulties, poor weather, or some other trouble. A failed takeoff or landing roll means that the pilot either pulls up from landing or *ground loops* at the end of the runway or aborts the maneuver for the moment. A Catastrophic Failure means the aircraft crashes and is destroyed. The extent by which the task was failed should indicate the seriousness of injuries, if any, sustained by pilot and crew.

Vehicle Combat

To this point, combat has almost exclusively dealt with combatants on foot. But occasionally characters will ride mounts or vehicles in combat situations. In resolving fire combat against vehicles, some additional die rolls must be made for vehicular weapons and damage. This section delineates the basic rules for incorporating those things into a battle.

Combat Movement

Incorporating vehicles into the combat sequence involves adding a few adaptations to the basic combat rules. Most of these adaptations involve vehicle movement. Players should note that vehicles move every phase regardless of player initiative or actions.

Units of Measure

As mentioned above, movement rates for ground vehicles are given in meters per combat phase, first on-road, then off-road. Aircraft and water vessels' movement rates are also given in meters, but in eight meters per combat phase. To get meters per phase, players should multiply by eight.

Boating Maneuvers

A few special rules apply to watercraft combat movement.

Turning: Each vessel has a turn rating which is the number of 45° turns it can make each combat turn (30 seconds). Regardless of this rating, only one turn can be made per phase (five seconds), and only on the phases in which the helmsman—or captain who is with the helmsman—can act.

Acceleration and Deceleration: Each vessel has an acceleration rating which is the amount by which it can increase its speed each combat turn. Regardless of the rating, only one point of increase can be made per phase, and then only in phases in which the helmsman—or captain who is with the helmsman—can act. A boat can decelerate at twice its acceleration per turn, but still at no more than one point per phase.

Rowed Boats: Rowboats may be rowed at up to—but not more than—twice their listed speed.

Sailboats: Sailboats will not move upwind, nor within 45° to either side of that direction.

Motorboats: Size 1 motorboats may be rowed if necessary.

Terrain

Terrain	*Effect*
Roads and Rivers	Travel on a good road is largely unaffected by the terrain through which the road passes, but good roads are becoming scarce. A poor road—one which is breaking up, partially washed out, or just hasn't seen a road crew in three or four years—allows travel at the full cross-country rate for vehicles, regardless of the terrain through which the road passes. Rivers serve a similar function for watercraft, but the draft of water in the channel can limit vessel passage.
Woods	Woods are forested areas of considerable density. While a person can walk through virgin forest, it is an impractical means of travel for vehicles and for a party of people for any distance. Thus, all travel through wooded areas is assumed to be along only paths and roads and through clearings whenever possible. Travel movement on foot through woods is at half the normal movement rate. Vehicles travel through woods is at half their off-road movement rate unless following a particularly well-travelled dirt road, in which case they move at their full off-road movement rate. Bicycles may not be ridden through woods except along such roads or along a well-defined trail.
Swamp	Swamps are difficult to traverse, but a person on foot can move at full movement rate. All vehicles move at half of their off-road movement rate. Bicycles may not be ridden. Hovercraft and shallow draft "airboats" can move in swamps at their full rate, unless the swamp is heavily forested.
Hills	Hills are relatively steep but regular rolling ground. All movement is reduced by half in hills. Hills may also be wooded. If so, determine the movement rate for woods first and then apply the hill terrain reductions to the result.
Open	Open terrain is generally flat or gently rolling grasslands, and for the most part consists of former cultivated lands which have reverted to the wild but are not yet wooded. Open terrain also includes cultivated ground. All movement through open terrain is at the full off-road movement rate.
Impassable	Terrain that is rocky, extremely steep, or cluttered with obstacles is considered impassable to ground vehicles. Reefs, rocks, and sand bars form impassable terrain for vessels.

Effects of Terrain on Vehicle Movement

	Ground Vehicles			*Vessels*
Terrain	*No road*	*Rough Road*	*Paved Road*	*Shallow draft airboats and Hovercraft*
Open	Off-Road Rate	Off-Road Rate	On-Road Rate	N/A
Woods	Impassable	Off-Road Rate	On-Road Rate	N/A
Swamp	Impassable	½ Off-Road Rate	On-Road Rate	Full movement rate
Hills	½ Movement Rate for other terrain			N/A

Effects of terrain combine when traveling through multiple terrain features.

Fire From Moving Vehicles

Characters may not conduct aimed fire from a moving vehicle. They may fire quick shots or bursts at one level greater difficulty than normal. Drivers fire quick shots at two levels of difficulty greater than normal, since their attention is split. Pilots or crew of aircraft firing weapons mounted on the aircraft are a special case and do not suffer these penalties, although crew and passengers firing non-mounted weapons (such as rifles or pistols) do.

Target Movement

If the target is moving 30 meters or more in the current phase, any attempt to hit it is conducted as if at a range greater than normal. For normal fire, this merely means one level more difficult than normal, but also impacts automatic fire.

"Drive" Action

When vehicles are involved in combat, characters must operate them using the Drive action. Drive includes the operation of all types of vehicles, from bicycles to oil tankers to space shuttles. In some cases, performing this action will require a skill check. In others, the action is considered to be automatically successful. For instance, a character who was using the Drive action to pilot a helicopter through a train tunnel might have to make a Difficult [Pilot( )] test, while another character who was driving a family car along a city street in good weather, or who was coming to a safe halt at a well-marked stop sign, require no check at all.

Characters can combine a few other actions with the Drive action. Talking and driving can be done together freely. The Ready/Change Equipment, Reload, and Fire actions can each be done while driving, but any necessary driving checks are at one level more difficult—sometimes requiring a check that might not otherwise be required.

Driver Initiative

Driving a vehicle is considered to be a special case of the repetitive action option. That is, vehicles move every phase, regardless of the Hesitation rating of their operators. This movement is considered to be simultaneous, although for simplicity the referee will follow the Reaction order.

At the beginning of each 30-second combat turn, each player of a driving character tells the referee the basic direction and speed of the vehicle. This can include such things as going in a straight line, following a road or path, travelling off-road toward a landmark, driving to a particular position and stopping, following a leading vehicle, or any similarly simple plan. The vehicle then follows the stated course through all phases prior to the driver's next turn to act. The only change that can be made to this plan during these phases is to bring the vehicle to a halt in response to an unforeseen obstacle or action—thus terminating the repetitive action.

Once a character's time to act comes up, however, that character can freely divert from the stated plan, choosing a new action each phase, as desired.

Fast Driving and Mishaps

During combat, a vehicle may travel faster than the listed safe on-road/off-road speeds at the risk of a mishap. Driving at up to twice the safe speed requires an Average check versus the appropriate vehicle skill. Ground vehicles—with the exception of bicycles—may travel at up to three times the safe speed, but this requires a Difficult task check. In either case, the roll is made each phase where the driver can act. Failure of the check means a mishap occurs.

Ground Vehicle Mishaps: The vehicle has become stuck in a ditch, or bottomed out in rough ground. It cannot move until it becomes unstuck. In each phase that the driver would normally act, a Difficult roll versus the appropriate vehicle skill may be made in an attempt to correct the mishap. Success means the vehicle becomes unstuck. If the mishap was the result of a Catastrophic Failure, however, the vehicle suffers some sort of severe damage. The referee will determine the exact effects, based upon the situation at the time and may require a Power Level check to determine how bad the mishap was. It may be that the vehicle suffers a collision and perhaps with passenger injuries, or simply that it has become too mired down to become unstuck without the aid of a towing vehicle.

Water Vessel Mishaps: The vehicle suffers a stall of some sort. Engines die, sails break loose, oars are dropped, and the like. To get the vessel underway again, the character in charge can attempt an Average roll versus the appropriate vessel skill once per phase in which that character would normally act. Success means the problem has been resolved. If the mishap was the result of a Catastrophic Failure, however, the vessel has suffered some sort of permanent damage, as determined by the referee, based upon the situation at the time.



Aircraft or Spacecraft Mishaps: The pilot has lost control of the craft due to aerodynamics, maneuver forces, or stalled engines, etc., and begins rushing toward the ground. Once per phase, the pilot can make an Average check versus the appropriate Pilot skill to regain control. Success means that control is regained. Based upon the speed of the craft and its altitude at the time control was lost, the referee will determine how many phases can elapse before the craft runs out of air space. If the pilot has not regained control by this time, the craft crashes, with damage being determined by the referee's judgment. Note that if the mishap was the result of a Catastrophic Failure, attempts to regain control are at Difficult level, rather than Average.

Driving Bicycles and Motorcycles

A character can attempt to go up to twice the safe speed on a bicycle. Characters who are encumbered travel at half speed on bicycles and may not go faster. Travelling over speed on a bicycle requires an Average [AGL] test. Failure means the character falls off, but no damage results. Catastrophic Failure results in damage to bike and/or rider.

Motorcycle mishaps mean the driver has taken a spill. Characters suffer 1D6 hit points of damage unless they succeed at a Difficult [AGL] test. The rider can use the next available action to remount the motorcycle and continue. Catastrophic Failures mean the driver takes 1D6 points of damage, and the motorcycle suffers one suspension hit.

Firing at Vehicles and Vessels

Firing at vehicles and vessels is similar in general principle to firing at individuals, but there are a few differences. The following sections are specific to firing at vehicles and vessels.

Fire Control

Many vehicle-mounted guns have range finders, magnifiers, thermal imagers, or other targeting systems that provide a fire bonus to the gunner's marksmanship. The bonus may only be used for aimed shots and only when shooting at land vehicles, vessels, and other large targets, such as buildings. The entry in the equipment list for each vehicle gives its fire control bonus. This bonus is added to the gunner's modified marksmanship at medium and long range. Half of the bonus is added at extreme range. Players should note that factors which cause a target to be treated as being at a longer range—movement or obscuration—do not change the range finder bonus, only the effective marksmanship of the gunner. For example, firing at an obscured target at close range is treated as if at medium range for determining the gunner's effective skill; it does not allow use of the medium range range-finder bonus since the target is actually at close range.

Antitank Missiles (ATM)

On rare occasions, guided antitank missiles may become available to characters. Unlike other direct fire weapons, *the range given on the combat chart for an antitank missile is its maximum range.* Within this range, the chance to hit is the same regardless of distance: It is an Easy [Tac Missile] task, however, the firer must take an aim action before firing, and (except for active antitank missiles, see below) must continue to aim during the entire flight of the missile or it will miss the target. All missiles travel 1000 meters per combat phase.

If a missile-firing character is hit by any sort of attack, the aiming concentration will be broken and the missile will miss its target.

Active Missiles

Active Missiles are fire-and-forget missiles that, once aimed and launched, will continue to guide towards the target without further actions by the operator. The firing character must still aim before firing, but once the missile is fired there is no need to continue to aim.

Long Range Missiles

Characters firing missiles at targets beyond the character's ability to see must use the RCV Operation skill instead of the Tac Missile skill. Targeting system bonuses still apply, but the operator's guidance actions are repetitive until the round impacts.

Multiple-Barrel Guns

In rare cases, large caliber guns with multiple barrels may find their way into combat. In such a case, the characters resolve the firing procedure as normal up to the point of calculating the number of hits achieved. When this point is reached, the resultant number is multiplied by the number of barrels on the weapon. For example, if a two-barrel gun were used, the number of hits would be doubled.

Boat Target Size

Boats are often much larger than other types of vehicles, so many of them are much easier to hit with weapon fire. When firing at a boat, add 1 to the chance of hitting it for each number by which its size rating exceeds 1. For example, add 2 to the chance of hitting a size 3 boat.

Firing at Aircraft

Sometimes characters will want to fire at aircraft flying around. Characters can fire at aircraft using ground weapons (i.e. from the ground) or from weapons mounted in their own aircraft (i.e. air-to-air).

Ground Weapons

The only ground weapons which may fire at aircraft are automatic weapons and antiaircraft missiles. Non-automatic weapons typically require extreme luck to hit and aircraft, much less to cause sufficient damage.

Characters can fire automatic weapons at aircraft using the normal rules to hit, but suffer one level of increased difficulty. All automatic small arms weapons cause minor damage. All larger caliber automatic weapons cause major damage. Each firing automatic weapon can only achieve one hit per combat phase, regardless of the actual number of hit rolls successfully made.

Antiaircraft missiles are fired using the Tac Missile skill. The accuracy of the missile indicates the difficulty level of the task. A successful task roll indicates that the target aircraft suffers minor damage; an Outstanding Success indicates major damage.

Air-to-Air Combat

Aircraft may also be fired at by other aircraft using either automatic weapons or antiaircraft missiles. All rules for firing are the same, with the following additions.

All hostile aircraft engaged in combat are either *advantaged* or *disadvantaged* with respect to each other. The advantaged aircraft is the aircraft with the higher total of speed points plus Pilot skill plus maneuver points. Advantage/disadvantage is recalculated each phase.

Speed Points: Speed points are equal to the current combat speed of the aircraft divided by 10, rounding fractions down. For example, an aircraft with a printed speed of 40 is being flown at twice its safe speed, or 80, has eight speed points.

Pilot Skill: Pilot skill is the actual skill level of the pilot, usually a skill from the Pilot skill cascade. In this case, it is not a commander, navigator, or other crewmember of the aircraft, but the actual pilot operating the controls. When operating a remotely piloted aircraft, the pilot uses their RCV Operations skill.

Maneuver Points: Maneuver points are gained by attempting difficult maneuvers. An Average skill roll maneuver gains 1 point, Difficult gains 2, and one stage further gains4. Failure is treated as a mishap—typically a wing stall or engine stall.

If the advantaged aircraft's total of *speed + skill + maneuver* exceeds the disadvantaged aircraft's total by 50% or more, the advantaged plane may break off contact and successfully escape. Otherwise it must stay and fight.

If a fight—an exchange of fire—ensues, the advantaged aircraft picks the range of the combat, provided the distance chosen is still within range of at least one of the disadvantaged aircraft's weapons. If the disadvantaged aircraft has no weapons, it must be within range of at least one of the advantaged aircraft's weapons.

Fixed weapons, such as machineguns and cannon fixed to fire forward, and antiaircraft missiles may only be fired at hostile aircraft if the firing aircraft is advantaged with respect to the target. Flexible mount weapons, such as gun turrets or door-mounted machineguns, may fire at enemy aircraft whether advantaged or disadvantaged with respect to them. If disadvantaged, however, the fire is conducted at one difficulty level greater.

Vehicle Damage

Like human targets, vehicles in ***Conspiracy Rules*** have various hit locations. When a hit is scored on a vehicle, damage is determined by a series of steps.

1. Determine the hit location by rolling 1D6 and comparing to the Vehicle Hit Locations table.

2. Compare the penetration value of the round to the hit location's armor value, to determine damage severity—major or minor.

3. Determine the specific damage by rolling 1D6 and comparing to the damage severity table for the vehicle, hit location, and the damage severity previously identified.

Ground Vehicle Configuration

In ***Conspiracy Rules*** are divided into two main groups: surface vehicles and aerospace vehicles. Aerospace vehicles include all those covered by the Pilot and RCV Operations skill. Surface vehicles include all those covered by the Vehicle Use and the **Vessel** cluster skills. Land surface vehicles are further subdivided into three types

(noted on each vehicle's vehicle card): standard, turreted, and crew in hull. Players will use the target's configuration to determine damage from a hit.

Standard: These vehicles have a roughly rectangular shaped body or "hull." Passenger cars and trucks are standard vehicles.

Turreted: Turreted vehicles have a large, manned turret on top of the hull. Tanks are turreted vehicles.

Crew In Hull: A crew-in-hull vehicle combines a standard hull with a small, unmanned turret. (While there are no crew-in-hull vehicles provided in the Conspiracy Rules basic game, some may appear in later supplements.)

Hitting Bicycles and Motorcycles

All small arms hits on a bicycle or motorcycle result in damage. All hits by larger weapons result in its destruction. A damaged bicycle or motorcycle can no longer be ridden. Characters riding a bicycle or motorcycle when it is hit fall off, taking no damage if on a bicycle. Characters riding a motorcycle at more than its safe speed suffer 1D6 damage unless they pass a Difficult [AGL] test.

Hit Locations

When a hit is scored on a vehicle, a 1D6 roll must be made to determine where it impacted. One point is added to the die roll if the shot was made upon the vehicle's side. The final result is then compared to the Vehicle Hit Locations table, to determine exact hit location. Those locations are explained as follows:

Hull: This reflects a hit upon the main body of the vehicle, whether it be an aircraft's fuselage, an automobile's body, or a boat's hull.

Superstructure: Many water vessels have structures built above the hull. This die roll result means the target vessel was hit in that area. If the vessel is flush decked—it has no superstructure—treat this result as a hull hit.

Suspension: The round impacted the ground vehicle's suspension—tires, tracks, legs, etc.

Turret: If the vehicle has a turret, the round impacts upon it. For vehicles without a turret, treat this as a hull hit.

Waterline: This indicates a hit below the waterline on a water vessel, resulting in flooding. The exact results of flooding are explained later.

Wing: In the case of rotary craft, this indicates a hit upon the rotor. On all other aircraft, it is a hit upon one wing or the other.

Vehicle Hit Locations

Die Roll[1]	*Surface Vehicle Result*	*Aircraft Result*
1	Turret / Superstructure[2]	Wing
2	Hull	Wing
3	Hull	Wing
4	Hull	Hull
5	Hull	Hull
6	Suspension / Waterline[3]	Hull
7	Suspension / Waterline[3]	Hull

[1] Add 1 to roll for side shots.
[2] If the vehicle has no superstructure, treat this result is a hull hit.
[3] Minor damage halves speed; major damage immobilizes the vehicle. Two minor results equal one major.

Suspension Hits

No damage tables are provided for suspension hits. One minor damage result to a vehicle's suspension halves that vehicle's movement. A second minor damage, or any major damage, immobilizes the vehicle.

Tracked suspensions are treated like any armored part of the vehicle using the armor value listed. Wheeled suspensions do not have an armor value, but instead have a critical damage level. Each time a weapon hits the suspension, it inflicts damage equal to its final penetration. Once the cumulative damage reaches the critical damage level, the suspension suffers minor damage. Once it reaches twice that level it suffers major damage. In most cases, any hit on a wheeled suspension will immobilize the vehicle. Only in the case of small arms fire is the cumulative damage likely to be important.

Overhead Attacks

Certain actively guided antitank missiles may be programmed to fly over the target and attack it from above. For overhead hit locations never add 1 to the die roll for a side shot and treat all suspension hits as hull hits instead. All attacks are resolved using the vehicle's side armor value.

Damage Resolution

To complete determining the extent of the vehicle's damage, the character will compare the striking round's penetration value and the armor of the hit location along with any other special factors.

Penetration: Once the hit location is determined, the final penetration value of the attacking weapon is compared to that location's armor value. But penetration is figured differently for small arms and exploding rounds.

Small Arms: When using small arms against living targets, the weapons' penetration value indicates the number of damage dice lost per level of armor on the target, and this penetration value varies with range. Small arms fire against vehicles is handled somewhat differently. For attacks on vehicles, the number of damage dice is divided by the appropriate penetration value (rounded down). The result is the weapon's penetration versus vehicles.

Exploding Rounds: Rounds which explode always have only one penetration listed—either a number followed by the letter C—indicating that it is constant throughout its range—or the notation *Nil*. If the value is not "Nil", roll 2D6 and add the total to the listed value; the result is the final penetration value. If the notation Nil is present, the round has no final penetration effect.

Vehicle Damage Severity

Pen – AV[1]	*Result*
≤ 0	No effect
1 – 10	1 Minor
11 – 20	2 Minor
21 – 40	1 Major
41 – 60	2 Major
≥ 61	3 Major

[1] P–AV = Penetration minus target location's armor value.

Armor: Once the penetration value and hit location are known, players consult the vehicle description and note the armor value at that location. Hulls and turrets each have a front, side, and rear armor value. Tracked suspensions have one armor value which is used when hit from all angles. Wheeled suspensions do not have an armor value, but do have a critical damage value, which is listed in parentheses to differentiate it from armor values.

Unarmored Vehicles: Unarmored vehicles have a slight armor protection provided by their metal bodies, but it is an incomplete cover. Whenever a shot hits an unarmored vehicle, there is a 50% chance of the shot hitting metal and a 50% chance of it going through the windows or canvas cargo covers. If it hits metal, the shot is resolved normally, and the vehicle gets the benefit of its armor. If it goes through the window or cargo area, the shot is always resolved as minor damage, ignoring damage results other than *crew* or *passenger/cargo*.

Extent of Damage

Subtract the correct armor value of the target from the final penetration of the weapon and consult the Vehicle Damage Resolution chart. If the result is 0 or a negative number, the shot had no effect. If it is a positive number, the result will read out (from the chart) as from one to three damage results, and will indicate whether they are minor or major.

When firing at aircraft, severity of damage is determined differently. All automatic small arms weapons cause minor damage when they hit, while all larger caliber automatic weapon cause major damage. When firing missiles, a successful task roll indicates that the target aircraft suffers minor damage, while an outstanding success roll indicates major damage.

Damage Implementation

Locate the damage table corresponding to the target vehicle's configuration (standard, turreted, boat, etc.). Find the correct section (minor or major damage, hull or turret damage) and roll 1D6 once for each required damage result.

The following results are possible:

1 Crewmember: If a turret hit, the crewmember is selected from the turret crew. If a hull hit, the crewmember is selected from the hull crew—most likely the driver. Randomly determine which crewmember is hit. The crewmember suffers 1D6 hits, each of which does 1D6 damage. Determine hit location separately for each hit.

2 Crewmembers: Exactly as above, but two crewmembers are hit, and they are selected randomly from the entire vehicle crew, not just those in the hull or turret.

2 Passengers: Two passengers are selected at random and are hit exactly as noted above. If this is not a passenger-carrying vehicle, then this is treated as a 1 Crewmember hit. If this is a passenger-carrying vehicle but no passengers are present, this has no effect.

Sight/Vision: The hit damaged the gun sight or night vision equipment. The referee determines which.

Traverse: The hit jams the turret traverse and the turret ca no longer turn. This makes it impossible to fire any fixed weapon—such as the main gun or a coaxial machinegun—in the turret until it is unjammed. Repairing the traverse is an Average [Mechanic] task. It takes a half hour and cannot be done from inside the vehicle.

Secondary: The hit destroys one machinegun, grenade launcher, or other secondary weapon.

Loader: Either the human loader is hit, as for a crew hit above, or the hit destroys the vehicle's autoloader.

Radio: The vehicle's radio is destroyed.

Main Armament: The hit damages the vehicle's main armament and it can no longer fire.

Ammo: The hit has penetrated to the vehicle's ammunition storage. The vehicle loses a percentage of stowed ammunition equal to the amount by which the final penetration exceeded the vehicle's armor value (Pen – AV). If the vehicle is armed with any exploding rounds or large-caliber gun rounds, this percentage is also the chance that the ammunition will explode. The target vehicle's player roll percentile dice and if the result is less than or equal to the result (Pen – AV), the ammunition explodes, the vehicle is destroyed and the crew is killed.

Weapon/Ammo: The hit destroys one weapon system at the hit location. If no weapon is present in the hit location, treat this result as an ammo hit (see above). If no ammo is present, the hit has no effect.

Engine: The engine is hit and rendered inoperable. The vehicle may not move.

Fuel: The fuel tank of the vehicle has been hit. The vehicle loses a percentage of fuel equal to the amount by which the final penetration exceeded the vehicle's armor value (Pen – AV). This percentage is also the chance that the fuel will ignite. The target vehicle's player roll percentile dice and if the result is less than or equal to the result (Pen – AV), the vehicle catches fire and the crew must immediately bail out.

Staging Up Vehicle Damage

Some rolled results convert the damage into a different type. For example, if a minor turret hit is achieved against a turreted vehicle but a 6 is rolled on the damage table,

the hit is converted into a major turret hit. In this case, roll again on the major turret table. If a 6 is rolled on the Major Turret table, the damage is converted to a minor *hull* hit. If a 6 is then rolled on the Hull table, it is converted to a major hull hit. There is no possibility of any alteration to a major hull hit.

Fire: Water vessels are usually quite susceptible to fire, as even steel-hulled boats tend to be full of combustible material. In addition to a fuel hit causing the fuel to ignite, a fire result also appears on the damage table to represent other onboard combustibles catching fire. The final penetration of the gun which caused the damage is the initial level of the fire. The fire will increase in level by 1D6 each 30-second combat turn (normally checked between combat turns, before the Leadership phase).

Characters may attempt to put out the fire by spending an entire combat turn fighting it. Extinguishing a fire is a Difficult [CON] task. For every successful task roll made by a character, the fire is reduced in level by 1D6. Outstanding success reduces the fire by 2D6 levels. Catastrophic Failure results in a burn injury to the firefighter.

If the level of the fire exceeds the vessel's tonnage divided by 10, the fire will begin burning out of control and cannot be extinguished. Roll 1D6 at the start of each combat turn thereafter. The fuel and ammunition on board will detonate on a roll of 6, destroying the vessel.

Flooding: Vessels which suffer waterline hull damage will begin to flood. Each vessel has three rows of flotation hit boxes, with boxes in each row equal to the vessel's tonnage. The amount by which the final penetration exceeded the vessel's armor is the number of boxes marked off. All flooding hits are marked in the top row of flotation boxes until the row is full, then in the second row, then in the third.

When the first row of boxes is full, the vessel's speed is halved. When the second row is full, the vessel is "dead in the water" and may not move under its own power, instead drifting with the current. When the third row of boxes is full, the vessel will sink.

If a vessel has pumps, each point of pump rating will reverse one point of flooding per combat turn. A human can bail one point per turn, as well.

No Effect: The round passes through the aircraft's wing with no serious effect.

Controls: The control surfaces or connections are



damaged, making the craft more difficult to control. All Pilot skill checks become one level more difficult. Additional damage results to the controls cause additional difficulty levels.

Instruments: The craft's instrument panel is damaged and instruments begin to fail (altimeter, windspeed indicator, fuel indicator, compass, and the like).The pilot must make an Average task roll to avoid a mishap at the start of each subsequent combat turn. Additional damage results to the instruments cause additional difficulty levels.

Fireball: The craft explodes in flame, destroying everyone and everything inside. It is Difficult [AGL] to jump out of the plane the instant before explosion. Ejecting is Average [AGL or Pilot], whichever is higher.

Collision Damage

It is entirely possible for vehicles to collide with one another in combat. The following general rules apply in those situations.

Damage done depends upon the size of the vehicle and the *net combat speed.* Net combat speed depends upon the relative direction and speed of the two colliding vehicles. Vehicles headed in opposite directions add their speeds together. Those travelling in the same direction subtract the slower vehicle's speed from the faster vehicle's. All others use the speed of the faster for determining collision damage.

Ground and Water Craft

For ground vehicles and water vessels, the damage value caused by a collision is equal to the tonnage of the object collided with, times the net combat speed of the collision, divided by 10. For ground vehicles, this number is used as a penetration value against a randomly rolled hit location. For water vessels, the hit location is automatically considered waterline hull, the collision value is divided by the armor value of the given location, and the resultant number is then applied as waterline hull damage, causing flooding.

Air and Space Craft

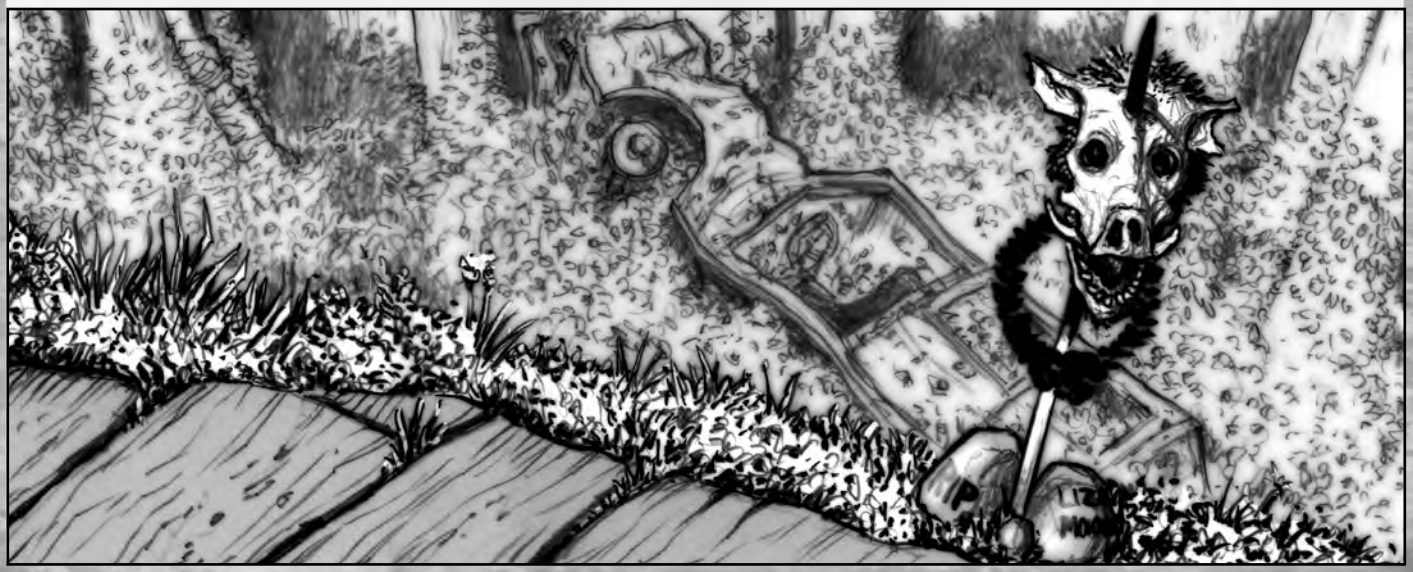
For aircraft and shuttles, collision damage value equals tonnage times net speed, but *not* divided by 10. A random roll is made as normal to determine wing or body as hit location, then the damage value is used as a penetration value versus the hit location's armor value, the result being used on the Vehicle Damage Severity table.

Vehicle Collisions With Creatures

When a vehicle collides with a human or other figure, including those riding bicycles or motorcycles, severe injury can result. In order to calculate the effects of this injury, first multiply the collision speed times the vehicle tonnage. If the target character is riding a bike or motorcycle, this number is the percentage chance that the bike or motorcycle is damaged enough to become inoperable. Next, the number is divided by two and becomes damage applied to a randomly rolled hit location on the target. Target figures have a chance to leap out of the way of an oncoming vehicle, by succeeding at an Average [AGL] test. If they succeed, they take no damage; otherwise they are struck by the vehicle.

Loss of Control

After all damage effects are calculated, operators of vehicles involved in collisions must immediately make a Difficult test of the appropriate skill in order to remain in control of their vehicle. Failure at this check means the vehicle goes out of control. Ground vehicles will skid to an uncontrolled stop, possibly colliding with something else and requiring a second damage check (at the referee's option). Water vessels will drift with the current, spinning slowly until control is regained. Aerospace craft will plummet toward the ground at maximum speed. It is a Difficult test versus the appropriate vehicle skill to regain control, which can be made once per phase in which the driver is normally allowed an action. A Catastrophic Failure at the original test means the vehicle is damaged so severely that control cannot be regained.



Vehicle Hit Locations

Die Roll[1]	Surface Vehicle Result	Aircraft Result
1	Turret / Superstructure[2]	Wing
2	Hull	Wing
3	Hull	Wing
4	Hull	Hull
5	Hull	Hull
6	Suspension / Waterline[3]	Hull
7	Suspension / Waterline[3]	Hull

[1] Add 1 to roll for side shots.
[2] If the vehicle has no superstructure, treat this result is a hull hit.
[3] Minor damage halves speed; major damage immobilizes the vehicle. Two minor results equal one major.

Standard Configuration Vehicle Damage

Minor Result		Major Result	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	1 crewmember	1	Engine
2	1 crewmember	2	Engine
3	2 passengers[1]	3	Fuel
4	2 passengers[1]	4	Fuel
5	Radio or sight/vision[2]	5	Weapon/ammo
6	Major hull	6	Weapon/ammo

[1]2 passengers becomes a 1 crewmember hit if this is not a passenger carrying vehicle. If it is a passenger-carrying vehicle but no passengers are present, the hit has no effect. Cargo destroyed may be substituted for this result at the referee's discretion. "Referee's choice.
[2] Referee's choice

Turreted and Crew-in-Hull Configuration Vehicle Damage

Turret Minor		Turret Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	Loader[1]	1	Loader[1][2]
2	Sight/vision	2	Main armament
3	Sight/vision	3	Main armament
4	Traverse	4	Main armament
5	Secondary	5	Major hull
6	Major turret	6	Minor hull

Hull Minor		Hull Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	1 crewmember	1	Engine
2	Loader[1]	2	Engine
3	2 passengers[2]	3	Fuel
4	2 passengers[2]	4	Fuel
5	Radio	5	Ammo
6	Major hull	6	Ammo

[1]Loader is either a hit on the autoloader mechanism or the actual crewmember loading the gun. This becomes a driver hit if neither is present.
[2]The loader result is a Main Armament result for Crew-in-Hull configurations.
[3]2 passengers becomes a 1 crewmember hit if this is not a passenger carrying vehicle. If it is a passenger-carrying vehicle but no passengers are present, the hit has no effect. Cargo destroyed may be substituted for this result at the referee's discretion.

Vessel Damage

Waterline Minor		Waterline Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	Waterline hull	1	2 crewmembers
2	Waterline hull	2	Rudder/screw
3	Waterline hull	3	Engine
4	1 crewmember	4	Fuel
5	Cargo	5	Ammo
6	Major waterline	6	Minor hull

Hull Minor		Hull Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	1 crewmember	1	Main armament
2	Auxiliary machinery[1]	2	Main armament
3	Secondary armament	3	2 crewmembers
4	Radio/radar[2]	4	2 crewmembers
5	Sight/vision[3]	5	Ammo
6	Major hull	6	Fire

Superstructure Minor		Superstructure Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	1 crewmember	1	2 crewmembers
2	Radio/radar	2	2 crewmembers
3	Sight/vision	3	Fire
4	Secondary weapon	4	Fire
5	Secondary weapon	5	Ammo
6	Major superstructure	6	Major hull

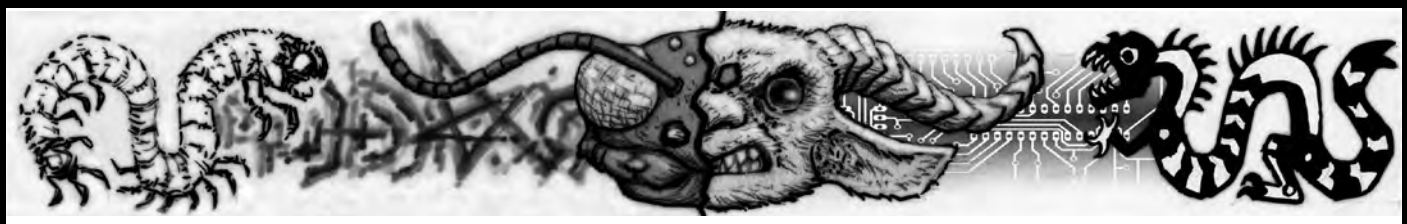
[1]Auxiliary machinery includes bilge pumps, power winches on the deck, generators, etc.
[2]A radio/radar hit in the hull becomes 1 crewmember if this is a vessel with a superstructure.
[3]A sight/vision hit in the hull becomes auxiliary machinery if this is a vessel with a superstructure.

Aerospace Vehicle Damage

Hull Minor		Hull Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	1 crewmember	1	Engine
2	Controls	2	Engine
3	Controls	3	Instruments
4	2 passengers[1]	4	Instruments
5	Radio	5	Weapon/ammo
6	Major hull	6	Minor wing

Wing Minor		Wing Major	
Die	Result	Die	Result
1	No effect	1	Controls
2	Mo effect	2	Fuel
3	Controls	3	Fuel
4	Controls	4	Fuel
5	Controls	5	Fuel
6	Major wing	6	Fireball

[1]2 passengers becomes a 1 crewmember hit if this is not a passenger-carrying vehicle. If it is a passenger-carrying vehicle but no passengers are present, the hit has no effect. Cargo destroyed may be substituted for this result at the referee's discretion.



Marching Orders
by Jason L Blair

I can still imagine that stone-still look on his face. The one that let you know with the barest trace whether you done good or you'd messed up royally. No anger, no praise, just that look. Sends chills through my bones to this very day. It was that face I imagined when I heard the news.

"Kellar is dead?"

John let out a long breath that filled my ears with static. "Yep. Happened last night. Just got off the phone with Margaret and wanted you to be the first to know."

"What happened?"

"They were clearing out an infestation in Kansas. He and his men had been camped there for just a couple days. Place was crawling with demons. Thing is, and this is more me thinking than anyone actually telling, is this was near the plant—you remember the plant?—the one Kellar always talked about?"

"The place in Wichita? The one working on the ground-pounder?"

"Promised to clear out those sons-a like a boot stomping cockroaches. Yep."

"Thought that failed. Lost funding or something?"

"Or something's my guess. My gut says it was still active but, I dunno, maybe something went wrong. Demons found it, maybe. They're smarter than people think."

"I remember."

"Anyway, that's my best guess. Beats the official line anyway."

"Official line?"

"Corporal Terrence Kellar was the victim of an unprovoked civilian attack, so says the wire."

"Why would they pin this on civilians?"

"Better them than admitting the push-back failed. Crazy humans, folks can deal with. A resurgence of minions, notsomuch."

"Still seems strange."

"Strange is all we got somedays."

"True."

"Listen, I'm gonna run. Wanted you to be the first though."

"I appreciate that, John."

"Sure bet."

I nestled the phone back onto its cradle and didn't move for a good fifteen minutes afterwards. Hard to imagine a man like Kellar dead. He's the type who seemed bulletproof. Indestructible.

I threw the heavy rucksack into the backseat of my Jeep and tore off toward the interstate. Classic rock blasted out of my archaic disc player as clumps of dirt and grass flew out from under my tires.

I flipped my phone open and thumbed through the menu until I hit the Ls. Gordon Lapp. I pushed the green button and waited through the ring tone.

Voice on the other end spoke through a haze of sleep and drink. "Hello?"

"Gordo," I said, a little too loudly. "Get your stuff together. I'm coming over."

"Who is this?"

"Now who do you think?"

"Speedman? What time is it?"

"Eight-oh-five in the ante-meridian. And time for you to shower and shave. I'll be there in fifteen."

"Jesus. Seriously?"

"Wouldn't kid. They got Kellar last night."

"They got—what? Are you serious?"

"Serious as cancer, Gordo."

"I can't—wow."

"I know." What jocularity I managed to affect slipped out of my voice. "I'll be over."

"Yeah," Gordon cleared his throat. "I'll be ready."

I made four more calls just like it. Ramirez, Park, Bundy, and Horowitz. Levi was the last of them, and the most eager. Whole pack of those hellrats killed his family. He's not been right since.

We were all cresting our thirties now but remembered our nineteenth birthdays like the candle tips were still warm. We all saw the digits turn under Kellar's command, and held the man in high regard. He turned us into soldiers, and then turned those soldiers into hunters.

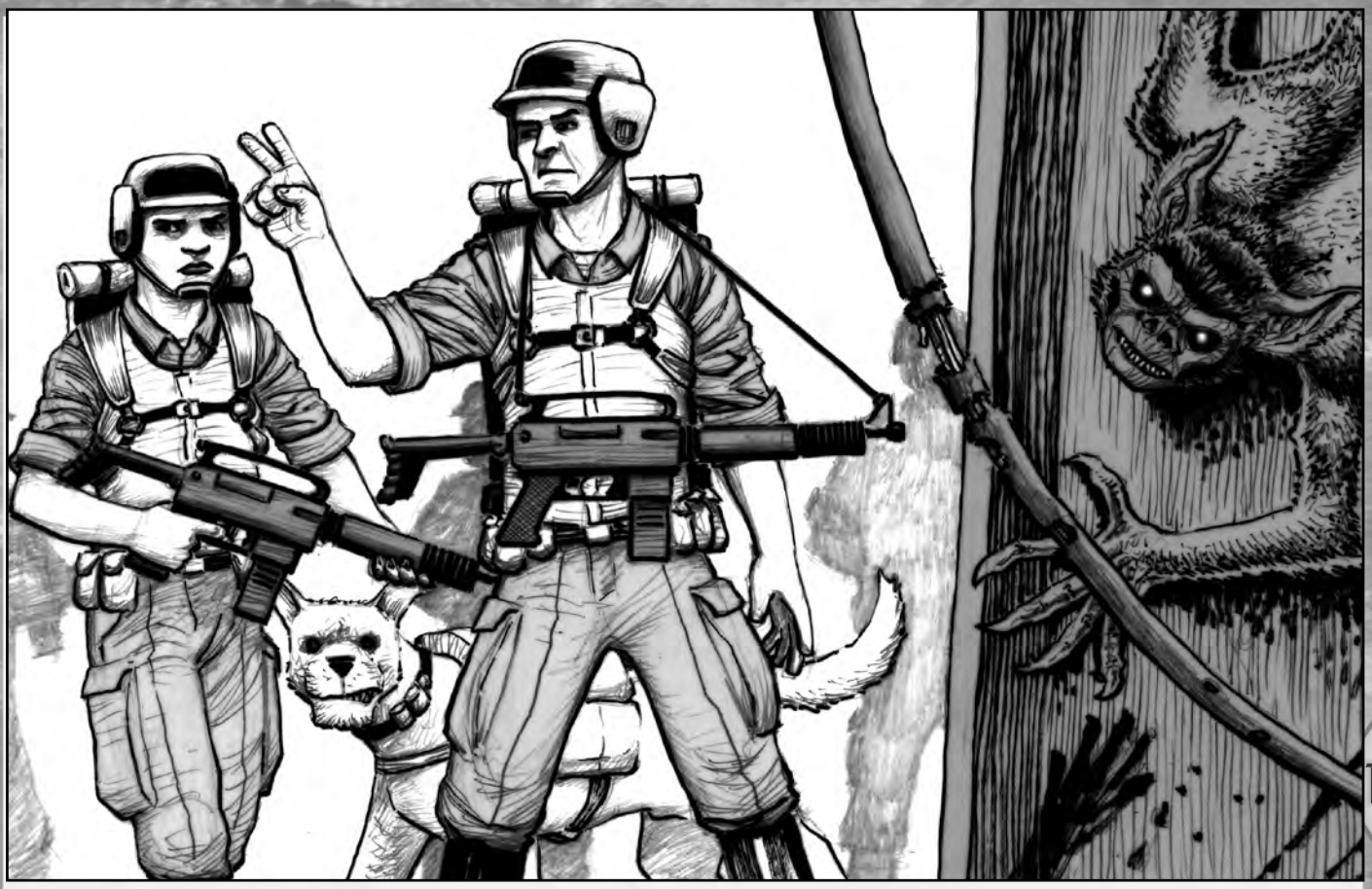
Fifteen years later, we were still hunters. Brothers. It may have been a few summers since I last picked up a gun but I knew it would come back to me. Same as pumping lead into the skulls of those fire-eyed SOBs was gonna be instinct again sooner than not. Some things you never forget. Kellar taught me that.

We'd all dine in Wichita together that night. A war party, a preparation. A gathering. Afterwards, we'd head out to find the monsters that killed our friend. And from whatever beyond or not the man may have believed in, we knew Kellar would have our backs, that stone-still face showing just the tiniest bit of a smile.






CREATURES



CREATURES

Creatures presented in the core ***Conspiracy Rules*** represent mundane terrestrial animals, as opposed to the Beasties (see "Beasties" on page 155). Referees can use these creature listings to extrapolate others for their own game worlds, thus keeping those worlds ever fresh and changing. Before looking at the listings, however, let's go over some general rules for using creatures in combat situations.

Creature Combat

Basically, creature combat—beasty combat is the same—follows the same rules as human melee combat, with the following exceptions and clarifications. Note that, as with normal combat, all distances here are calculated in meters.

Creature Movement

In general, creatures have three different movement rates: walk, trot, or run (although some creatures are not able to run, and some swim or fly). The number of meters moved at each rate depends upon the type of creature, and is listed with that creature's statistics in the descriptions below.

Mounts in Combat

Riding a draft animal is considered an action in the same manner as driving a vehicle. The referee should refer to the vehicle movement rules for details (see page 277). Horses, mules, camels and the like may be ridden in combat. A walking animal can be ridden safely by virtually everyone. Riding a trotting animal requires an Easy [AGL] test for characters without Riding; those with this skill pass this test automatically. Characters with Riding skill have a maximum safe speed on a horse equal to 20+Riding asset. For these characters, riding at or under the safe speed is automatically successful. Riding at greater than the safe speed—up to 40 meters per phase (full gallop)—is done at the risk of falling off. To avoid a fall requires an Average [Riding] test or a Difficult [AGL] test, rolled once per phase. Failure results in a fall, ID6–3 hits being suffered to a randomly rolled hit location. Critical failure results in some serious injury to horse and/or rider, as determined by the referee, based upon the exact situation in which the mishap occurred. Injuries to a horse might include breaking a leg in a chuckhole, tearing a muscle during a leap, or becoming bogged in mud in such a way as to cause injury. As well, it is likely that the rider has fallen and suffered damage as per a normal failure.

Creature Attacks

If the attack check indicates that the creature will attack, it will attack as if engaging in armed melee combat. This means that a creature attack cannot generally be blocked by an unarmed character, but may be blocked with a melee weapon. Some creatures attack with diving blows, which cannot be blocked but can be dodged. Some creatures have poison attacks (see "Poison" on page 131).

Creature Morale

Whenever a creature first suffers damage from a combat, there is a chance it will flee. Each creature has a chance of attacking listed with its other statistics. This is the likelihood that the creature will attack when first encountered if the characters stumble upon it accidentally. (Of course, if the referee planted the creature intentionally, whether it attacks or not is entirely dependent upon the referee.) That chance of attacking serves also as the likelihood that the creature will continue to attack even if wounded. By the same token, when a creature is killed or rendered unconscious, an equal chance exists that any other creatures in its group will flee. This die roll is made each time a creature is killed or rendered unconscious.

Creature Listing Definitions

The creature entries are listed in alphabetical order with statistics headings explained as follows:

#Appear	Some creatures are typically encountered alone, others in groups. The # Appear listing gives either a number or a dice roll to indicate how many of a particular type of creature will be encountered together.
Attack	This heading gives referees an indication of what the chances are that a creature will attack if encountered. However, referees should not feel bound by this notation. Specific circumstances may make a creature more or less prone to attack, at the referee's option. The Attack number is rolled on percentile dice (D100) as an attack check. The creature will attack if the roll is less than or equal to the listed Attack number. The creature attempts to run away or evade the encounter if the percentile roll is Greater than the Attack number. The Attack number is also the percent chance that a creature will continue to attack after being wounded or when one of their own is killed. Use the same attack check procedure.
Move	The first number listed under Move is the creature's walking speed, followed by its trotting speed, and then its running speed, if any. Creatures that can fly or swim will have more numbers. The creature description will indicate which number to use for those movement modes.
Initiative	This is the creature's Initiative number in combat. It operates exactly as do human Initiative ratings.
Strength	Obviously, this gives a Strength rating for the creature. It is useful in determining effects of diving blows, etc.
Constitution	Just as obviously, this gives a Constitution rating for the creature, which is also useful for determining effects of diving blows, as well as for saves versus poison, etc. It can also be used when characters are being pursued across open terrain by.
Agility	This refers to the creature's Agility rating. It is useful for determining such things as whether or not the creature avoids a diving blow.
Skill	This number represents the creature's ability to hit an opponent in melee combat.
Dam.	An abbreviation for Damage, this identifies the amount of harm a creature does with successful melee attack. Note that while characters have a set number for their unarmed combat damage rating, many creatures have a die roll. (Some even have a poison damage notation.) For creatures with multiple attacks, combat damage ratings for each attack will be listed.
Hits	Creature hit points are split into two sections: The first number listed is for Slight Wounds; the second one is the total number of hit points. For example, a rating of 10/20 means that the creature has 20 hit points with 10 indicating slight wounds received and the next 10 being Serious Wounds. Damage is first marked off on the Slight Wound section, and once damage has begun on the second section, it indicates a Serious Wounding. Seriously wounded creatures will attempt to flee (at the referee's discretion).When the last point of damage has been crossed off, the creature is unconscious or dying.

Army Ants

# Appear:	3D10	*Initiative:*	5/3	*Agility:*	3
Attack:	90%	*Strength:*	0	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/1
Move:	2	*Constitution:*	1	*Hits:*	1

One of the results of global warming has been a poleward migration of equatorial creatures, especially insects. Army ants have been encountered in some parts of the United States, for example. When these creatures are encountered, they will be on a feeding frenzy, eating everything organic in their path. In combat, the referee should describe them as a carpet of insects that begins at one side of the characters and sweeps steadily toward the other. When a character first enters a square containing army ants—or the army ants sweep into the character's square—the character suffers attack by a number of ants equal to the "# Appear" notation. That many dice are rolled for combat, and for each success, the character takes one point of damage to a random location. Each phase thereafter, another roll is made for "# Appear," and that number of attack dice is added to the previous total, as the horde swarms over the character. Hits on army ants are automatic, with the character destroying a number of ants equal to his or her Unarmed Combat Damage Rating. Obviously, fighting army ants is a losing proposition. However, characters can easily outrun them, unless they find themselves trapped somehow.

Bats

# Appear:	3D10	*Initiative:*	6	*Agility:*	8
Attack:	30%	*Strength:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1
Move:	10/20	*Constitution:*	1	*Hits:*	Special

Bats have a long tradition of involvement with horror plots, and ***Conspiracy Rules*** adventures are no exception. With the proliferations of insects, especially in abandoned areas, comes an increase in the number of bats, as well. Now, bats are as common in the night skies as birds are during the daytime; and occasionally those bats will swarm to attack animals and even humans. In combat, a flock of bats will swirl around the characters, individually swooping to attack at irregular intervals. Players roll 1D6–1 for their character in the swarm, to determine how many bats attack them in that phase. The bats will attack and then swoop away, making it virtually impossible for the referee to keep track of hits on individual bats. That is why the "Hits" listing for bats has a variable number and a note. As the note says, whenever a bat takes damage, the referee should roll 1D3, and if the damage received is greater than this number, the bat is dead. Otherwise, the bat is not sufficiently damaged to make a difference in the attack.

Bears (Brown/Black)

# Appear:	1D6 x 2	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	4
Attack:	40%	*Strength:*	13	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D6
Move:	10/20/40	*Constitution:*	13	*Hits:*	20/40

If characters spend any time in rural areas, there is a chance that they may encounter dangerous wildlife, such as bears. Even in outlying built-up areas, with scarce food bears will move into suburban areas to scrounge through trash and even the occasional home. In combat, a bear makes two melee attacks per combat phase—one with its claws and one with its jaws. After the first successful claw attack, later claw attacks become Grappling attacks instead. Players should note that grappling attacks cannot be blocked. This Grappling attack is special, inflicting not only controlling hits upon its target, but also causing 1D6 damage to the target's chest. In addition, once controlling hits have completely subdued the target, the bear's jaw attacks hit automatically and do double damage.

Bears (Grizzly/Polar)

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	3	*Agility:*	4
Attack:	45%	*Strength:*	27	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/3D6
Move:	10/25/50	*Constitution:*	27	*Hits:*	25/50

Brown bears and black bears can be dangerous enough, but characters might also have the misfortune of meeting a grizzly or, if in the arctic, a polar bear. Kodiak bears use the same stats as grizzly bears. Like normal bears, grizzlies and polar bears make two melee attacks per combat phase—one with their claws and one with their jaws—and after the first successful claw attack, all other claw attacks become Grappling attacks. Players should note that grappling attacks cannot be blocked. This Grappling attack is special, however, and inflicts both controlling hits on the target and2D6 damage to the target's chest. Once controlling hits have completely subdued the target, the bear's jaw attacks hit automatically, doing double damage.

Camels

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	3	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	10%	*Strength:*	17	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Move:	10/20	*Constitution:*	13	*Hits:*	35/65

In desert environments, camels can be indispensable, especially if vehicles are not available or fuel is limited. The creatures can be quite cantankerous, however.As a beast of burden, a camel can carry loads up to 120 kilograms in weight. Camels seldom attack, but when they do it is a bite attack. It is an Easy [Riding] test to calm a biting camel.

Cats, Large (Lions etc.)

# Appear:	1D6 + 3	*Initiative:*	6	*Agility:*	8
Attack:	40%	*Strength:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/2D6
Move:	10/30/60	*Constitution:*	10	*Hits:*	15/25

The category "large cats" includes such felines as lions, leopards, and cougars—creatures that maybe encountered in the wild. Tigers have different stats, see below. On the first combat phase in which a large cat attacks a target, it makes two simultaneous attacks, one a diving blow in an effort to knock over their target, and the other a melee attack. No more than two large cats can be involved in diving attacks on a single target. In each phase thereafter, the large cat makes only one attack, that being a melee attack.

Cattle

# Appear:	3D6	*Initiative:*	2	*Agility:*	5
Attack:	20%	*Strength:*	20	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D10
Move:	10/20/25	*Constitution:*	18	*Hits:*	15/30

This listing represents animals such as the American bison, the African gnu, and the Asian water buffalo. But it also includes domesticated cattle, such as the Ox—many of which have reverted to wild. Cattle that are still domesticated have only a 5% chance of attack.

In combat, cattle make diving attacks whenever possible. Note that attacking cattle are not knocked down if they miss their target, unless that target scores a Outstanding Success on the attempt to Dodge the diving blow. In all other cases, the attacking cattle simply turn and attempt another diving blow in their next combat phase.

Crocodiles & Alligators

# Appear:	1D3	*Initiative:*	3[1] / 1	*Agility:*	5
Attack:	50%	*Strength:*	15	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/2D6[2]
Move:	4/16	*Constitution:*	20	*Hits:*	60

[1]Number represents Initiative when in water. On land, Initiative =2.
[2]Numbers represent a bite attack. Tail attack Skill / Dam. = 2 / 1D6.

Crocodiles and alligators are flourishing in the ever warmer waters of Dark Earth. Preying on the creatures that stray into their territories, these creatures know no bounds on how large that they can get. Typical large specimens are 10 meters long and weigh up to two tons. The listed size being was measured from an alligator killed by sewer workers in the Trenton NJ area.

In combat, crocs and alligators will bite in their forward hemisphere and sweep with their tail to the sides and rear. Numbers for both attacks are given above. When attacking from water the croc will bite, seize the target and dive underwater in hopes of drowning its victim. When using this tactic, the first attack is a melee bite attack. If the first bite attack is successful, subsequent bite attacks are Grapple attacks, which do the listed physical damage in addition to controlling hits. Once enough controlling hits are secured, the croc will dive dragging its victim into deeper water.

Dogs

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	3
Attack:	60%	*Strength:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/2D6
Move:	15/30/60	*Constitution:*	2	*Hits:*	12/24

This listing covers quite a bit of ground, including everything from pet Chihuahuas to packs of wild dogs prowling cities or abandoned farms. The statistics above are for a dog of average size and ferocity; the referee should adjust the Strength, Constitution, damage, and hits values up or down to represent very large or very small dogs.

In the first round in which a dog attacks, it is allowed two simultaneous attacks—one diving blow representing its leap into combat and one melee attack representing its attempts to bite. Due to space restrictions, however, no more than two dogs can make diving attacks on a single character in any combat phase. All other dogs attacking the character make only their melee attack. Players should note that the diving blow is made only during the first phase in which a dog attacks a character. As long as that dog remains engaged with that character, it may make no further diving blows.

Elephants

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	3	*Agility:*	4
Attack:	20%	*Strength:*	26	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/5D6
Move:	10/15/30	*Constitution:*	26	*Hits:*	30/60

It may seem odd, at first, to have a listing for elephants. However, not only may the characters encounter them in Africa, they might also escape from a local zoo, and tabloid stories occasionally mention elephants being kidnapped by UFOs. In an attempt to save African wildlife from the destruction of habitat, ecologist established a large reserve in the hills of Texas dedicated to transplanted African wildlife. Control of the project was abandoned and the animals were left to survive on their own. Several species of African fauna have since established a precarious, but relatively successful hold in rural America.

When used as beasts of burden, elephants can carry up to 600 kilograms. If an elephant becomes involved in combat, its first attack is a charge

attack, which is treated as a diving attack for purposes of determining success and damage done. Players should not that the elephant does not fall prone if the attack fails, unless the target scores an Outstanding Success on the attempt to Dodge the attack. Due to the size of the animal, this charge requires Panic / Rout checks from its target. After the first phase of combat, however, an elephant will usually engage in melee by stomping, and goring with its tusks. Use the skill and damage listings above for determining hits for these attacks. When resolving a collision between an elephant and a vehicle, treat an elephant's weight as five tons.

Horses

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	10%	*Strength:*	12	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Move:	10/30/60	*Constitution:*	11	*Hits:*	13/25

Sometimes characters may want to use horses rather than vehicles for transportation, especially in rural settings. Characters may also encounter small bands of wild horses in the wilderness. The statistics listed here are adjusted to represent the average equine, and referee should adjust the statistics for larger or smaller creatures, such as Clydesdales or mules. If used as beasts of burden, horses can carry a number of kilograms equal to 10 times their Strength rating.

Rats

# Appear:	5D10	*Initiative:*	6	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	45%	*Strength:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/2
Move:	4/8/15	*Constitution:*	1	*Hits:*	1/2

With the world's general economic decline, most localities have less money to spend on keeping rat infestation under control. As a natural result, the rat population has boomed, which has led to increased competition for food, which in turn has led to mounting numbers of rat attacks on human beings. Recent reporting on rat attacks has hinted at intelligent patterns and much larger rats, but these reports have not been substantiated. In combat, rats fight in the same square as their targets. On the first phase of combat, 1D6 rats will attack each target, with an additional 1D6 rats joining upon each subsequent phase until all of the number appearing have been accounted for. Typically, hit locations on the target will be lower body. To reflect this, roll 1D6+3 on the hit location chart instead of 1D10.

Rhinos

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	3	*Agility:*	3
Attack:	30%	*Strength:*	20	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/4D6
Move:	10/15/25	*Constitution:*	20	*Hits:*	25/50

Like elephants, rhinos can be encountered not only in their native environment, but also as escapees from zoos or ranging from abandoned reserves (see Elephants, above). Rhinos in combat do little else but make charge attacks. A rhino's charge requires its targets to make Panic and Rout checks, but for purposes of determining hits and damage, the charge is treated as a diving attack. The skill and damage listings above are for those rare occasions when the referee determines a rhino may be unable to make a charge. Treat non-charging attacks as Diving attacks. When a rhino makes a successful attack on a vehicle, damage is calculated as a collision and counting the rhino's weight as three tons.

Sharks

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	90%	*Strength:*	7	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D10
Move:	13/25/50	*Constitution:*	9	*Hits:*	13/25

The aquatic food chain has been seriously disrupted. Hundreds of saltwater creatures have become completely extinct, with the result that the waters that once teemed with life now seem relatively barren. The number of large sharks appearing in coastal waters where humans routinely swim has increased dramatically of late. If the characters spend any time in the ocean, they have a modest chance of encountering sharks. It is almost guaranteed that those sharks will be hungry enough to attack.

Snakes, Constricting

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	2	*Agility:*	6
Attack:	30%	*Strength:*	12	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/5
Move:	4/12	*Constitution:*	10	*Hits:*	40

Constricting snakes include all varieties of pythons and boa constrictors. While not generally native to North America or Europe, abandoned pets have moves to low-lying wet areas and occupied an ecological niche where they dominate. These pythons and constrictors can grow to quite a large size. One Reticulated Python—assumed to be an abandoned pet or an escapee from a visiting cargo ship—was killed in the salt marshes southwest of Charleston, South Carolina. The snake was just under 20 meters long and reportedly responsible for three human and several livestock deaths before its demise.

In combat, pythons and constrictors have two attacks. The first attack can be either a bite attack or a diving attack depending on the situation. The skill number and damage stats are the same for both. Upon a successful bite or diving blow, the constrictor has gained a foothold grip with subsequent attacks being Grapple actions. These grapple attacks inflict 1D6 damage to the chest in addition to controlling hits. Once the target is unconscious or dead, the constrictor will attempt to swallow their prey. This takes up to an hour to do, depending on the size of the target.

Snakes, Poisonous

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	50%	*Strength:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1p*
Move:	5/15	*Constitution:*	1	*Hits:*	2/4

*The number of poison dice rolled is variable: for rattlers: 1p, asps and cobras: 2p, coral snakes: 3p, "two-step" (green snake) 4p.

Those snakes represented by this listing include poisonous varieties such as asps, cobras, and rattlers. To reflect the fact that they are quick and elusive, snakes are allowed an Average test of Agility to dodge any melee attack made against them. Like blocking, the Dodging creature uses up one of its actions for the combat turn. Players should note that some snakes are much more poisonous than others. To reflect this, the notation for number of poisonous damage dice rolled has been made variable. The referee can use the snakes listed above as a guide for rating other varieties.

Squid, Giant

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	2	*Agility:*	5
Attack:	60%	*Strength:*	40	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/4D10
Move:	8/15/30	*Constitution:*	25	*Hits:*	75/150

With the decrease in ocean life as a result of water pollution, a number of carnivorous creatures have become increasingly more desperate in their hunt for food. Hunters that once only prowled the depths have recently begun to haunt the oceans' surface. One result of this has been an increase of sightings of giant squids, some as large as whales. Generally, a giant squid will not attack a single human figure near the water's surface. It will attack swimming characters at depth and will attack boats up to 50 tons. If there are any human figures on deck, it will attack them as well, more in reflexively closing its tentacles around whatever it encounters than in any deliberate plan.

In combat, a giant squid usually gets two attacks per phase. The first is an attack on the boat, treated as having a penetration of 4, and causing hull hits as if in a collision. This represents the boat's prow being slowly pulled under water. The second attack is against one human figure on the craft's deck—referee's choice of multiple figures. If this attack hits, a hit location is rolled, and that body area suffers the damage listed above not only in the present phase, but also automatically in every succeeding phase until the creature is killed or driven off. Once a giant squid has taken damage totaling more than half its hit points, it must make an attack check and will flee if that checked is failed. After a giant squid has completely submerged a vessel, it will remain in the area for 1D6 minutes, attacking any swimmers. Note that combat by swimmers adds one level of increased difficulty to all skill checks. Players should note that this does not apply to skill checks by the squid, which is native to the water.

Tigers

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	6
Attack:	50%	*Strength:*	13	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/3D6
Move:	10/20/40	*Constitution:*	18	*Hits:*	20/40

Tigers are very rare, but it is remotely possible that characters may encounter one in the wild in parts of Asia. In the economic turbulence of the Greater Depression, several Nomes—fortunes slipping away—divested themselves of their exotic tiger and other big cat pets. Also, some NPCs might keep a tiger or two as a high-status watch animal. In combat, tigers fight in the same way as grizzly bears, above.

Wolves

# Appear:	2D6	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	8
Attack:	60%	*Strength:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D10
Move:	15/30/60	*Constitution:*	3	*Hits:*	6

With the abandonment of vast tracts of farmland and the resultant increase in wilderness, some animal species such as wolves and coyotes have greatly increased in number. If the characters are travelling through rural areas, a good chance exists that they will at least hear wolves or coyotes or encounter their spoor. Given the right circumstances, there is even a fair chance that the characters might be attacked by them.

Like other canines, a wolf receives two simultaneous attacks during its first phase of combat. One is a diving blow which represents its leaping upon its victim, and the other is a biting melee attack. Because of space restrictions, however, no more than two wolves can perform diving attacks on a single target in any combat phase. If other wolves are also attacking the target, they get only their melee attacks. Note that the diving blow is made only during the first phase in which a wolf attacks a character. As long as that wolf remains engaged with that character, it may make no further diving blows.

BEASTIES

Beasties are the flora and fauna that has emerged with the onset of the Dark. While beasties have a significant amount of intelligence, they are still creatures of a fortean nature. Sentient intelligences are considered Dark Races or just Darklings. Conspiracy Rules is dedicated to that sense of open-endedness and mystery, and this chapter is evidence of that fact. Herein you will find creatures, many of which are creatures of legend, often with multiple explanations, always with a blurring of the forms we have come to impose upon them. Others are beasts of a particular fevered imagination. For referees there is no obligation to follow even these descriptions. Efforts were made to make certain the creatures within have everything needed for using them in campaigns. Use the Dark Races to tread upon the boundaries, to adapt these visions as you see fit. Let your own imagination loose as you read about these dark abominations. Make them your own, no one knows scary better than you. Scare your players-they'll love you for it.

Darkling Attributes

Attributes for the various Dark Races and Minions—collectively called *darklings*—described here are given in human terms. But obviously they are not human, so there are a few things that need to be explained up front about some of those attributes. Note, for example, that some of these creatures have poison attacks. See, for an explanation of poison notation and effects.

Physical Attributes

The darkling physical attribute ratings reflect the same things as for humans. But many secondarily derived characteristics-such as hit capacity, weight, load, throw range, and unarmed combat damage-are much different from what those primary attributes would indicate. Some creatures, for example, are much more resistant to damage than are humans, and as a result their hit capacity is far beyond what their Strength and Constitution would suggest. In their descriptions, such differences are indicated. If a difference is not listed, assume that the human norm applies.

The Intelligence rating reflects the same sort of thing in Dark Races and Minions as it does in humans. But darkling Education ratings are typically very low, not so much because the darklings are ignorant, but because their knowledge is so alien. The Education rating, then, indicates their familiarity with human knowledge. Obviously the darklings are not pleasant, chummy creatures with sunny dispositions. Many of them are, however, quite forceful and charismatic. The Charisma rating, therefore, may not necessarily reflect how likable they are, but instead how frightfully impressive. As for the Psionic rating, it indicates the same sorts of things as for humans; but while empathy in humans projects warm and wholesome feelings, Darkling Empathy feels cold, cruel, and twisted.

Darkling Skills

To keep things simplest for the referee, most individual skills are not listed for each race. Instead, referees should assume that the races have the following skills at the level of their associated attributes. Any other appropriate skills are indicated in the individual descriptions.

Constitution Skills: Swimming, Climbing.

Strength Skills: Thrown Weapon. Unarmed Combat rating is indicated by the "Skill" notation in the statistic block.

Agility Skills: Acrobatics, Stealth. Remember that Acrobatics means the creatures make normal Agility checks versus this skill instead, and at one level less difficulty.

Intelligence Skills: Navigation, Observation, Stalking, Tracking, Willpower.

Education Skills: None at full value. Biology, Chemistry, Computer Operation, and Physics are at one-half Education unless otherwise indicated.

Charisma Skills: Act/Bluff, Leadership, Language, Persuasion. Language will be appropriate for the region in which the creature is encountered. Leadership is generally through fear, and Persuasion is through enticement using greed, fear, or confusion.

Psionic Skills: Darkling Empathy (see below), Foreboding" Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Project Thought, Willpower Drain. Most darklings rely heavily upon Human Empathy and Project Emotion to enhance the natural dread humans feel upon encountering them.

Darkling Psionic Skills

Some darklings have psionic skills that do not normally occur in humans. If the referee allows characters to acquire these skills, it is strongly recommended that they only be acquired through darkling contact. Note that characters are strongly encouraged to keep them secret afterward. Some clandestine psychic agency just may snatch them up for testing.

Also note that the rules concerning task difficulty and power levels apply to these skills just as with other psionic skills.

Darkling Empathy: This skill works just like Human Empathy, except that it allows contact with darklings rather than humans.

Dissolution: A few types of darklings are able to control their bodies' molecular bonding to such an extent that they can become semi-liquid at will, allowing them to ooze through small passages. The process is hideous to observe, as the liquefying tissues lose their opacity, making internal organs visible. Of course, the creatures are able to reverse the process and return to solidity at will.

Plant Empathy: This works the same as Animal Empathy, except with plants. Of course, there generally isn't much to do with a plant once you have made psionic

contact, unless it is some sort of sentient darkling plant.

Insect Empathy: Another psionic skill that operates the same as Animal Empathy. Normal psionic checks for humans using this skill as one level more difficult owing to the strange nature of insect intelligence.

Darklings and Human Emotions

Most Dark Races rely heavily upon the Human Empathy and Project Emotion skills to enhance the dread that humans feel for them—as if their appearance were not horrifying enough. Some of the more psionically powerful ones may even project feelings of goodwill, to lure humans off their guard. The mechanics for this are exactly the same as those for characters, but there are a couple of ways in which referees can dramatize the results to enhance the game.

The referee should never tell players that their characters have been the victims of a Project Emotion attack. Whenever a character is the target of such an attack, the referee should roll that character's resistance secretly. Then, if the resistance check is failed, rather than tell the player that the character feels "terror," "irritation," or the like, the referee should instead make the player believe that the character has had a sudden sense of Foreboding, and it should be described in terms intended to evoke that emotion in the player.

For instance, a player whose character is the victim of an attack of rage might be told, "Beyond the facing door, you sense a terrified child, locked away in a dark closet after having been tortured and maimed." If the PC bursts through the door and finds a couple of smug corporate execs seated inside, he or she will be likely to take immediate, rageful action, only to discover later that there was no child, just a figment of the imagination. As another example, a player whose character is the victim of a terror attack might be told, "You have the certain sense that the Dark Minion you're facing isn't the only one in the vicinity. In fact, even now, you can sense dozens of them closing in on your position, and they feel really mean." Of course, there really aren't any more darklings in the area. The trick is to invent a description that will evoke as much as possible the target emotion in the character, rather than stating the emotion directly.

Similarly, the referee should make secret resistance checks for PCs who are victims of Project Thought, and, if those checks fail, describe things in such a way as to make the players think like the character would in that situation. For instance, the victim of a projected thought should be told that the thought comes from the Foreboding skill. As well, when faced with hallucinations, referees should not say, for instance, "You see a medusa," but rather, "Standing before you is a medusa."

Apeps

# Appear:	2D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	10
Attack:	95%	*Strength:*	6	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1D6
Move:	4	*Constitution:*	10	*Hits:*	8/16



According to Egyptian legend, *apeps* were snakelike creatures that exuded pitch darkness and prowled tombs to guard them from robbers. Nowadays, they prowl the mazy, organic corridors of Minion corporate constructs guarding them from intrusion by outsiders.

Apeps are roughly of a size with the largest pythons. They are highly psionic by nature with incredible skillfulness at the use of Human Empathy and Project Emotion. This latter skill is used primarily to project a conviction of blindness, preventing the apeps from being seen, but if an apep elects to forgo a normal action, it can also project panic into its opponents. Targets of these attacks get a save versus Willpower to resist the effects: to save versus panic is an Average [Willpower] test and to save versus blindness is a Difficult [Willpower] test.

Creatures fighting blind against an apep do so at one level increased difficulty. Aimed fire has no effect (you cannot hit what you cannot see) but spray autofire operates as normal with the exception that range is treated as being one band greater than the actual distance.

Assassinoids

# Appear:	3D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	4
Attack:	100%	*Strength:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1P1
Move:	12/24/36	*Constitution:*	2	*Hits:*	6/10



Assassinoids are small—hand-sized—multi-legged robot guards programmed to recognize a particular type of creature—typically humans—and attack it. They are created by some undisclosed government agency, which uses them primarily to protect top-secret facilities. Very rarely are they encountered anywhere else. The only way to stop an assassinoid, other than physically destroying it, is to deactivate it with a special code word that its electronic brain will recognize. Of course, usually this code word is changed regularly, to enhance security.

In combat, assassinoids attempt to leap onto their victims (treated as a diving blow). Once they succeed, they cling to the victim and try to inject their poison into it. Hit locations can be rolled as normal, representing the assassinoids' clambering over their victims in search of an unprotected location. Once an assassinoid has successfully injected its victim, it drops off and flees.

Most assassinoids are loaded with a standard killing toxin, but occasionally some carry a sleeping drug instead. This drug does no real damage. Rather, the victim must keep a separate account of "wounds" it causes. The effects of the drug are the same as for regular wounds, but the wound level never progresses beyond serious, and sleep drug-induced damage wears off completely after 10 hours.

Generally, if an assassinoid is damaged it is destroyed. However, if it is reduced to exactly 0 hit points, it can be repaired by a Difficult [Electronics] check, and then reprogrammed to attack a different type of creature or to recognize a different code word on a successful Difficult [Computer] check. It may be necessary for the creature's injector to be refilled, however it is a Difficult [Chemistry or Medical] test to manufacture more of its toxin.

Bloats

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	2	*Agility:*	9
Attack:	95%	*Strength:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D6
Move:	16/32	*Constitution:*	3	*Hits:*	10/20

Bloats are amphibious creatures about the size of a human fist, housed in a leathery black shell and covered on all sides with tough, four centimeter-long, barbed spines. First reported in the Great Lakes region of North America, bloats are evidently a form of life new to this planet. The creatures have no evident external sensory organs, and speculation is that they sense vibrations through their quills. Among the psionic community, it has been hypothesized that they are at least slightly psionic as well. On land or water, bloats move by rolling across the surface, which they can do quite rapidly. Under water, they move much more slowly (one-quarter the listed speed) by stroking with their spines. The creatures can also leap as much as three meters straight upward by means of flexing those quills.

Bloats get their name from their manner of feeding. Typically, a bloat will attack some small creature, up to twice its size, impaling the victim upon the quills and slowly sucking body fluids from it. After the victim has died, the bloat will remain attached to the decaying carcass, continuing to take sustenance from the bloating corpse while waiting for carrion eaters to arrive. The bloat then attacks those creatures as well, beginning the cycle once more. In the water, it is not uncommon for a bloat and its victim to be swallowed whole by a larger creature, which then finds its life being drained from the inside.

In combat, a bloat attacks by leaping at larger opponents, continuing to do so until it has made a successful hit, which indicates that it has fastened onto its victim. Damage from that point on is automatic until the bloat is destroyed. Any attacks that miss a bloat once it is attached automatically hit the bloat's victim instead. The only time a bloat will not attack creatures that encounter it is when it is attached to a victim that is not yet quite dead.

Blood Vultures

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	6
Attack:	40%	*Strength:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Move:	20/40/80	*Constitution:*	4	*Hits:*	10/20

The only real difference between blood vultures and regular vultures is that blood vultures do not wait for dead prey. They attack the living, even the unwounded. Add 20% to the listed chance of attack if the target is already bleeding. In combat, blood vultures drop upon their prey and buffet it with their wings while pecking at it with their beaks. They are more likely to hit the head and upper torso than the legs, so 1D6 is rolled on the hit location table, rather than 1D10.

Cerberoids

# Appear:	2D6*	*Initiative:*	6	*Agility:*	**
Attack:	100%	*Strength:*	**	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1P1***
Move:	**	*Constitution:*	**	*Hits:*	**



* The number appearing is the number of tentacles. The number appearing for a cerberoid is one (1).

** Use the stats for the base creature.

*** These stats are for the tentacles. The base creature gets its normal attacks in addition to the tentacle attacks.

Cerberoids are normal terran creatures that have had independently guided, stinger-tipped tentacles grafted to their heads and shoulders. Cerberoids may have originated as nearly any type of animal, and the referee should use the statistics for that particular creature in combat. However, a cerberoid also makes poison attacks in addition to its normal attacks, with each tentacle striking separately.

Hits to the cerberoid's head or chest may instead strike the tentacles. The total number of wounds inflicted to the head or chest times 10% represents the percentage chance of destroying one or more tentacles. If a percentile roll is less than this percentage, 1D6÷2 tentacles, rounded down, are destroyed. For example, a blow that did 3 points of damage to the chest would have a 30% chance of severing tentacles. The character rolls a 5 on 1D6 divides by 2 and rounds down for a 2, indicating two tentacles have been sheared off and flop around on the floor.

Chimeras

# Appear:	1D6÷2	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	7
Attack:	80%	*Strength:*	5	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1D6
Move:	15/30/60	*Constitution:*	4	*Hits:*	30/60

No one knows what chimeras truly look like. Some reports indicate they are mixtures of two or more individual terran creatures that have been merged together. But reports vary, so there is not real guidance to minion hunters as to their true form. Belief is that are highly psionic, with powerful natural skills of Animal Empathy, Human Empathy, and Project Emotion, which they use to stir up animal memories in their opponents' minds often resulting in the mixture of forms. As a result, opponents remember only confused images amalgamated from portions of various creatures. Because chimeras flee after taking half their total hit points in damage, no carcasses have been left around to study. Tentacled extraterrestrials have been reported to create purely physical "chimeras' as a result of grafting, gene splicing, or other evil methods. Referees can mix the stats of "normal" beasties for such abominations.

Dragons

# Appear:	1D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	9
Attack:	70%	*Strength:*	8	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/2D6
Move:	5/10/20	*Constitution:*	9	*Hits:*	24/48



Imagine a desert alligator slightly faster than a human, with a voracious appetite, and you will pretty much know what the beasties called dragons are like. No one is certain whether they are native to the Earth—perhaps they were at some point in history—or if they have been genetically engineered from existing terran stock. What is known is that they are vicious, and that in arid rural regions they are giving the coyotes and wolves some stiff competition. In combat, a dragon gets two attacks on its first phase, like a dog: one diving blow and one bite attack. On every phase thereafter, it gets only the bite attack. Additionally, no more than two dragons can perform a diving blow on the target creature, because of space limitations.

Manticores

# Appear:	1D6÷3	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	8
Attack:	40%	*Strength:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/2D6*
Move:	10/30/50	*Constitution:*	10	*Hits:*	30/25

* Stat is for the big cat's attack. The Scorpion Tail damage is 2/3P4.

Manticores are basically large cats that have had a huge scorpion-like tail grafted onto them. The creatures are so rarely encountered that they are generally thought legendary. In combat, manticores get two attacks per round: one with claw or tooth at skill level 8 and doing 2D6 damage, and the second at skill level 2 with tail stinger and doing poison damage rated at 3P4. Once a poison attack has hit, however, the secondary stinger attack does only 3 points of puncture damage for the rest of combat.

Roaches, Giant

# Appear:	2D6	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	8
Attack:	60%	*Strength:*	2	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Move:	15/30/60	*Constitution:*	2	*Hits:*	10/20

Giant roaches infest some abandoned buildings and sewers. At just under one meter in length, they are large enough to be extremely dangerous, but small enough to still be creepy. Giant roaches are fast and voracious, but they scatter quickly when faced with tough opposition. To represent this, while most beasties flee combat if they fail a roll versus their attack percentage once one of their number has been killed, giant roaches do just the opposite. That is, they flee combat if they succeed at that roll. Very bright lights, such as floodlights, flares, or automobile headlights, will drive them away as well unless they fail their chance-to-attack roll.

Saber-Toothed Cat

# Appear:	3D6	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	5
Attack:	60%	*Strength:*	22	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/ 2D10+2
Move:	15/25/50	*Constitution:*	22	*Hits:*	50/100



Many Dark Races have visited or inhabited the Earth for uncounted ages, and a few of them, notably the extraterrestrials, have been collecting animal specimens for that entire time, keeping them in suspended animation for later use. So, it is possible for PCs to come face to face with creatures long thought extinct. Such is the case with saber-toothed cats.

Saber-tooth tigers conduct combat in the same way as grizzly bears. However, a saber-tooth's grappling attack does 2D6+2 damage to the target's chest.

Slugs, Giant

# Appear:	2D6	*Initiative:*	1	*Agility:*	1
Attack:	80%	*Strength:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D6
Move:	2	*Constitution:*	6	*Hits:*	16/32

Like its smaller cousin, the garden slug, the giant slug is a slimy chunk of dark gray-brown flesh, like a snail without a shell, and for all practical purposes, it is a snail without a shell. While normal slugs can be found above ground, giant slugs dwell only in sewers and caves. Giant slugs reach a size up to two meters in length. The creatures are terribly slow, but because they feed on refuse, speed is not normally an issue. Also, in the sewer tunnels that they frequent, it is not impossible for a number of them to trap a quicker creature in a dead end and attack it en masse.

In combat, giant slugs suffer no loss of Initiative until they have lost half of their hit points, at which point they can take no action except to attempt to flee. Note that salt serves as a deterrent to the creatures.

Slithers

# Appear:	1	*Initiative:*	4	*Agility:*	5
Attack:	90%	*Strength:*	30	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/3D10
Move:	2/4/8	*Constitution:*	35	*Hits:*	120/240



No one is quite sure what the subterranean creatures known as slithers really look like. Only the barest glimpses of them have ever been caught—at least by anyone who has survived the encounter. But from the size of the tunnels these creatures leave, it is estimated that they must be at least as large as an elephant. Accounts of attacks by the creatures describe them as having clawed tentacles that erupt from the ground to drag their prey, kicking and screaming, into a cavernous beaked orifice. Some have suggested that slithers are like immense, leathery squids.

Additionally, it is apparent that the creatures exude a strong acid from their skins, as residue from the tentacles has been tested chemically. It is hypothesized that as the creatures push themselves through the soil (apparently by brute force), this acid slime reacts with the soil, compacting it and firming it to create semi-permanent tunnels. Typically, when a slither is encountered, it is in an area that has been extensively tunneled, allowing the creature maximum mobility in chasing its quarry. Apparently, slithers are incredibly sensitive to sound vibrations, which is how they track their prey. They have been known to consume creatures ranging in size from house cats to cows. At least one account claims that while slithers cannot freely travel through rock, they can use their acid to tunnel in it at a very slow pace, perhaps up to 25 centimeters an hour.

In combat, a slither attacks by positioning itself under its victim, either by using existing tunnels to lie in wait for the victim to pass or, if hungry enough, by tunneling through the soil toward the prey at a maximum speed of four meters per phase. In the latter case, it is an Easy [Observation] test to notice the slither approach because the creature tends to burrow along near the surface, causing the ground to rise as it moves. Once the slither is under its target, it raises its mouthed end suddenly, sometimes knocking the victim off its feet—Easy [Agility] test to avoid—then launches its tentacles into the air to pin the prey. If its attack is successful, the prey takes the listed damage as a combination of acid burns and crushing. This attack cannot be blocked, but it can be avoided by an Average [Agility] test, using one of the dodger's actions for the combat turn. Once the prey has been grabbed, it takes no further damage, but it will be swallowed, with instant death, within 1D6 combat turns, unless the slither takes enough damage in the interim to push it past half its total hits. After taking more than half its total hits, a slither will drop its prey and flee into its deeper tunnels.

Spongies

# Appear:	4D6	*Initiative:*	5	*Agility:*	2
Attack:	90%	*Strength:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	9/2D10
Move:	2/4	*Constitution:*	12	*Hits:*	70/140

Just as humans use guard dogs to patrol an area and keep it secure, some Minions use creatures commonly called spongies. Spongies are actually animated plants. A spongy is a tall, tripedal, fungoid creature, typically a little over two meters in height, resembling an immense sponge (sorel) mushroom. Its wrinkled gray-brown surface is covered with hundreds of pale tendrils up to 30 centimeters in length, which writhe and twist continually.

Spongies receive their sustenance by feeding off animal life. They hunt in packs, surrounding their prey and then closing in upon it, or trapping it in an enclosed area such as a ravine. When used as guard creatures, they typically trap intruders up against a wall or fence. Once the prey is unable to escape, the spongies press themselves against it and begin worming their tendrils gradually into its orifices and under its skin, where they start to drain a victim's vital fluids until only a husk remains.

In terms of the combat rules, once a spongy has made a successful attack, it need not roll to hit from that point on but continues to do damage every phase (as a special sort of continuous action) until its last hit point is lost. Also, one particularly horrifying thing about spongies is that they apparently have no sense of pain. When one is struck, whole chunks of vegetable matter may fall away, but the creature itself will continue to attack with no adverse effects (i.e., no loss of Initiative or attempts to flee when losing too many hit points) until it is completely destroyed. Note that spongies will attack 90% of the time when encountered. The other 10% of the time, they are dormant, feasted to fullness and preparing to release spores.

ROBOTS

Although originally designed to free humans from dangerous or boring occupations, robots have become increasingly common as corporate "employees" due to their unquestioning loyalty and damage resistance. After the Greater Depression, robots are treated as a special class of NPC, capable of preprogrammed actions and responses to external stimuli. They are not self-aware, although the more sophisticated ones can simulate self-awareness pretty well easily passing a Turing test. Characters will most commonly encounter two classes of robot: guardbots and drudgebots.

Guardbots: These are robots specially designed to perform security functions. Several varieties exist, varying in cost, sophistication, armament, and armor.

Drudgebots: Drudgebots are robot laborers. Some are immobile and work on factory assembly lines; others are multifunctional and completely mobile.

Robot Behavior

Most robots are so strictly designed for a specific task that they are little more interesting than a drill press or a milling machine. Other robots are more wide-ranging in their abilities—butler robots, cleaning robots, etc .—and may seem intelligent, but once a person has experienced their repertoire of programmed responses to various stimuli, any sense of "personality" is lost. There are a few robots, however, whose programming is wide-ranging and flexible enough to make them seem capable of intelligent thought. Their pattern of response to human interactions is designed to seem sentient and having independent thought. Characters should take care not to attribute human emotions to such constructs, no matter how "alive" they seem. A robot's behavior is dictated by programming, sometimes augmented by remote instruction by wireless or radio. Consequently, even the most "friendly" or innocuous robots can suddenly prove deadly, without warning, depending upon hostile programming or commands via wireless links.

Combat

For the purposes of combat, robots are divided into two broad categories: vehicular and non-vehicular. The normal combat rules apply to human-versus-robot and robot-versus-robot fire combat, except as noted below. Melee combat can only be carried out with non-vehicular robots. Non-vehicular robots are assigned attribute numbers to enable their use in melee combat.

Weapons: The weapons installed in robots are identical in performance to those used by characters, except that the magazine capacities are often larger. Ratings for weapons are included with the individual robot entries. Installed firearms do not suffer the effects of recoil having been engineered to account for it.

Melee Combat

Vehicular robots may not engage in melee combat. Non-vehicular robots use the normal melee combat rules, with the following exceptions:

Unarmed Combat: Robots may make strike attacks, escape attempts, or grapple attacks. They may not make diving blows. Unarmed attacks by robots are resolved normally, but using Agility rating if no melee combat skill is given in the description.

Armed Combat: Only robots which have built-in melee weapons may make armed melee attacks, and they do so with the characteristic of the weapon. Robots with more than one melee weapon can attack with each of them in every phase in which it attacks, unless specifically prohibited by the robot description.

Melee Ratings: For melee combat, robots have the following ratings:

Agility: This is the robot's chance of connecting with a blow or a grapple attempt, and is a measure of the speed and agility of their striking/cutting appendages.
Unarmed Combat Damage Rating (UCDR): This is the number of hit points inflicted by a blow from a robotic arm or other appendage.

Melee Weapon: Not all robots have melee weapons, but those with drills, screwdrivers, cutting saws, welding torches, and so forth, can use them like weapons. Robots with multiple tools like this may have several weapon listings. If the robot cannot use more than one at a time, this fact is specifically noted. Weapon effects are defined by the following three characteristics:

Range: Either short or long melee range (see "Melee Combat" on page 124). Long range accounts for things on the end of long servo arms, while short range accounts for things mounted closer to the robot's torso.
Hit Modifier: Some weapons are clumsier than others. Hit modifiers can be -1, -2, +1, and +2.
Damage: This is the amount of damage the weapon does if it hits. (Melee weapons average about 1D6 damage.)

Fire Combat

Fire combat against non-vehicular robots is carried out according to the conventional fire combat rules. Fire combat against vehicular robots is carried according to the vehicular combat rules. Hit procedures are identical to those given in prior pages, but battle damage differs, as noted below.

Battle Damage (Non-Vehicular Robots)

Non-vehicular robots sustain damage as if they were people or animals. Each robot's description states which column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Chart is to be used for that robot. Bipedal and quadrupedal should not be

taken literally; they simply describe the general orientation of the robot. Note that the scratch damage has no effects for robots. The specific results for robots are:

Head: This represents the electronic center of the robot, and contains sensor systems and the robot's central processing unit (CPU) or "brain." Slight damage has no effect. Serious damage means one sensor system is destroyed. Critical damage means the robot's CPU is damaged, and the robot is "dead."

Right/Left Arm: If a robot has only one arm, the right/left designation is not needed. If a robot has more than two arms, hits should be assigned to arms randomly, regardless of whether a right or left hit was rolled. Slight damage has no effect other than to cause the limb to make grinding noises; serious damage means the arm loses the use of any tools or attached weapons; and critical damage means the arm has been blown off.

Chest: The chest is where a robot's weapons and ammo, if any, are kept. Slight damage means one weapon—chosen randomly if more than one is present—becomes inoperative for the remainder of the turn. If no weapons are present, the damage has no effect. Serious damage means a randomly chosen weapon is put out of action permanently. If no weapon is present, this result represents damage to the fuel or batteries in the abdomen, and the robot's speed is halved. Critical damage means that an ammunition, fuel, or battery explosion has occurred, and the robot is rendered inoperative, i.e. dead.

Abdomen: This result represents the power plant of a robot. Slight damage means the robot begins to smoke or make grinding noises (but otherwise there is no effect). Serious damage means the robot is reduced to half speed. Critical damage means the fuel has exploded or the batteries have been hit—drenching the insides of the robot with acid—in either case rendering the robot inoperative.

Right/Left Leg: Legs can either mean a literal leg or another means of propulsion such as a track unit or wheel. As in the case of arms, robots may have a number of legs other than two or four, and leg hits should be distributed at random. Slight damage to a leg/track/wheel has no effect other than to cause grinding noises. Serious damage reduces the robot's speed by half and halved again with each successive leg hit causing serious damage. Critical damage means the robot is immobilized, although all other system may be operational).

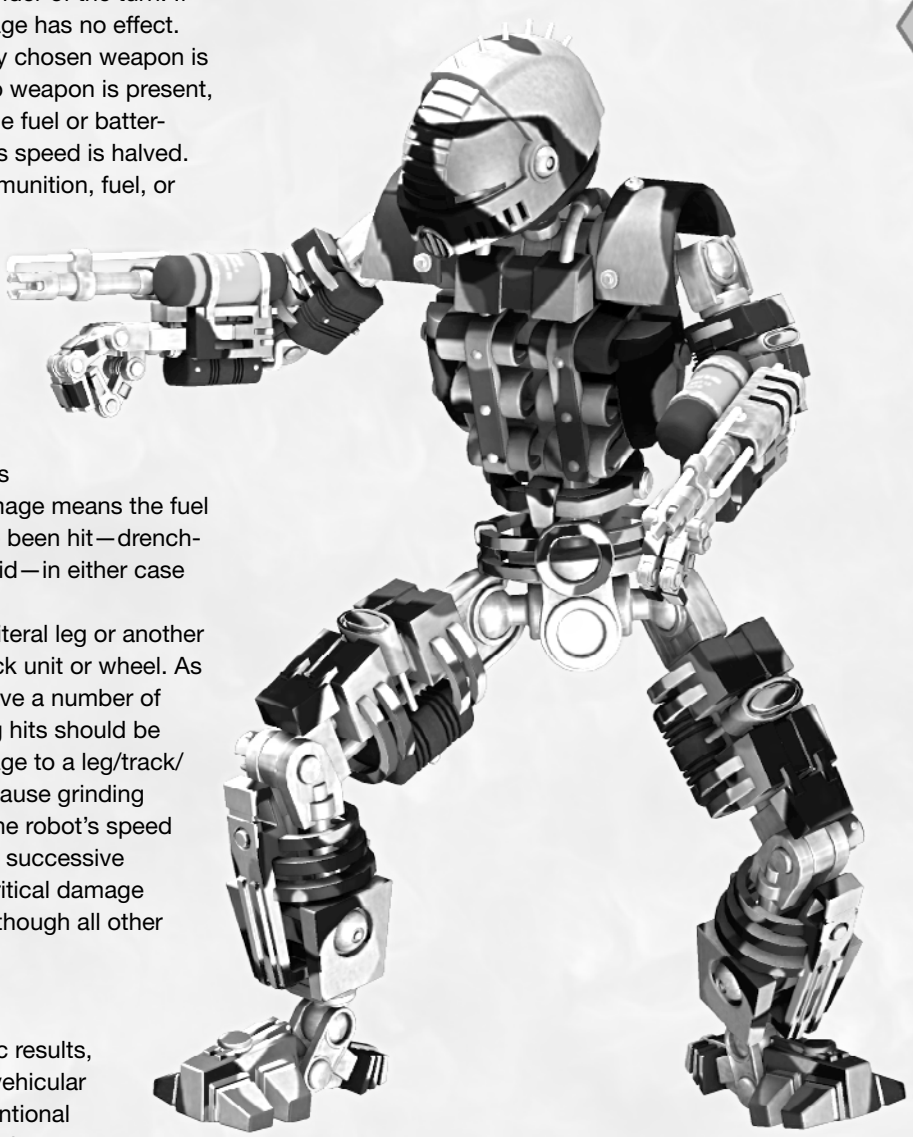
Battle Damage (Vehicular Robots)

With the exception of different specific results, the damage implementation system for vehicular robots is the same as that used in conventional vehicle combat. The specific results for robots are as follows:

Crewmember/Passenger: If the crewmember/passenger hit was a result from a hull hit location, this result represents damage to the robot's CPU. Minor damage means that each task the robot attempts to perform—firing one of its weapons, sending a message for help, etc.—becomes two levels more difficult. Major damage puts the robot out of action killing it, in other words. If the result is from a turret hit location, it represents damage to a randomly picked robot sensor systems. Any damage whatsoever puts this system out of action. Sensor hits are only significant only when repairs are attempted.

Radio: This result represents damage to a robot's communications equipment. The robot will have to fall back on its default programming, and can no longer receive instructions or communications from elsewhere.

Engine: This represents damage to the robot's power plant—electrical or internal combustion. Minor damage means that the robot can only move at half normal speed, and that it cannot move and fire at the same time. Major damage means that the robot may not move, and can only fire one weapon at a time.



Fuel: This represents damage to the robot's power source, either the fuel tank or its rechargeable batteries. Fuel hits are adjudicated as in conventional vehicle combat. Battery hits result in the immobilization of the robot.

Weapon/Ammo: One weapon system is destroyed. If no weapon is present in the damaged location, the hit becomes an ammunition hit. Ammo hits are handled as conventional vehicle combat. If no ammunition is present in the damaged location, the hit has no effect.

Burn Damage

Burn damage against non-vehicular robots is halved, to reflect the fact that machines are harder to damage by heat than are people. Being on fire completely destroys infrared (IR) sensors, however.

Typical Drudgebots

Characters may encounter the following, rather typical, drudgebots. Players should keep in mind that while these robots are usually harmless, there have been instances of them being reprogrammed to attack; and that the tentacled extraterrestrials are adept at this sort of thing. Of course, it is theoretically possible that the characters can reprogram these 'bots themselves.

Cleaningbot: This is a small, vehicular drudgebot with several arms (ending in various cleaning and polishing attachments), sometimes found towing a wheeled trash bin.

Butlerbot: This non-vehicular robot resembles a small, four-wheeled cart. It is fitted with serving arms, a sensory arm, and a number of compartments to keep food and drinks at the optimum temperature. Butlerbots take on comestibles in the kitchen, transport them to the dining area, and serve them, accompanied by appropriate phrases ("Dinner is served," "More wine?" and "Would you care for some freshly ground pepper?")

Foodbot: A foodbot is a non vehicular robot designed to take food orders at restaurants. The machine is equipped with voice-recognition software and a limited number of vocal responses such as "Thank you for dining at Zhukov's! May I take your order, please?" "Would you like to speak to my supervisor?" the ever-popular "Would you like cabbage rolls with that?" and for the more avant garde "That's not my table." Foodbots are similar to butlerbots, except that they have provisions to accept payment and in miketowns to make change from an armored internal safe.

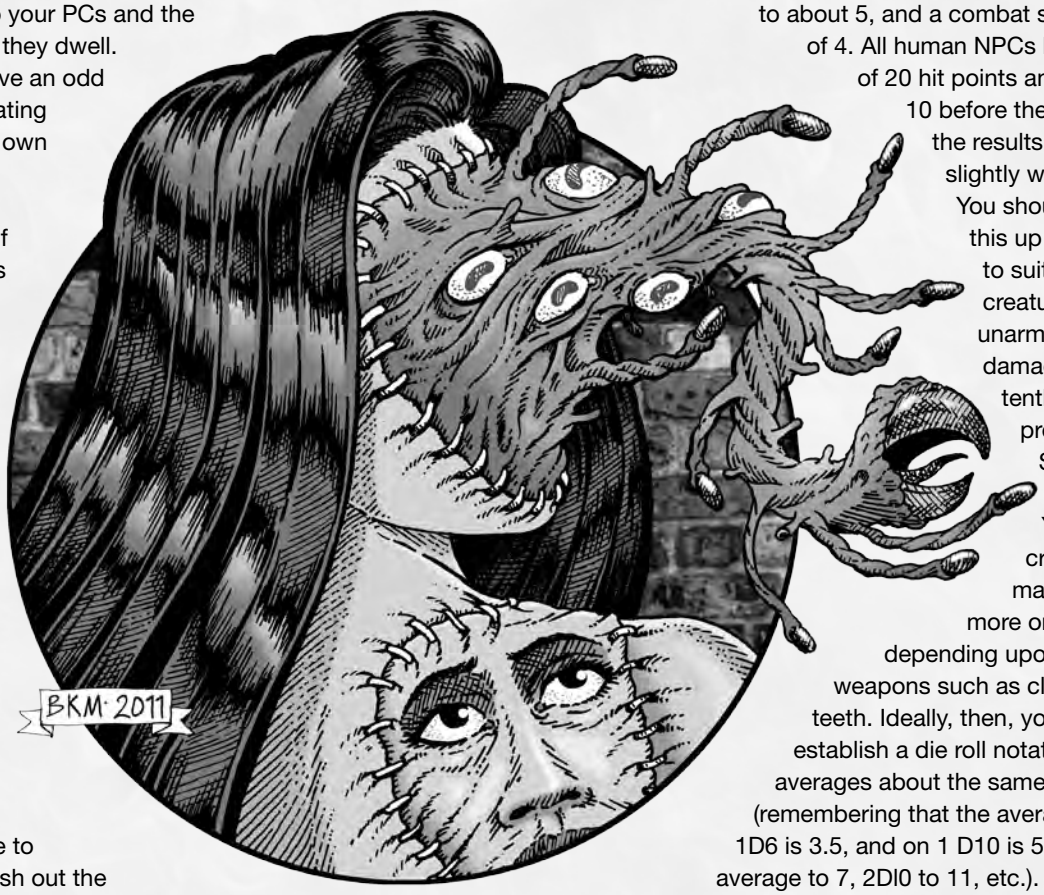
Receptionistbot: This non-vehicular robot is programmed to greet anyone who comes within range and ask their business. The sophistication of this robot's voice-recognition software, and the pattern of responses, varies with the particular duties of the robot. The RetroTek versions of this robot look like beverage vending machines with huge rivets and bolted metal or plastic covers. More expensive versions are humanoid in basic shape, and deluxe models may even be equipped with very realistic appearing skin and hair. Such android receptionistbots are distinguishable from real humans for the most part. With extreme HiTek versions, this is not always the case. But the precise "machine" speech and an inability to rise from their chair or move from behind their dais signals their artificiality. Human-appearing models are very delicate, and are reserved for dreamland offices where the bias against machines is normal.

Repairbot: This is a small, squat, non-vehicular drudgebot with several arms ending in assorted tools, intended to perform preventative maintenance and simple repairs on other machinery, including other robots. Special arms contain electrical interfaces that allow the execution of diagnostics to isolate malfunctions. The repairbot then removes and replaces the indicated parts. Occasionally, the repairbot will tow a cart containing the 'bot parts having the highest failure rates.

DARKLINGS

Designing Dark Races and Minions

Sources of ideas for new Darkling races surround us every day. Novels, movies, TV, and periodicals abound with strange creatures that can become the basis for a new threat to your PCs and the world in which they dwell. Or you may have an odd idea or two floating around in your own head.



In order to translate one of these creatures into Dark Conspiracy game terms, first write down a word description of the creature's appearance and behavior, without worrying about numbers at this point. As you write, new ideas will come to you, to help flesh out the description.

With that description firmly in mind, begin thinking about how to translate any special powers into rules. With the pale, for instance, we knew that we wanted creatures that leeched heat in a way similar to the manner in which traditional vampires drain blood, including the possibility of draining just a little, leaving the victim alive for repeated feedings. Just a little bit of playing with human body heat and weight revealed a relatively simple formula that would allow referees to easily keep track of hours gained for heat drained. A little testing revealed that the formula allowed for draining a human entirely and receiving a full two days of activity, as well as for keeping the victim alive by smaller feedings every seven hours or so. Of course, we had to set a limit on how low the heat could be leeched (not quite to freezing), as well as a rationale for ruling out other heat sources.

After all of this is done, work through the statistics, assigning numbers that seem reasonable, given the other creatures in the game. Human NPCs can be a great guideline for this. For example, if you want something about as tough as an Experienced NPC, you should give it an Initiative of about 3, attributes that average to about 5, and a combat skill value of 4. All human NPCs have a total of 20 hit points and can take 10 before they suffer the results of being slightly wounded. You should adjust this up or down to suit your creature. NPC unarmed combat damage is one-tenth of the product of Strength and Skill. Your creature may do more or less, depending upon natural weapons such as claws and teeth. Ideally, then, you should establish a die roll notation that averages about the same number (remembering that the average on 1D6 is 3.5, and on 1 D10 is 5.5, so 2D6 average to 7, 2Dl0 to 11, etc.). When adjusting these things, keep in mind that a low initiative creature needs a fairly high skill level, if it is to hit in combat at all, while a high-Initiative creature can afford a lower skill level, as it will get many more chances to hit during the course of a battle.

Next, if you want the creature to be just a bit tougher, give it one point of body armor, representing tough hide perhaps, or make it somewhat more difficult to hit, due to small size, snake-like quickness, or the like. Finally, if you haven't done so already, give the Darkling a name that reflects its nature, something that Darkling hunters will have coined for it. (Alternatively, you can start with a jazzy name, then build the description and statistics upon it.) Now you are ready to turn it loose upon your PCs.

The following represents a set of creatures from previous editions of ***Dark Conspiracy***. New or updated ***Dark Conspiracy*** setting Dark Races will be introduced in the ***Conspiracy Lives*** setting book.

Amoebeons

Strength:	18	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	1/5/10/20
Constitution:	16	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	8 / 1D6*
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	14	*Hits:*	30 / 30
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing:*	1D6+3

*Ratings are for "bare-handed" attacks. If an amoebeon enters the same space as its target, it can grapple rather than doing actual damage. A target which becomes entirely grappled will suffocate in a number of combat phases equal to its own Constitution rating.

Special: Chameleon-like image projection and body shape control. They also have rapid regenerative powers when food is available.

The Mythology

Amoebeons are a relatively new phenomenon on Earth. Consequently, there are no mythologies directly built up around them as yet. But the missing village population myths that abound have been attributed to a single cause. Postulates of this cause include amoebeon-like creatures looming from underground, decimating a small population and retreating before organized discovery or resistance.

The Reality

Amoebeons are known of only because their pictures have been captured on film by remote-viewing devices and because a few have been found frozen into a state of dormancy Also, a handful of psychics have been able to study them while in a trance state, avoiding vulnerability to the telepathic image projection amoebeons use for disguise.

Physical Description

Picture an amoeba of human size and mass. Equip it with rudimentary intelligence, telepathy, and telepathic image projection. Give it great powers of cellular control, such that it can shape its body into any desired form or size compatible with its mass. (When walking among humans, for instance, it actually takes on human form-two arms, two legs, head and torso, though the arms, legs, and head are pseudopods.) The result is an amoebeon.

Origins

Amoebeons were discovered in another dimension and brought to Earth by tentacular aliens in the late 1990s. They serve those aliens as a slave race of great versatility. They are strong enough to perform most physical labor unassisted, smart enough to be trusted with complex tasks (although not smart enough to pose a threat to their masters), highly damage resistant, able to blend into almost any crowd, and so powerfully telepathic that they can serve as universal translators. They have also been empathically programmed to serve their alien masters without question or hesitation.

Reproduction

Although originally only a few hundred amoebeons were released on Earth, there may be hundreds of thousands of them here by now, as they reproduce rapidly and almost never die.

Reproduction is by means of fission, fusion, or regeneration. When an amoebeon reaches a mass of approximately 150 kilograms, it divides into two smaller amoeboids of about 75 kilograms apiece. Each unit retains all the knowledge and memories of the parent unit, but has a strong desire to get away from its opposite member.

Reproducing by regeneration is also an option. If an amoebeon is damaged and loses a part of itself, not only will the parent creature regenerate the lost mass, but the smaller piece can also regenerate the parent over time, if it absorbs enough nutrients.

The third method of reproduction is sexual in nature. When two amoebeons with different genetic material meet under favorable circumstances (with a ready supply of food), they merge for an hour before separating into three amoebeons, two with the genetic components of the parents and a "baby" with half its genes from each contributor.

Vulnerabilities

Amoebeons do not die of old age, nor are they vulnerable to most forms of attack. Their slimy, aqueous constitution tends to quench flame, while simply parting before most other attacks. High explosives can blow an ameobeon into pieces too small to regenerate, and they can be slain by strong acid, which dissolves them, or by highly toxic neuropoisons that disrupt their internal communications.

Feeding Habits

Amoebeons need a lot of food or else they become very lethargic, and what they chiefly like to eat is meat, especially human meat. Even better than flesh and blood is brain tissue. Any amoebeon that ingests brain marrow gains a temporary +1 to its Intelligence and a minute long-term gain which, over thousands of years, has brought their Intelligence on the whole up to its current level. Given several million years of evolution and ingestion of intelligent beings, the amoebeon could become the most gifted sentient being in the galaxy.



Amoebeons cannot digest bone or metal. though most softer objects can be assimilated. They feed by surging over their victims. quickly suffocating creatures that need to breathe. and dissolving the soft tissue. which is incorporated directly into their own ever-expanding bodies. Digestion takes two hours per point of the victim's Constitution.

Empathic Abilities

To gain access to food. amoebeons can empathically pass themselves off as human beings. Their image projection is so powerful that it overwhelms every mind within range. Few human minds have ever been known to successfully resist their illusion-casting under normal conditions. (A test of one-quarter Willpower skill is required to do so. and it can only be attempted once per encounter.)

The creatures are fully capable of going so far as to dress themselves in human clothing, carry human tools and identification. and take the place of individuals they have devoured, using their telepathic powers to pluck any knowledge they need about their disguise from the minds of nearby beings. They need up to six hours to digest, so they prefer to take humans when they are alone and secluded.

Their image projection powers work only against living beings. Mechanical sensors see them as they really are-oozing. polymorphic. translucent. watery-blue creatures shot through with coruscating globules of gold, silver and coppery red. They also have a faintly disgusting body odor that they cannot disguise, as they have no sense of smell. In fact. amoebeons have none of the regular senses of humanity-they do not see. hear, feel, taste or smell anything through their own bodies. Instead, they have an empathic, telepathic awareness of what is in the minds of all thinking creatures within a SOD-meter range. the strongest awareness from the thoughts of beings that are closest. This impressive empathic sense makes them very hard to surprise.

Dogs and other domestic animals frequently detect the "wrongness" of amoebeons posing as humans and go crazy. Such animals may either attack or run away. If they get too close while attacking, the amoebeon will absorb the animal, even while telepathically shielding humans in the area from noticing that the dog is being eaten (though this allows a second Willpower test to penetrate the disguise, at Easy difficulty).

Final Notes

Few amoebeons are free agents. Most are encountered only in direct association with their tentacled alien masters. Amoebeons are believed to range throughout the temperate and tropical zones of North America and Europe. There have been no reports of them in the southern hemisphere or in Asia. They cannot last long in frigid climates, as temperatures below zero-degrees centigrade tend to freeze their internal fluids and reduce them to hibernation. Then they cannot maintain their image projections.

Animators

Some Darkling races, notably the various extraterrestrials, have extraordinary biologic knowledge and technology. Among other things, some can create simple life forces called animators. When animators are projected into objects, they bring those things to life. They can make a disembodied hand crawl, for example, by temporarily restoring life force to the dead tissues. But they can also make a tricycle move about, or a block of stone slide along, telekinetically propelling whatever object they inhabit (this is a special case of the Telekinesis skill and requires no task rolls to succeed).

Most things animated in this manner betray almost no signs of true intelligence, but they can obey simple commands and perform straightforward tasks of limited duration (such as "crawl upstairs, get the tablet of Ra, and return here," or "attack that person"). Statistics for the creatures vary widely, depending upon the object being animated. Average statistics for a few of the most common are listed below.



Animated Auto

Strength:	—	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	*
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/*
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing:*	1

* As automobile.

Special: Attacks per vehicle collision rules. Skill value denotes Vehicle Use skill appropriate to vehicle.

Animated Knife

Strength:	—	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	60
Constitution:	1	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/1D6
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	2
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Two levels more difficult to be hit, due to small size and great speed.

Crawling Hand

Strength:	1	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	15
Constitution:	1	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D61
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	2	*Hits:*	80/160
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

Special: One level more difficult to be hit, due to small size.

Animated Statue

Strength:	13	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	2/8/15
Constitution:	30	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/—
Agility:	1	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	80/160
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	2	*# Appearing*	1

*Two meters tall.

Special: Attacks by making diving blows.

Bhuta, Devourer of the Dead

Strength:	10	*Education:*	14	*Move:*	3
Constitution:	20	*Charisma:*	2	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Agility:	2	*Empathy:*	16	*Hits:*	100/200
Intelligence:	9	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing:*	1

*A bhuta gets 1D6 attacks per action in melee combat due to its multitude of biting heads, skeletal limbs and slashing pseudopods of bone-encrusted flesh.

Special: With its various appendages, a bhuta can attack at long unarmed melee range. In addition to its melee attacks, a bhuta has two special atlacks-it can release a noxious cloud of gas, and can use its pseudopods to grapple opponents and draw them into itself (see below). Bhutas are also able to create a special type of animator zombie called darbas (see "Bhuta's Children").

The Mythology

In Indian mythology, bhutas are the atlendants of Shiva-the Great Lord, or Lord of the Beasts-when he haunts cemeteries. Also known as the 'Children of Anger', bhutas were thought to animate corpses and eat human flesh. Sometimes it is amazing how closely ancient mythologies reflect reality.

The Reality

Bhutas do indeed exist, surviving as pulsating mounds of rOlling flesh beneath cemeteries around the globe. Under such places can be discovered a twisting maze of dirt tunnels, ranging in size from as small as one meter in diameter to as large as four or five meters. These passages radiate from the bhuta's lair (typically a huge chamber filled with human bones) like a bizarre spider's web. The tunnels exit through graves and tombs on the surface above. They can even reach to nearby structures, such as a mortuary or a human domicile. Prowling these grim alleyways are the bhuta's "children," the darbas, fashioned by the 'bhuta from its own body. A typical warren contains 5D 10 darbas and one bhuta.

For the player characters, information concerning bhutas should be very limited, consisting mostly myth and speculation. These creatures are so utterly deadly that incredibly few humans have ever lived to report an encounter with them.

Only one of these entities has ever been vanquished. The incident occurred several decades ago in a rural farming community in southern Indiana called Bennington. After suffering numerous disappearances and discovering a maze of tunnels beneath the local cemetery, the small community of farmers gathered en masse and assaulted the bhuta in its lair. During the initial encounter, more than half the attackers were slain. Retreating to the surface, the farmers pumped



thousands of gallons of gasoline, kerosene, and agricultural pesticides into the tunnels. Then this toxic mixture was ignited, resulting in a terrific conflagration which burned for three days and nights. Apparently, the bhuta was utterly destroyed, as no remains were ever found. Records of a "bizarre cemetery fire" in state archives mention reports of the "walking dead" and "a giant mound of quivering flesh." These reports explain the incident as a prank or hallucination brought on by mass hysteria. But pes might be able to find old-timers in Bennington who remember the truth.

Physical Description

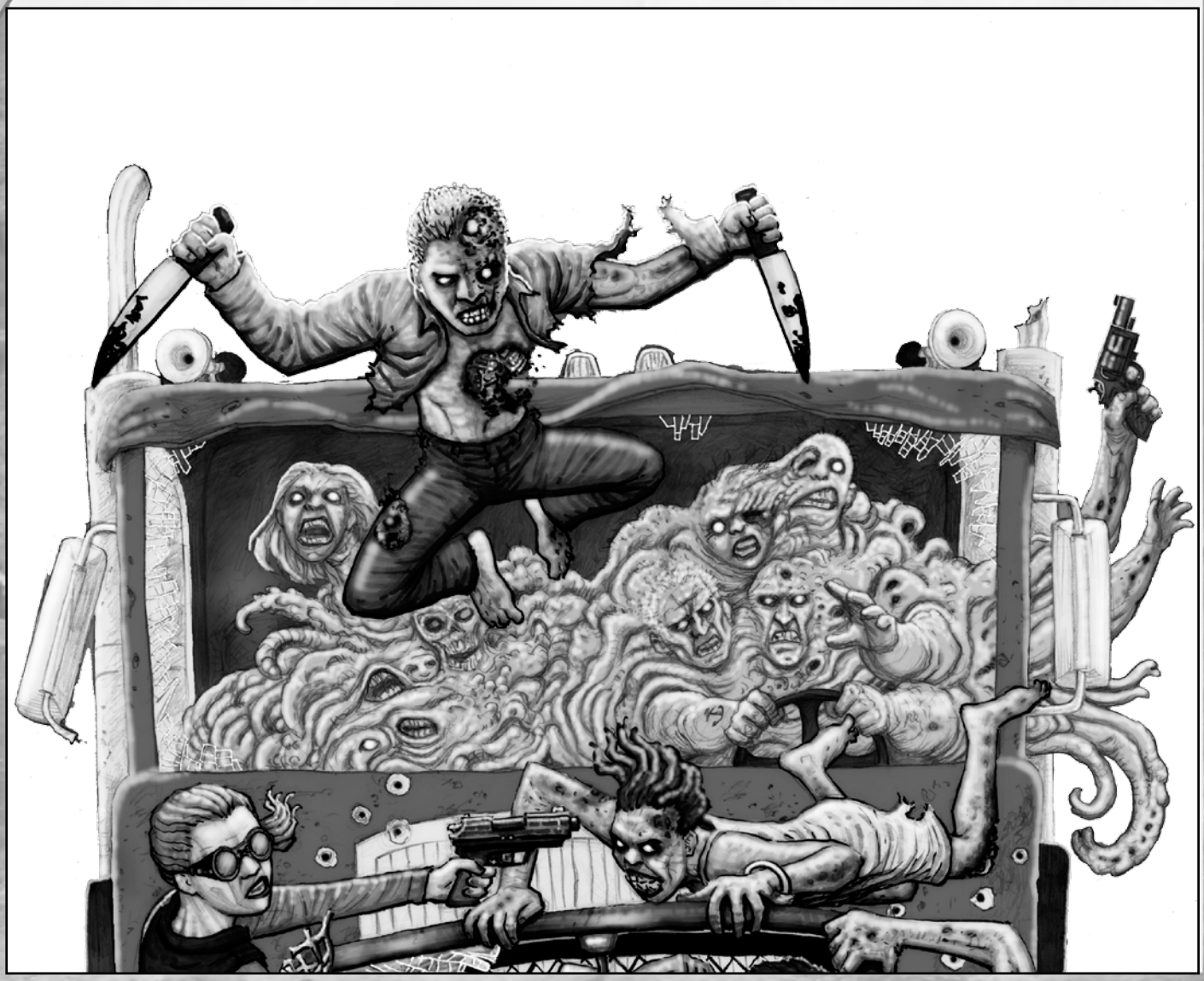
A bhuta is a hideous thing to behold. Its outer body consists of a globular mass of "fused" corpses. It can be as large as 10 meters long and five meters in diameter. The creature is adorned with scores of heads, some on long stalks of flesh and others visible just beneath its skin. Those heads that are not merely skulls are active-gibbering, crying, screaming, singing, and laughing. A bhuta can speak through any or all of its heads simultaneously, and can draw upon the memories of the people it has subsumed (thus its high Intelligence and Education).

Combat Abilities

The heads can also be used in unarmed melee combat to bite opponents for 1D6 damage. Heads on stalks can attack at long range (up to three meters distance). Limbs of all shapes and sizes extend from the creature's body. Some appendages are completely skeletal, while others appear like normal human limbs or pseudopods of putrid flesh. Its limbs can be used in unarmed melee combat at long range and inflict 1D6 damage.

Additionally, its limbs can be used to make grappling attacks at long range. Up to four limbs can grasp a single human-sized target, meaning the creature can inflict up to 4D6 points of "control" damage per phase. Victims who do not break free (or are not freed by allies) are pulled into the bhuta's mass on the creature's next phase. Once inside, these hapless people begin to fuse with the bhuta, suffering 2D1O points of damage to each hit location each phase of combat after the first.

Each limb is considered to have a Strength of 10. Severing a limb requires 10 hits of damage from a single blow. Assuming that at least 10 points damage are inflicted, even gunfire can sever a limb.



A bhuta can also expel a gas attack once per engagement (it requires at least an hour to build up another blast). By opening a large orifice in its mass, the bhuta "exhales" a roiling cloud of putrescence. The cloud has a burst radius of 20 meters, centered upon the bhuta itself All creatures within this radius must make a panic check, except those protected by gas masks.

Those who fail must flee the cloud and spend one full combat turn recovering. In addition, at the start of each combat turn that characters are within the cloud (including the turn in which the gas is released), they must attempt an Average: Constitution test to avoid being overcome by the fumes.

Those who fail the Constitution check are incapacitated by coughing and vomiting. They are disoriented, confused and only able to move at a crawl. Such characters remain incapacitated for 20 I 0 turns, but are not required to make further checks for panic or incapacitation.

Characters who succeed at both the panic check and the Constitution check may function normally. The noxious cloud persists for 2010 turns.

Bhuta's Children (Darbas)

Strength:	7	*Education:*	*	*Move:*	2/8/15/25
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D6÷2
Agility:	3	*Empathy:*	—	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	*	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	5D10**

*As per the appropriate NPC level.

**This is the average population of an entire warren. Usually no more than 2D6 darbas will be encountered outside their lair.

Special: Unlike most walking dead, darbas retain the Intelligence, Education and skills they possessed when alive, meaning they can use equipment, including weapons and vehicles. They do not retain Empathy skills, however-these are lost to them.

The Mythology

According to myths in India, darbas are risen dead who haunt cemeteries and eat the flesh of corpses. An ancient legend tells that long ago, a young boy was trampled to death while at market. His family grieved so much that a curse fell upon the entire village. The rains would not come, and it was believed that the gods were angry because the villagers had shed so many tears over the poor, trampled boy. Crop withered, and cattle perished.

One night the grieving parents were awakened by their son. He had returned from the land of the dead, and his body was whole and unbroken. The people rejoiced and sang praises to the gods. It rained that very night, confirming the people's belief that a miracle had been bestowed upon them and that the curse had been lifted.

The youth assured his village that it was indeed a miracle and that more miracles were soon to come. "But first you must gather at the cemetery and make an offering to the gods," he told them. "If this js done, the dead shall join the living, just as I have returned to my family." Overwhelmed with thoughts of dead loved ones, the villagers gathered at the cemetery the next night. They brought with them their most treasured dowries to be offered to the blessed gods.

As the boy promised, the dead arose. But they did not join the living. Instead, the living joined the dead. To this very day, that village is a cursed place. It is said that the mournful cries of the villagers can still be heard, rising from the blackened earth of the graveyard.



The Reality

Darbas are created by bhutas, servants of the god Shiva. Each bhuta's outer body consists of bones and rotting flesh. It is from this material that the bhuta fashions its "children," the darbas.

Physical Description

Darbas are a special type of animator zombies. A bhuta creates the animator spirit from within itself, and it can shape the body that will contain it from the remains of many different corpses. Thus, a darba may have several arms and legs, and even more than one active head. Typically, though, darbas conform to a vaguely human appearance.

The head of a darba retains much of its memories and intellect, though its personality is warped by the animator spirit given by the bhuta creator. Some darbas are fashioned to perfectly resemble a living person in order to infiltrate human society, using cosmetics and perfumes to conceal their decay. Upon close inspection, however, their true identity is apparent (a successful Average test of Intelligence is sufficient to penetrate the disguise).

Darbas can serve several different purposes for their bhutas. Typically, they act as guards to patrol the bhuta's warren of tunnels, which is almost always located beneath a cemetery. But they also serve as hunter-gatherers, collecting fresh corpses in the graveyard and taking them to be "joined" with the bhuta. On rare occasions, darbas will even leave the warren to hunt and capture living humans, who are taken back to the bhuta for consumption.

Although given a semblance of life by the bhuta, darbas continue to decay once separated from their "parent's" body. Each darba can exist for a maximum of 1D10 days before literally falling to pieces. Then, the creature is dead for good. Usually, though, the darba returns to be rejoined with its "parent" before decomposition completely claims it.

Combat Abilities

A darba can use its limbs to make unarmed melee attacks that inflict 1 D6+2 points of damage. Even more disturbing, however, is the fact that darbas are intelligent enough to employ relatively complex weapons, such as automatic riles, if the person from whom the darba's head was " harvested" possessed the appropriate skill in life. They have also been known to drive stolen vehicles during their forays into human society. Fortunately however, they cannot acquire new skills.

Though often unavoidable, puncturing a darba's body with missile or melee weapons can be a big mistake. The first time this occurs, a putrid cloud erupts from the darba's body, consisting primarily of gases from the organs and blood festering within it. The cloud covers a radius of two meters, centered upon the punctured darba. Any living, breathing creatures caught within the cloud must attempt a panic check, with failure meaning the character flees and must spend one full tum recovering. In addition, during each subsequent combat turn spent in the cloud, characters must attempt an Average check of their Constitution. Failure means they are overcome by the stench and are incapacitated by coughing and vomiting. Characters in this state become disoriented and confused, and are only able to move at a crawl. The condition lasts for 1 D6 turns, but incapacitated characters are not required to make further checks for panic or incapacitation.

Characters who succeed at both the panic check and the Constitution check may function normally. The noxious cloud persists for I D6 turns. A darba can also intentionally expel the cloud from its mouth. But no matter how the gas is emitted-whether by a character's attack or the darba's choice-it takes a full 1D6 hours for the creature to build up enough fumes for another blast.

The trampled boy in the old Indian legend was almost certainly a darba. Given the dues that he was "resurrected" with no sign of the horrible injuries he sustained in life, was able to disguise the fact that he was still dead, and was intelligent enough to lure his entire village to the cemetery to be slaughtered, it is reasonable to assume it was no ordinary, mindless zombie. Perhaps a huge quivering bhuta still throbs beneath that graveyard in India, protected by the living corpses of a small Indian boy and his entire village.

Bloodkin

Legends of trolls and vampires have been spawned targety by one Dark Minion race in particular, often called the bloodkin. Bloodkin are roughly humanoid in shape, with a hairless, slug-gray skin that covers what would otherwise be a plated exoskeleton. Their arms are longer than a human's, with hands and feet that end in heavy claws. Bloodkin facial features differ markedly from a human's, consisting of a pair of lidless yellow eyes surmounting a muscular trunk instead of a human nose and mouth. The trunk ends in a pair of sharp pincers set in horizontal opposition.



Bloodkin are incredibly difficult to wound. Their skeletal plates provide impressive protection from internal damage. But even more importantly, their internal organs are targety undifferentiated, meaning there are no truly "vital" organs. Their nervous system is well dispersed throughout their bodies, and their circulatory system consists of a slow-moving nutrient bath, which makes it unusual for them to "bleed" to death, even from the severest wounds. Also, they heal incredibly swiftly from everything except burns, particularly if there is food readily available. Bloodkin feed primarily upon blood, the larger ones supplementing this diet with flesh.

Fortunately, bloodkin are very susceptible to damage from ultraviolet light, which gives rise to legends of trolls and vampires being afraid of sunlight. In general, the larger a bloodkin is, the slower and less intelligent it is. More specific information for bloodkin trolls and vampires is given below, along with average statistics for each type of creature.

Bloodkin Trolls

Strength:	12	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	1/5/10/18
Constitution:	18	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/2D10
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	2	*Hits:*	90/180
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1D6+3

Special: Trolls are treated as having an overall body armor value of I. They do not suffer double damage from head hits, like most NPCs. They also heal very quickly, but UV light does special damage to them .

Trolls, the large, dumb bloodkin, tend to hide in caverns or abandoned buildings and wait for unwary travelers. (In days of yore, they often lay in wait under stone bridges.) Leaping out of hiding, they snatch unfortunate victims, tear them limb from limb, then suck the blood from the body and eat the internal organs, particularly the bloodiest ones such as the kidneys, spleen, liver, and lungs.

Trolls heal naturally from wounds at the following rates: slight, 1 hour; serious, 1 day; critical 3 days. For each half gallon of blood they consume, they heal one wound level almost instantaneously (effectively within one combat phase). Note that a human body contains approximately six pints of blood, enough to heal three wound levels. Ultraviolet light does extra damage to trolls. Normal daylight does one point of damage per combat phase, as do black lights. UV lasers do double their listed damage against trolls. Thermite and white phosphorus explosions do UV damage per the concussion rules, in addition to concussion damage.

Bloodkin Vampires

Strength:	4	*Education:*	3	*Move:*	3/9/16/32
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	12	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/1D10
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	15	*Hits:*	50/100
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

Vampires, the smaller bloodkins, are much more intelligent thant their larger brothers, and are also highly empathic. As a result, they rely much more upon guiles that upon brute force (although they are no stranger to that, either). A vampire will use its powers of thought projection to make itself appear as an attractive human, then use emotion projection to draw victims near enough to be feasted upon. Generally, however, a vampire will not kill its victim immediately, but will instead keep a coven of victims, all weakened from blood loss, to serve it as slaves and bring it more victims.

Like trolls, vampires heal naturally from wounds at the following rates: slight, 1 hour; serious, 1 day; critical 3 days. For each pint of blood they consume, they heal one wound level almost instantaneously (effectively within one combat phase). This means that a normal human body, if completely drained of blood, will heal six wound levels for a vampire.

As with trolls, UV light does extra damage to vampires. Normal daylight does two points of damage per combat phase, as do black lights. UV lasers do double their listed damage. Thermite and white phosphorus explosions do UV damage per the concussion rules, in addition to concussion damage.

Lesser Vampires

Strength:	*	*Education:*	*	*Move:*	5/**
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	*	*Skill/Dam.:*	*/*
Agility:	*	*Empathy:*	*	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	*	*Initiative:*	*	*# Appearing*	3D6

* As per human NPCs.

**Initiative 5 until one is downed, then normal Initiative.

Special: Averse to bright light and garlic.



Human victims of a vampire typically suffer from a related disease called iron-deficiency porphyria. This disease causes the gums to recede, making the teeth look elongated, and creates a craving for blood in its victims. As well, bright light becomes painful to their eyes, and certain natural chemicals in garlic makes them nauseous. Historically, bloodkin vampires have often played upon these symptoms, telling their victims that they are becoming immortal vampires as well, thus adding more confusion to the vampire legends.

Referees should choose an NPC experience level for these “lesser vampires,” based upon where they were “recruited” from. However, because they believe themselves to be immortal, they will attack with incredible ferocity-treat them as having an Initiative 5, regardless of actual NPC level-until one of their number dies. At that point, they revert to their normal Initiative and attempt to flee. Unfortunately, by the next time they are encountered, their master will have convinced them of their immortality once again (explaining away their comrade’s death as a fluke or illusion, perhaps).

Boogeyman

Strength:	11	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	3/9/18/50
Constitution:	10	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Agility:	12	*Empathy:*	12	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	9	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

* The last number represents the movement of the boogey man in its noncorporeal state.

Special: The boogey man has Human Empathy and Telekinesis skills rated at double its Empathy rating. It has Animal Empathy equal to its Empathy.

The Mythology

Nearly every culture has stories of a spirit that torments and haunts children. It has become so much a part of society that it is more than common to find a night-light or religious symbol posted in a child's room as protection.

The Reality

In reality, the boogey man is a creature of both shadow and substance. It has the ability to change from corporeal to noncorporeal form, a transformation which takes 1D6 phases to accomplish (the randomness representing the varying resistance to change that it encounters in our world). Usually, the creature is first encountered in its noncorporeal state in our dimension, the exception being when it is going for a kill.

Boogey men live on emotional energy put out by humans, primarily fear. They have found that children are much more likely to be scared of them than older persons, although senior citizens are also a targeted group. Infants (less than 18 months old) are strangely immune to the creatures, likely because they simply have not learned to be afraid of them.



Physical Description

In its noncorporeal state, a boogey man is basically no more substantial than a shadow. Upon close examination, a viewer will see the more sinister side to this shadow, however-it will appear to glide effortlessly about from point to point and to have small, glowing, red eyes.

The corporeal version of a boogey man lands 1.25 meters tall and weighs less than 60 kilograms. It is humanoid in appearance, with two long arms reaching nearly to the ground. The arms are capped with six 15- to 25-centimeter-long claws. The entire body (except for the head) is covered with long, matted, black fur which stinks of mildew. The boogey man has a hideous face with glowing red eyes. Its horrible, 100centimeter-long snout ends in a mouth full of razor-sharp teeth.

Light Sensitivity

Sunlight burns boogey men, so they generally only appear at night or in dark, shadowy places. Direct sunlight causes 1D6 points of burn damage per phase. Similarly, bright lights-including normal room lights-that leave few shadows will force a boogey man to flee temporarily, although causing no actual damage. Despite parents' assurances to the contrary, a small night-light in a child's room may make the child feel better, but it will not protect the child from the boogey man.



The only exception is if the night-light is shining directly onto the child, in which case the creature will be unable to physically harm the children until it coaxes him out of the light. Religious symbols, despite what folklore might claim, do nothing to hinder a boogey man's actions, though they may give a boost to the confidence (Willpower) of an intended victim.

Reliance upon Trickery

Boogey men are great tricksters whose usual tactics are to dupe and then scare their victims. This behavior is continued until the victims become emotionally exhausted, after which the evil creatures finish them off in some slow manner.

With a young victim, a favorite trick of boogey men is to animate a favorite toy, especially a rag doll or stuffed animal, while establishing an empathic link with the victim by means of its Human Empathy. (When calculating a boogey man's effectiveness with its Human Empathy, double the Willpower rating of victim over 55 years old and quadruple it for victims from 15 to 55 years.) This empathic contact is to make the child feel at ease with its newly animated toy until it has been lured into some dark place, such as outdoors, in a closet, or even under the bed. The boogey man will then reveal itself in such a way as to terrify the child and feed off of his fear energy.

With senior citizens, the tactic used is naturally somewhat different. The creature attempts to draw its victims into the dark by calling out to them and using Thought Projection to make them believe it is a friend or loved one. Once a victim is lured into the dark, the boogey man will simply stand back while the person becomes disoriented and frightened at not finding the caller waiting.

Feeding Limitations

The fear generated by a boogey man's attack is typically enough to sustain the creature's existence in our dimension for 1D6 days. A DM-1 die modifier is applied for each subsequent appearance to the same victim. When a boogey man reaches the point where it is receiving no further sustenance from a victim, it moves in for the kill.

Victims who have survived an attack by the boogey man are allowed a test of Intelligence during subsequent appearances to avoid succumbing to the creature's tricks. This test is Easy for victims aged 15 to 55, Average for those over 55, and Difficult for those below 15. Should a victim pass this test, the boogey man can gain no further sustenance and will attempt to kill the victim.

Combat Abilities

When a boogey man moves in for the kill, it will become corporeal and appear out of the shadows. All victims with weak Constitutions (3 or less for children and 4 or less for senior citizens) must pass an Average: Constitution check or suffer a fatal heart attack. Victims who survive this initial shock will be attacked physically. Boogey men prefer to kill by suffocation, especially with a victim's favorite toy or pillow. The killing will sustain the creature's existence on Earth for one day per point of Constitution the victim possessed. This sustenance is halved should the boogey man be forced to resort to a quick-kill method such as stabbing or bludgeoning.

Spotting the Creature

While in a corporeal state, a boogey man is immediately visible unless hiding in shadows, in which case an Easy: Observation test is required to spot it. While in a noncorporeal state, the creature is much more difficult to discover-a Difficult: Observation test is required.

Braineater

Strength:	11	*Education:*	3	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	5	*Skill/Dam.:*	9/2D6*
Agility:	11	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6+3

* This SkillIDam. attribute refers only unarmed melee. As noted below, braineaters can "absorb" skills from their victims, perhaps giving them the ability to use weapons.

Special: Skill Absorption at a level equal to twice Empathy level.

The Mythology

Folk tales of many races tell of creatures that can steal the memories, abilities and appearance of their victims, then take the place of those victims in their day-to-day lives-doppelgangers, fetches, and many others. Although several races of Dark Minions can perfectly imitate the appearance and perhaps even the voice of their victims, so far there have been no validated reports of creatures that can completely emulate the abilities of the mythical doppelgangers-which is fortunate for humanity.

The Reality

It seems that myths and folk tales have merged the abilities and characteristics of several Dark Races in their descriptions of doppelgangers. There are those who believe that the Dark Minion race known as the braineaters are a key part of these combined legends.

Physical Description

Braineaters are vaguely humanoid creatures. They stand a little more than two meters tall and are heavily muscled, with bony spines projecting from their bodies at various places. An average braineater masses about 125 kilograms. The creature's skin is pale gray and smooth, stretched tightly over its definitely nonhuman skeletal structure and musculature. Its head is overlarge, bald, with a domed forehead. Its eyes are large, yellow-white in color, with no discernible irises, and its pupils are vertical slits like those of a cat. Its nose is small, and its fairly human-looking mouth is supplemented by spiderlike exterior mandibles.

Braineaters are completely double-jointed and hideously fast. Their hands and feet have seven digits each, and each hand has two opposable thumbs. Each finger and toe is tipped with a hard and sharp bony claw. On the inside of the wrist is an eight-centimeter-long spur, sharp as a razor, supported by sufficient muscle to manipulate it like a gutting knife. Braineaters are also completely telepathic. They have no language, spoken or written, and seem not to understand the concept of normal forms of communication. This telepathy seems to be limited in range to about 100 meters; within this radius, all braineaters can coordinate their actions perfectly.

Braineaters are nocturnal by choice, not through necessity. They are undisturbed by bright lights; their preference for darkness simply reflects the relative ease of hunting at night. The creatures are hermaphroditic, though an individual creature cannot impregnate itself.

Skill Absorption

Braineaters like to lurk in ambush, falling on their unawared prey, and killing the victims by tearing out their throats. Then they use their powerful clawed fingers to split open the victim's skull and extract the brain, which they devour as soon after the moment of death as possible.

The "moment of death" is a somewhat nebulous concept. Although the victim of a braineater attack is legally dead before the creature starts to feed, most of the neurons that make up the victim's brain will continue to live for several minutes, until they expire from lack of oxygen and nutrients. If the braineater devours a brain during this four- to five-minute "window," the creature can "absorb" and integrate much of the knowledge and experience, and even many of the skills, stored within that brain.

When a braineater eats a "fresh" brain, the creature must make a Skill Absorption roll to extract information from it. The exact difficulty level of the roll depends upon how safe and undisturbed the creature is during the period of absorption. If this roll is successful, the creature temporarily gains all the victim's skills to the level possessed by the victim, with a maximum level equal to the braineater's own controlling attributes. (Thus, a braineater who has absorbed the knowledge and experience of a military officer would gain skjll with small arms and other weapons, understand the intricacies of tactics, etc., making it an incredibly daunting foe.) These skills and attributes remain with the braineater for a period of four days, after which they fade at a rate of one point per day.

The absorbed skills enjoyed by a braineater can never be higher in level than the skills possessed by the creature's last successfully absorbed victim. For example, suppose a brajneater devoured the brain of a nomad ganger and successfully absorbed the victim'S skills. If the nomad had Small Arms 3 and Streetwise 3, the braineater would now possesses these skill levels. Now suppose that two days later, the creature devoured the brain of an accountant who wandered across its path. If the accountant had Business 2, Computer Operation 2 and Small Arms 1, upon absorbing the contents of this new victim's brain, the braineater would gain Business and Computer Operation, both at level 2. Small Arms skill would drop to 1, and the creature would lose its points of Streetwise since the accountant did not possess this skill.

Changeling

In faerie legend, the fey folk (see below) would sometimes steal a human child and leave a faerie impostor in its place. That impostor was known as a changeling.

Type I (Mystic)

Strength:	*	*Education:*	*	*Move:*	*
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	*–1*	*Skill/Dam.:*	*/*
Agility:	*	*Empathy:*	*+1*	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	*	*Initiative:*	*	*# Appearing*	*

* As per character being replaced.

Special: Dimension Walk, Telekinesis. Modifiers listed are adjustments to statistics of the character being replaced.

Type II (Cyborg)

Strength:	+1	*Education:*	–2	*Move:*	3/10/18/35
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	–2	*Skill/Dam.:*	+2/+2
Agility:	+1	*Empathy:*	–2	*Hits:*	x2
Intelligence:	–1	*Initiative:*	+1	*# Appearing*	1

* As per character being replaced .

The more mystical races, such as the fey folk, tend to leave changelings that are in nearly every way just like the humans they replace. These are the Type I sort, listed above. Empathically, these changelings read the psyches of their targets, becoming intimately familiar with their personalities. As well, the changelings' growth is empathically guided to result in an identical physical appearance. But the changelings do tend to have higher empathic skills and lower Charisma ratings than the people they replace (reflecting that something feels slightly wrong about them).



The Type II changeling listed above is a cyborg replacement commonly used by extraterrestrials. A human who resembles the replacement target is surgically adapted to enhance the resemblance and to boost Agility, Melee skills, etc. The changeling is then hypnotically prepared to take the subject's place. Because they are less well-prepared in terms of memory and personality than the Type I changelings, Type II changelings are generally intended for shorter term replacements. For example, a state governor's bodyguard might be exchanged with a Type II changeling prepared to assassinate the governor.

There are basically only two ways to recognize that a person has been replaced by a changeling. The first is to notice lapses in the changeling's memory or behavior. This requires a test of the Observation skill: Difficult to recognize a Type I, and Average for Type II. However, this test should only be allowed when the referee believes it appropriate, such as when the changeling is under unusual stress, or when a character is spending a great deal of time with the changeling or was extremely familiar with the person replaced.

The second way to recognize that a person has been replaced by a changeling is when a friend shoots you in the back.

Changelings can be wonderful devices for the referee to use for enhancing PC paranoia, especially if you secretly have one of the PCs kidnapped and replaced. (You may want to keep this secret from the player of that PC until the changeling unmasks itself. Or, if you trust the person, you can recruit the player to run the changeling, promising to return the PC, with bonus experience points or something, if the job is done well.) The first time the PCs encounter such a changeling, the players will likely be shocked. After that, they will be watching over their shoulders all of the time.

Charons

Strength:	6	*Education:*	7	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	2	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1

The Mythology

There have always been tales of evil priests, necromancers and arcane sorcerers serving the dark and elder gods of antiquity. While our more primitive and highly superstitious ancestors knew of these foul practitioners and feared them, the tales evaporated under the strong fluorescent lights of the modem era. Until, of course, reality changed.

The Reality

Recent encounters with a deadlier, more powerful type of "Igor" have uncovered a new kind of minion in service to the Dark Ones. These minions fit the old legends of dark mages, and their powers and lack of fear set them apart from a typical mischievous Igor. The taint of evil has so corrupted them as to make them closer to the Dark Races than to mortal humans. They are a foul crossbreed, combining the worst of humanity and Dark Minion into one terrible soul. They call themselves charon, after the legendary ferryman of the dead, and the name may signify more than just a fondness for ancient mythology.



Earth legends describe Charon as the ill-tempered ferryman who transported the dead across the dark waters of the River Styx. The human charon see themselves as a connection between Earth and the Dark Ones, bridging the dark waters of the dimensional barriers without the trappings of ferry or pole to commune with their alien masters. Each charon serves a particular Dark One. They are the closest tiling to Earthly priests of the lords of the dark dimensions, often serving as twisted druids tending the blighted Demongrounds wllich have sprung up across the planet. Of course, communion with the alien minds of the Dark Ones tends to destroy even the strongest human psyche.

Those who seek to join the ranks of the charon have a saying, paraphrased from Metzsche: "What does not drive you mad makes you more powerful." Those who have actually become charon understand the truth: "With great power comes madness, and madness can be glorious".

Physical Description

The charon look human , but certain tell-tale signs hint at their true nature. The stronger the charon, the more demented and crazed he becomes. All have wide, sparkling eyes that have gazed upon the horrific wonders of the dark dimensions. They wear black hooded robes, and ignore their own appearance, so that they have a haggard, unkempt look. The most powerful among the charon become skeletally thin, with sunken eyes, taut skin and pale complexions.

Initiates

Each charon (or dark wizard, as some call them) has one to three acolytes in his service. These human students seek to commune with the Dark Ones and to become full charon, serving the wizards faithfully until the time of testing. Testing seems to involve opening a mental connection between the acolytes and the Dark One they serve. Most die in the attempt or come away with shattered minds. Those few who survive relatively intact join the arcane ranks of the charon.

Abilities and Practices

Legends of the dark wizards have been with humanity since its beginning, and a small number of charon throughout the ages have held communion with the Dark Ones. Since the release of the Dark and the opening of the horrific dimensions, the charon have become more numerous. Most operate from within Demonground, but a few wander the world performing unfathomable tasks for their foul masters.

They are granted empathic powers normally unavailable to those of human stock, and they have power over a lesser Dark Minion race, called the spectrals (see the following entry), which have been created to serve as familiars and guardians to the dark wizards.

Other Dark Minions often work with the charon to accomplish specific tasks, and most pay homage to or at least tolerate the presence of the dark wizards. Many times, a charon will be orchestrating the activities of other Dark Minions, especially in situations that need an intelligent and guiding force to coordinate menace and mayhem.

Charon the Ferryman crossed the river to the Underworld on a regular basis. The charon regularly enter into a meditative state to send their minds across the barriers and into the dark dimensions. They draw power and knowledge from these sendings, and they relish the alien touch of the Dark Ones caressing their minds. After each sending, a charon wizard returns to his body a little more powerful, a little more knowledgeable and a little more mad.

Sendings into the dark dimensions are typically accomplished on the summer and winter solstices, which the charon believe generate additional power by the balancing of sun, planets and stars.

Charon's Servants

The servants of charon, commonly called spectrals, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. All have been created by the Dark Ones to serve the charon, human priests of the Dark on Earth. They appear as iridescent shadows flowing around their charon masters or skulking in the darkness nearby. In the past, spectrals spawned the legends of familiars, demon servants, and ghostly contacts to the spirit word. Now we know them for what they are-foul Dark Minions with a taste for fear, blood and forbidden knowledge.

Aversion to Light

All spectrals have an aversion to bright light. Normal daylight does one point of damage per combat phase; black lights do two points. Ultraviolet lasers do double their listed damage against spectrals. Thermite and white-phosphorus explosions do UV damage per the concussion rules, in addition to concussion damage.

Spectral Functions

Even the weakest among the foul brood that is the charon have access to spectrals. These shadow beings were created to serve the human priests of the dark, gifts from their masters in the dark dimensions. It appears that they serve the charon fully and without question, but it is assumed that the Dark One which created them can call them back to its side at will to complete a special task, or as punishment to an undeserving charon. Until that occurs, the spectrals exist to do the bidding of the dark wizards. Hunters are used to patrol Demonground , to stalk Darkling hunters and to kill enemies of the Dark wherever they hide. Guardians protect the charon and their domains, standing as silent sentinels against the forces of light. Familiars act as oracles, advisors, information gatherers and spies for the charon, going where the wizards cannot go to retrieve knowledge.

Spectral Hunters

Strength:	12	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	3/9/18/36
Constitution:	8	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D6+1
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	36/72
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: One level more difficult to be hit in combat. Observation, Stalking, Stealth and Tracking at three times (3x) the controlling attribute.

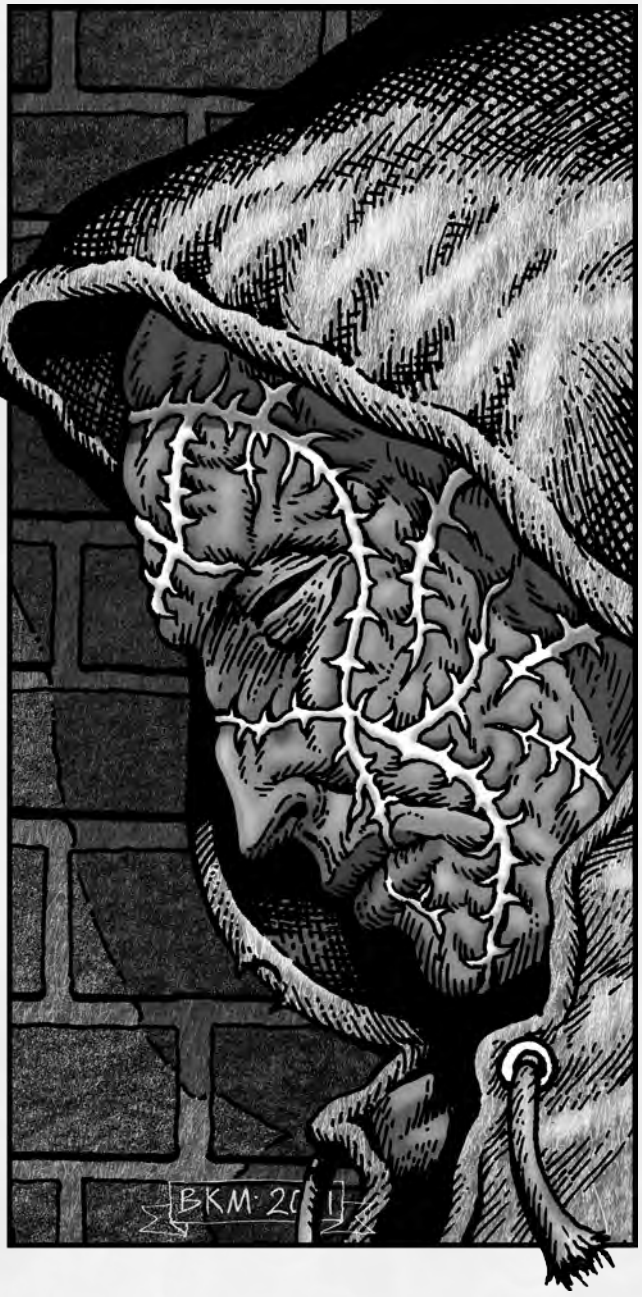
Spectral hunters appear as long, thin shadows (approximately 2.3 meters tall) which glow with otherworldly light. No features can be seen within the dark abyss of a spectral hunter's face, save for the deep glowing hollows that serve as its all-seeing eyes. Its arms and legs are elongated caricatures of their human equivalents, but each ends in a single, big-knuckled, sharp-clawed talon. Hunters move swiftly and with unnatural grace for beings so awkwardly constructed. They are experts at Observation, Stalking, Stealth, and Tracking, and they delight in the hunt, using all their skills to remain unseen until the moment they decide to strike. Spectral hunters relish the smell of fear which mixes with the sweat of their prey, and they love the taste of warm, bubbling blood.

Spectral Guardians

Strength:	16	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	1/5/9/15
Constitution:	18	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/3D6+1
Agility:	2	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	44/88
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1D6+3

Special: Foreboding and Observation at three times (3x) the controlling attribute.

Spectral guardians stand almost three meters tall, appearing as formless blobs of shadow with thick appendages and deadly claws. They are slow, plodding beings, given to long periods of total stillness as they perform the duties assigned to them. Guardians were created to watch and to protect. Skills such as Foreboding and Observation make up the bulk ofa guardian's abilities, as well as the strength and skill to fight. Unlike their hunter and familiar cousins, guardians have no innate curiosity. They are content to remain where they are told, watching for signs of intrusion. When intruders appear, however, guardians become huge wrecking machines, dealing out destruction with their supernatural sinews and rending claws. They live for nothing more than this moment of combat and the inevitable kill, relishing the fear they inspire and longing to taste the blood coursing through their opponent's veins.



Spectral Familiars

Spectral familiars are small, rarely growing much beyond one meter in length. They can take a humanoid shape, but most often appear as velvety shadows flowing across their master's body or hanging upon it like dark, otherworldly adornments. They are true servants in thrall to their charon masters, using their innate curiosity and divination abilities to uncover the secret things which haunt the dark wizard's dreams. Familiars have limited combat capabilities, but that is not what they are needed for. They leave battle and the physical skills to the hunters and guardians. Instead, a familiar relies most heavily on skills such as Animal Empathy, Language, Observation, Darkling Empathy, and Dimension Walk. They are the eyes, ears, and researchers of the charon, going into the Dark to bring back information pertinent to their dark wizard master's goals and ambitions.

Spectral Familiars

Strength:	2	*Education:*	5	*Move:*	4/9/16/32
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	5	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/1D6
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	6	*Hits:*	14/26
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: One level more difficult to be hit in combat. Besides the normal mix of skills for Dark Minions, they also possess Animal Empathy, Bargain and Dimension Walk.

Child Monster

Strength:	2	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	1/4/8/15
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/1*
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	6	*Hits:*	16/32
Intelligence:	9	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

*Or by weapon.

Special: Human Empathy 7, Project Emotion 8, Willpower Drain 7.

The Mythology

Some kids look so sweet and innocent, it's hard not to trust them. Sometimes, though, you should look closer into their eyes, for some of them are hiding a dark secret. Myths have been around for a long time about tiny goblins that run around sabotaging anything they can. Perhaps the truth is that the culprits aren't really ugly creatures but rather possess the aspect of children.



The Reality

A child monster is a malevolent spirit that inhabits the bodies of young human children. It exists to kill adults, pure and simple. These spirits enter our world from another dimension and seek children to possess. The process of taking over the children involves stripping them completely of their will and totally destroying their psyche. Once the process is complete, even the brain structure is altered, and nothing at all remains of the human child except the body.

Typical Behavior

When not in school, a child monster sneaks away from its "parents" and prowls the streets and businesses in the area of its home. The creature takes with it some favorite toy, such as a doll or ball, which it uses to conceal a weapon like a knife or gun. The creature then looks for an adult, preferably one that is alone. It tells the adult some story in order to get the victim to follow it. Once it has the adult in isolation, it will take out the weapon and kill its victim. Then the child will run to the police and blame the crime on another adult, usually planting evidence on the innocent before doing so.

The creatures also delight in using their parents' occupations as a means of murder. For instance, if a parent is a restaurant owner, the child monster may poison the food served there.

Another favorite tactic of these creatures is to run out into traffic, hoping cars will crash in an effort to avoid hitting them or someone will get hurt running out after them. Other malicious tricks include starting fires and luring firemen into deadly traps, or sabotaging automobiles, furnaces and construction equipment, etc., so that it will cause injury or death to the next user. In general, a child monster will do anything in its power to kill as often as possible before the human body it possesses grows out of childhood. Once the body has aged to about nine years old, the spirit within concocts a plot by which to kill the body in as gruesome and tragic a manner imaginable, in the sight of as many adults as it can. This is the only way in which the spirit can leave a body it has possessed and go in search of another, younger child to take over.

Often, a child monster will possess the child of an upper-class family. After causing the deaths of what neighboring adults it can, it will murder its own parents while they sleep, making it look as if they died as the result of a break in. The creature will then wait for the authorities to place it into foster care or for someone to adopt it. Once it has found a new family, it will repeat the process, using the adoption and foster-care process to circulate around the country and relying upon the disinclination of authorities to suspect a mere child of the crimes.

Child monsters favor urban areas and heavily populated suburbs, as it is easier in such places for them to stalk about unnoticed. While at school, they do their best to corrupt young minds with dark and sinister images. They encourage as many children as possible to commit destructive acts, but they are very careful about concealing their influence from adults.

Despite their diminutive size, the threat these monsters pose to humanity is very serious. They operate with extreme efficiency and have an incredible focus of will. Since they inhabit the bodies of children, they are seldom suspected of complicity in the murders they perpetrate, and even if they are suspected, they can use their small size to great advantage in escaping.

If caught, of course, they will sacrifice the body they inhabit as soon as is possible. Because they have no concern for bodily pain, the only way to prevent them from killing their host body is to keep them in some sort of restraint, such as a

straight-jacket and a padded room. Even then, the child monster will attempt to use its empathic skills to convince someone to let it out of the uncomfortable jacket for a moment so it can stretch its arms just once.

Daemons

Strength:	23	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	4/8/30/50
Constitution:	18	*Charisma:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/2D10
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	16	*Hits:*	50/100
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Psychology, Dimension Walk. Most have other skills to include a wide range of Psionic skills.

The Mythology

Virtually every human culture has its demons. its evil spirits that plague humanity. There are the Hindu *asuras*, for instance, enemies of the benevolent gods. Among other things, they include *rakshasas*—a type of being that can only enter this world by taking on the form of an animal, monster, or beautiful woman—*nagas*, which are serpent demons. There are the Persian *djinni*, spirits with physical bodies much like those of humans. but with nearly limitless magic powers. There are also the *ifriti*—similar to the *djinns*, winged creatures of smoke, impervious to physical weapons, but susceptible to magical attack. There are the Japanese *oni*—huge creatures with hideous faces, horns, and three digits on each extremity—and the *tengu*—spirits that possess the bodies of others. In Western myths, there are goblins, bogeys, ghosts, devils, and faeries, and a plethora of other beings. The names of the creatures vary as widely as the descriptions of their powers; nearly every tale describes them differently.



The Reality

In Dark Conspiracy, these creatures are collected under one heading, daemon, from the ancient Greek word for spirit (whether good or evil). Daemons are physical creatures, but they are so highly empathic as to seem almost miraculous.

The Dimension Walk skill enables them to enter proto-dimensions quite easily, disappearing from the Earth and reappearing at will. As well, they specialize in all forms of psionic skills: Human Empathy, Project Emotion, and Project Thought. These latter they use in conjunction with high Psychology and Leadership skills to manipulate weak-willed people. Some types are also quite good at Pyrokinesis and/or Telekinesis. A few have high Animal Empathy skill ratings, as well.

The statistics and skills listed above are for the average daemon. Referees should feel free to adjust them to reflect the particular legend being recreated.

Desert Ghoul

Strength:	7	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	4/15/25/40
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2D6
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	2	*Hits:*	20/40
Intelligence:	2	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D10



The Mythology

Many tales throughout the world describe ghouls. Some stories tell of mindless automatons constantly in search of human flesh, others of men transformed into unholy creatures by their cannibalistic tendencies. Most of the beings described have only the most basic intelligence and are capable of capturing prey only via brute force. One type of ghoul that differs from the archetype, however, is the Arabian "desert ghoul" of the Middle Eastern and wastelands.

The Reality

Desert ghouls were thought to only inhabit the deserts and barren mountains of the Saudi Arabian and Iraqi nations, although suspected to infest areas as far west as the Nile Valley and Sahara Desert. No statistics are available to confirm this and the total ghoul population in the Middle East is unknown. Experts believe that human incursions into the desert over the last few decades have resulted increased interactions with desert ghoul populations.

Other reports indicate that what were once believed to be a Middle East "species" may have offshoots in other desert regions. Reports from China and the American southwest (and the deserts of Washington state) tell of encounters with beings similar to the desert ghoul.

Not long ago, for instance, reports reached news agencies concerning a National Guard supply column classified as missing in action while crossing the Mojave in pursuit of raiders. Upon their absence, a long-range patrol discovered the wrecked trucks and jeeps near the foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains. Weapons belonging to the soldiers were found strewn across the ground; all had empty magazines; and the men had apparently fired into the desert around them in all directions. None of the soldiers' bodies were found until two weeks later, a National Guard remotely-piloted vehicle operating some 80 kilometers from the location of their trucks discovered the fate of the men. They were found in a small depression, their uniforms torn from their bodies. Most had been entirely stripped of flesh. Known scavengers did not leave the large teeth marks found on the lost guardsmen's remains. Indeed, no vultures would go near the site, and no other evidence could be found to determine the identity of their attackers.

Physical Description

From a distance, the ghoul appears to be a normal human, wrapped in the loose clothing and headdress common to the desert—*keffiyeh* for the Middle East and slouch hats for the US Southwest. Upon closer examination, their true nature becomes evident.

A ghoul's skin tends to be gray and sickly looking, hanging loosely from its wiry frame. Although appearing to be quite emaciated and feeble, it possesses remarkable strength for its build. The flesh on the creature's face is drawn tight across its bare skull and often shows signs of tearing when it has been unable to feed for more than a few months.

Its frightening features are its gray eyes, which are nothing more than orbs glowing with a dull, white light. Many people have seen eyes watching them from the darkness of the desert night, but most do not realize what they belong to, thinking them to be the usual nocturnal predators in search of sustenance.

Dread Sidhe

Strength:	8	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/9/16/32
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	13	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1D6+2
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	80/160
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1

Special: A dread sidhe can create "groupies" (empathic slaves) with its bite. Dread sidhe also have the Psychology skill at the level of their Intelligence rating.

Background

The dread sidhe (pronounced "she") are not really sidhe (fey folk) at all-they are an entirely different type of creature. However, they have come by their name because they are so often confused with dark elves (who *are* fey folk).

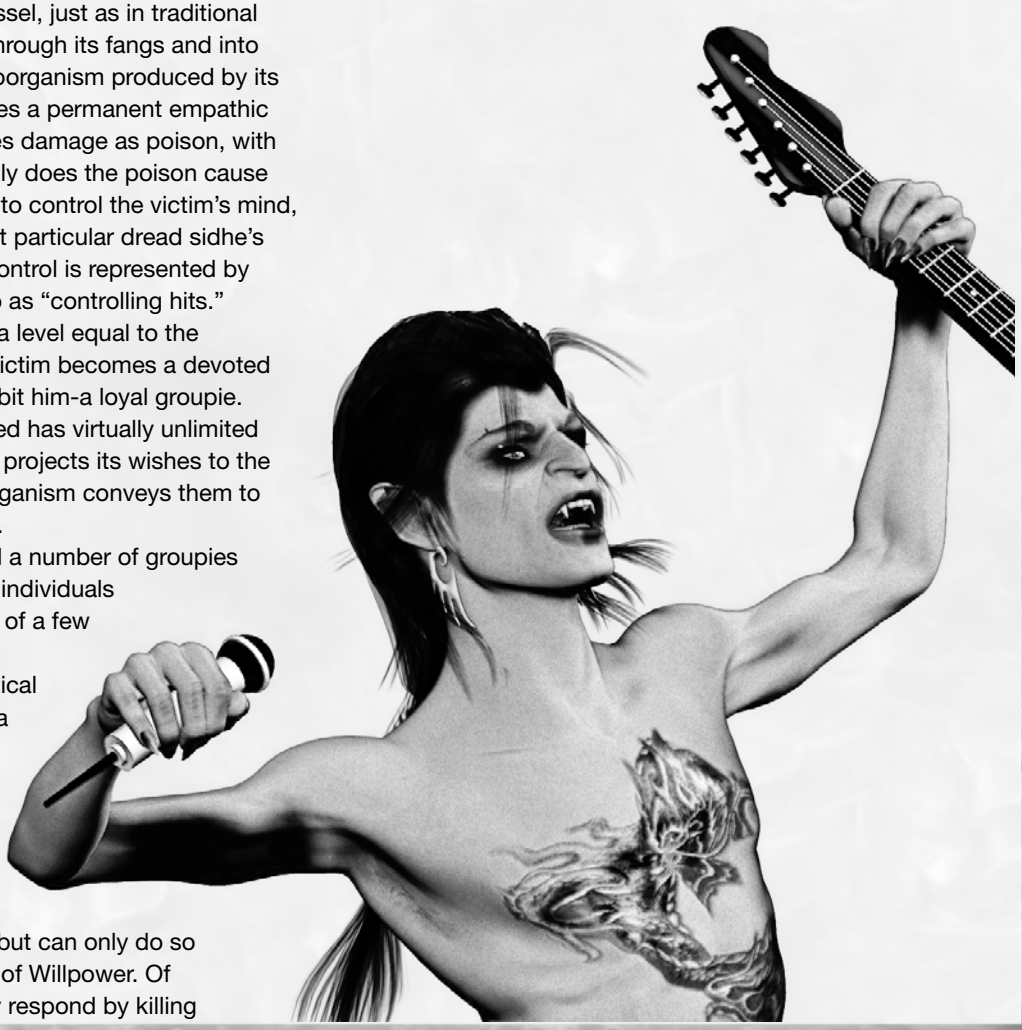
Dread sidhe are native to northern Europe. They are empathic vampires, feeding off the energy of human emotions. They prefer emotions of anger and despair, and they typically pursue a human career as a musician or an artist in order to engender those emotions. Realizing that adolescents and teenagers are prime sources of these emotions that people at this age are in nearly constant emotional turmoil and are often looking for some sort of guidance (from non authority figures)-the dread sidhe have long focused their efforts on the young. When the rock 'n' roll movement started in England, they quickly recognized that involvement in the rock industry would give them easy access to kids.

General Description

The dread sidhe all appear basically human, but each has enlarged canine teeth (typically passed off as a cosmetic affectation). They do not use these fangs for drinking blood like traditional vampires, however, but rather to inject into their victims a controlling microorganism from their own bodies, forging an empathic bond that allows them to command these unfortunates. In modem parlance, this is typically called "making groupies."

Groupies

In order to create a "groupie," a dread sidhe bites its intended victim near a blood vessel, just as in traditional vampire tales. It then secretes through its fangs and into the victim's bloodstream a microorganism produced by its own body, through which it forges a permanent empathic link. In game terms, the bite does damage as poison, with a rating of 3p2. However, not only does the poison cause physical damage, it also begins to control the victim's mind, making the victim subject to that particular dread sidhe's will. Again in game terms, this control is represented by treating the poison damage also as "controlling hits." When the controlling hits reach a level equal to the victim's Intelligence rating, the victim becomes a devoted follower of the dread sidhe that bit him-a loyal groupie. The empathic bond that is formed has virtually unlimited range; in effect, the dread sidhe projects its wishes to the microorganism, and the microorganism conveys them to the victim's brain as commands.



Each dread sidhe can control a number of groupies equal to its Charisma rating. So individuals investigating the disappearance of a few teenagers may find themselves fighting a baker's dozen of fanatical followers. It is relatively rare for a particular dread sidhe to have a full set of groupies, however, as the creatures are callous and cruel, and groupie deaths are fairly frequent.

A groupie may attempt to disobey a particular command, but can only do so by succeeding at a Difficult test of Willpower. Of course, the master will generally respond by killing

the disobedient groupie at the earliest opportunity. Note that succeeding to disobey a particular order does not break the empathic link. The groupie will still be under the power of future orders, and the master will remain aware of the groupie's approximate location (exact direction and rough distance). The only known way of completely breaking the empathic link is by killing the dread sidhe who forged it, after which the controlling microorganism will die.

Scams

As mentioned earlier, the dread sidhe feed on emotional energy. Therefore, most of their time and energy are devoted to generating strong emotions in a setting in which they can safely drink it in. Public events such as rock concerts, film showings, art exhibitions and occasionally even sporting events (particularly hockey or soccer matches) serve them well.

They can easily drink in enough energy to survive simply by visiting such events and mixing with the audience, but their pleasure is much more intense when they are themselves the focus of the attention. For this reason, most dread sidhe devote themselves to becoming quite adept at some type of performing art that allows them to draw their own crowds, as well as in Psychology, which helps them to manipulate those audiences.

Interestingly enough, however, the dread sidhe do not want superstar status. That would bring them unwanted attention. Instead, they like to move from place to place, staying in each location just long enough to perpetrate an elaborate "scam" on the locals. In its earliest stages, this scam is nothing more than advance publicity to gain the local population's interest. Shortly thereafter, the dread sidhe will arrive and begin performing at relatively small assemblies. As it gains growing interest from the locals, the creature will arrange larger and larger performances, culminating finally in a single, powerfully hideous conclusion to the sequence, such as prompting a mob lynching of some local figure, or a spree of looting, murder, and rape.

Afterward, the dread sidhe will move on and lay low for a while before beginning again in a new locale under a new name.

Dream Master

Strength:	5	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	10/20/30
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	15	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2D6
Agility:	10	*Empathy:*	12	*Hits:*	26/50
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Dream masters have the ability to Dimension Walk.

It is not altogether uncommon to hear tales of people dying or suffering serious injury while sleepwalking. There have been tales of people walking out of windows, accidentally strangling themselves in twisted sheets or smothering themselves in pillows. Then there are those who simply died in their sleep with horrible contortions of fear on their faces. Many of these unfortunates have been the victim of creatures sometimes known as dream masters.

Physical Description

Dream masters are tall (just over two meters), thin (under 80 kilograms) humanoids with fairly standard human features. They have a bald, human-looking head, though the skin is darker and more leathery than normal for humans. Their hands have only four fingers, each nearly twice the thickness of a human digit and ending in a short but heavy claw.

Dream Haunting

A dream master haunts the dream of sleepers, but it can only prey upon the dream of people with at least some Empathy. Its favorite target is someone with a combination of great Empathic potential (i.e., a high Empathy attribute) but little control (i.e., low Empathic skill levels) and little resistance (i.e., low Willpower). Such people radiate their dreams strongly, like a sort of Empathic beacon, allowing dream masters to mentally bridge the gap between their dimension and our own. A dream master can do so once per day.

Once a dream master has discovered a suitable victim, it must insert itself into the person's dream. This requires a Difficult test of the dream master's Human Empathy skill, with the following modifiers added to the die roll: subtract the victim's Empathy attribute and add the victim's highest Empathy skill.

For example, a victim with Empathy 4 and Animal Empathy 3 as the highest Empathic *skill* level would yield a net -1 to the die roll. Note that this almost always results in a net modifier beneficial to the dream master.

If successful, the dream master will begin working to change the victim's dreams into hideous nightmares, using Project Thought. If unsuccessful, the dream master is incapable of entering the person's dreams and will leave in search of some other victim

Sleep Deprivation

A Power Level is rolled for a dream master's Project Thought skill, as usual, to determine the quality of the creature's projection. But the level generated also determines the chance that the victim suffers weariness from having had a troubled sleep. At the end of their normal sleep period, victims must roll 1D6 greater than the power level achieved or suffer a



temporary -1 modifier to all attribute and skill levels. (In other words, a 2 or better is required if Basic Success was achieved, a 3 or better if Level Two was achieved, and so on.) These negative modifiers are cumulative, so a character who failed the 1D6 roll three days in a row would be suffering a -3 modifier to all attributes and skills. For each four-hour period that a character sleeps undisturbed, the modifier is reduced by 1 point. Thus, a character could nap during the day to recover from the previous night's loss, for instance.

Characters suffering from weariness will tend to act irritable, and as the size of the modifier mounts, they may act increasingly irrational and paranoid.

Dream Death

Once a dream master manages to acquire a Stage Six success on its Power Level when using Project Thought to haunt its victim's dreams, the creature can cause the victim's death in one of two ways: The victim can be made to suffer a heart attack while sleeping, or the victim can be forced to commit suicide while sleepwalking. Surviving the first requires an Easy test of the victim's adjusted Constitution. The second can only be avoided by the intervention of other people physically restraining the victim. However, if someone intervenes in this way, the dream master may decide to manifest itself physically by means of Dimension Walk and battle the defender.

Dream Defenders

Because of the nature of the empathic link established between a dream master and its victim other empathic characters can enter the link as well. Anyone can "eavesdrop" on the victim's dreams by means of a successful Human Empathy roll. Those who also succeed at a Difficult test of Project Thought can force the invading dream master to make a second Difficult test of Human Empathy to maintain dream contact, but this time substituting the eavesdropper's highest Empathy skill for the victim's.

If the dream master fails at this second roll, its contact is broken, and it will leave in search of easier prey.

If it succeeds at the roll, both the original victim and the eavesdropper will suffer any effects of sleep deprivation caused by the dream master's Project Thought roll. Or worse, if the dream master manages to score a Stage Six success with its Project Thought skill, both victim and eavesdropper will be subject to the effects of dream death.

Role-playing Nightmares

Referees are encouraged to role-play with their players the nightmares caused by a dream master, rather than simply announcing what the creature rolled and having the character check for weariness. The dream settings should be based upon the affected characters' skills and the intensity of the dream on the Power Level the dream master gained with its Project Thought roll. The dream master will tend to project images that play upon the character's weakest skills, and the character's subconscious will attempt to change the dream to something that allows the use of a more practiced skill.

For example, if a character is not much of a swimmer, the dream master might project images of a terrible flood sweeping over the character. A character who is good at Climbing might then choose to adjust the dream to include a tower that can be mounted. The dream master could respond by having the flood undermine the tower, causing it to fall. The character might then use a high Acrobatics skill to land safely on a spur of high ground, and so on.

If the dream master rolled well at its Project Thought attempt, the character would find his head nearly underwater before being able to dream up the tower. On the other hand, if the creature rolled poorly, the character might barely suffer wet feet before climbing above the water.

Dreamweaver

Strength:	2	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	2/9/18/35
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/2
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	16	*Hits:*	10/18
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

A dreamweaver is one of the many Dark Minions that live for the misery they create to feed on, not for bloodletting and mayhem in themselves. The creature targets its prey when psychological defenses reach their lowest ebb-in the depths of sleep. It manipulates the very stuff of dreams, until the victim lives in a waking hell of warped desires, induced obsessions and ever-growing madness. Historically, most victims of dreamweavers have been diagnosed with a variety of mental illness and treated however their society deals with such unfortunates.

Folklore of medieval Europe came closest to slowly warping those dreams over the course of identifying the causal agent, however, with its tales of incubi, succubi, and personified nightmares. Because other Dark Minions follow similar modes of attack, and because a dreamweaver is rarely seen or captured unless it is careless, the creature has often been confused with other beings.



Physical Description

A dreamweaver's true form is that of a small, furry humanoid, about the size of a housecat. Dreamweavers have enormous eyes and thin, elongated fingers, lending it the look of an overgrown tarsier. One may enter a home in the empathic disguise of a forlorn kitten or a skinny puppy (particularly if it hopes to target a child); however, an open window is all the invitation a dream weaver really needs. A pile of dirty clothing, a chair pulled into the comer, a box in the bedroom closet-all provide adequate hiding places for a dreamweaver while it waits for its victim to bed down for the night.

Modus Operandi

The dreamweaver's mode of attack is subtle-first reading the natural dreams of its victim, then slowly warping those dreams over the course of many nights. Every case is different. A dieting (or starving) victim might dream of a holiday feast. But the dream returns the next night with shadowy intimations of poison laced into the chocolate silk pie or maggots hiding in the rice pilaf. Subconscious fears about food grow. Soon the victim stops eating at home (but cannot explain why), then he cannot bear the idea of eating out. Only food prepared personally remains edible, and eventually not even that. All the while, the victim is dreaming of fabulous banquets, with every gustatory passion enticing, all dread forgotten-until the lobster vomits butterslime and the thousand-year eggs hatch. A dreamweaver spinning this particular scenario might permit one category of food to go untainted, allowing the dreamer to avoid starvation and prolong the agony. Anything a person might dream is grist for the dream weaver's mill. Anxiety dreams slowly become petrifying insecurity; the desire to get the upper hand on one's boss becomes a Napoleonic power fantasy played out on the streets; sexual fantasies take on darker permutations; and dreams of flying rocket out of control. All the while, the dreamweaver feeds on the dreamer's confusion, fear and madness, and on the equally satisfying emotions of anxiety from those close to the dreamer.

Progressive Symptoms

A dreamweaver's victim is likely to be unaware of the progression of events, particularly in the earlier stages. A dreamer experiences a few particularly vivid dreams, with the attendant emotions spilling over into the waking day. As the dreams become more psychologically dangerous, the victim's own defense mechanisms may kick in to shield him from recalling the actual dream. By the time those barriers are broken, the victim may be suffering hallucinations and delusions brought on by sleep deprivation. With natural dreaming increasingly derailed, the psychological strains feed back into each night's subsidence into deeper madness.

At first, the dreamweaver's victim wakens a little haggard, with flashback memories of disturbing dreams. The dreamer may sleep more than usual, or awaken in the night with a sense of foreboding and oppression.

The dreamweaver must be quite close to the victim to affect the dreamweaving for which the race is named. A normally light sleeper might even sense a small body resting on his chest, though the dreamweaver's exceptional stealth, agility and empathy make it very unlikely to be seen.

The length of time a dream weaver works on its victim varies. A patient, experienced dreamweaver might be able to drag things out for a year, granting surcease for a time, then slowly building to another near-crisis before slacking back again. An impatient or particularly hungry dreamweaver can destroy a dreamer in a night or two, with the victim catapulted into waking nightmares that resonate to the darkest depths of his personality.

Breaking the Curse

Victims take numerous steps to shake the nightmares, some more effective than others. Changing where one sleeps works, but not for long, unless the victim makes a long-distance, permanent move. Watchers are often recruited from among spouses, friends, or health professionals-all of whom may be boondoggled if the dreamweaver wants to finish the "meal" it has started, and all of whom also need to sleep and dream. Tranquilizer and antidepressant drugs which suppress normal dreaming also muffle the dreamweaver's activities, but they cannot halt the dreams, nor permanently shield victims from their private stock of potential madness-drugs treat the symptoms, not the "disease".

Dreamweavers are a particularly cowardly race and-as can be seen from their attributes-they are not fighters. What skills they possess are used to acquire promising victims and otherwise remain out of sight. If a dream weaver is actually discovered, it is likely to abandon its victim and seek another. If the first victim was particularly satisfying, though, the creature may return much later (weeks, months or years) and seek a more subtle, careful approach. To escape detection, some dream weavers make a habit of not "riding" any victim to destruction, but only "sipping" briefly for a few nights or a week, then moving on before the victim suspects anything amiss. A trail of unease, weariness, short tempers and odd impulses is all that is left to show what has passed in the depths of the night.

Electrogeist

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	20*
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D10*
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	—	*Hits:*	**
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

* When in ball lightning form. Movement through an electrical circuit is at electronic speeds. Damage from an electrical circuit depends upon the circuits strength.

** Can only be destroyed by grounding or electrically overpowering.

Physical Description

The electrogeist is a strange construct of electrical energy, a being typically without form. The electrogeist can assume a physical form, appearing as a rolling ball of electrical force. It only does this when it wants to traverse the physical distance between unconnected circuits. Electrogeists are quite rare, fortunately for many power grids. They live in electrical circuits, traveling via power lines

Behavior

The habit of taking over all the electrical appliances on a circuit is what earned the electrogeist its name. An electrogeist will move into a circuit and animate all the electronics linked to that circuit, causing them to act without external activation. The electrogeist does what it can to turn the area its circuit rovers into electronic madness.

Combat Abilities

Electrogeists can travel at electronic speeds when using electrical lines. They can arc across the distance between circuits that are no more than three meters apart. If the circuits are farther apart, the electrogeist can form a ball of power resembling ball lightning and roll at the rate listed above, passing through any thin obstacle that isn't grounded. It can also make melee attacks at long melee range by using electrical arcs while in this form.

Eiectrogeists seem to delight in jinxing computers, switching or deleting data, and they take perverse pleasure in attacking computer savants (people with Computer Empathy). If an electrogeist gets the drop on a person who is using Computer Empathy, it can deliver an electric charge to that person, doing 1D10 damage per phase (applied to the chest). Fortunately, computer empaths can easily detect the presence of an electrogeist in a computer system—even a Basic Success at Computer Empathy will reveal its effect on data tlow. Furthermore, computer empaths may disconnect from the system before an electrogeist attacks if they score at least a Stage Two success with their skill.

Weaknesses

An electrogeist may be destroyed by overpowering it or grounding it. Overpowering an electrogeist can only be done by trapping the entity in a closed circuit and then flooding that circuit with major amounts of power—about 30 seconds of 440-volt industrial power or 60 seconds of 220-volt semi-industrial power would suffice, as would a five second jolt of direct power plant feed.

Extraterrestrials

Extraterrestrials, or ETs, may well be the most difficult Dark Minions for the referee to convey effectively. The reason for this is that many players will not be used to thinking of ETs horrifically. They may have images of cute, child-sized humanoids with overlarge eyes like Chihuahuas in cheap velvet paintings, of aliens who have come to save us from ourselves. On the other hand, there are also ample examples of warty, bug-eyed monsters who have come to steal away Earth women. Neither of these images is quite appropriate for the paranoid horror of Dark Conspiracy.

Dark Conspiracy ETs are both subtle and horrific. They are mysterious creatures of soulless super-science. These extraterrestrials view our planet as a cage full of laboratory animals upon whom they can experiment. For instance, some years back, a magazine called UFO Reports carried within its covers stories of aliens taking over mental hospitals in New York state and performing head transplant surgery upon the inmates. Nearly every tabloid currently on the market carries regular features about aliens abducting someone and performing experiments on them. The paranoia surrounding these creatures is also evident in reports that they have established secret bases inside the Earth.

In Dark Conspiracy, these sorts of stories are all too true. ETs are taking over the planet-or at least they are trying to. It is they who were the major force behind the worldwide economic crash that began the Greater Depression. They are the ones who secretly control the largest megacorporations. They have offices within every major government, and secret experimental installations allover the world. In places, they have even replaced entire populations of towns. Like a metastasizing cancer, they have infiltrated human society at all levels.

But ETs are not merely one race. There are insectoid ETs, tentacular ETs, humanoid ETs with bulgy eyes and foreheads, and even some that are pure energy. These disparate races do not always work together well, which may be all that keeps them from completely enslaving the Earth. The one thing that all of the extraterrestrials have in common is that they are extremely advanced technologically.

Energy ETs

Strength:	1	*Education:*	20	*Move:*	40
Constitution:	1	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6*/4D10**
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	4/8
Intelligence:	18	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1D10÷2

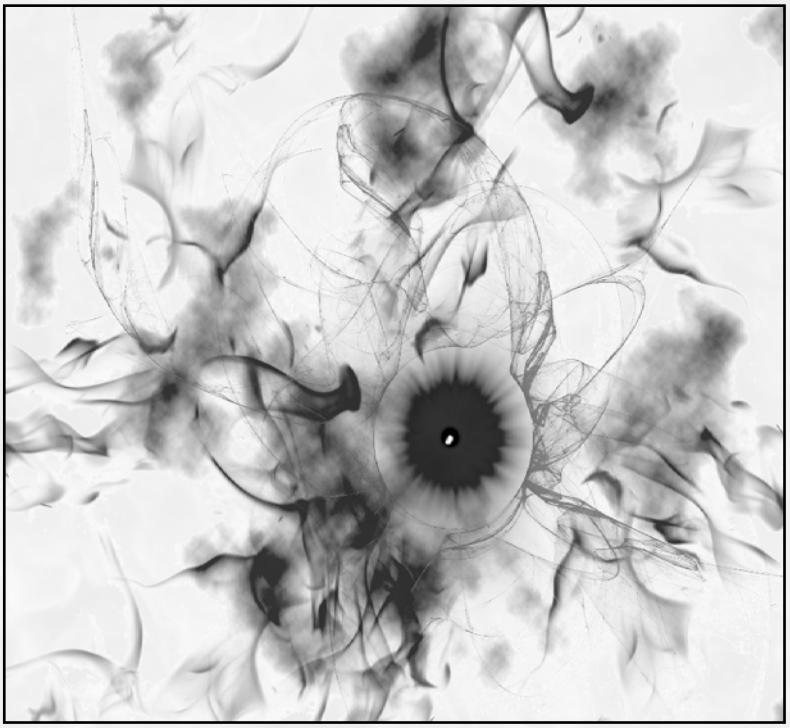
* Possesses the following special skills: Darkling Empathy 6, Human Empathy 4, Project Thought 10, Willpower Drain 8.

** This is an electrical attack with a medium range of eight meters.

Special: Two levels more difficult to hit, due to small size. Armor value 1.

Each energy ET is a glowing sphere of pure energy, two meters in diameter, centered upon a tiny ball of matter (0.10 kilograms) that serves as its focus point. In combat, the creature gives off bolts of lightning, treated as a fire combat attack. It can only be destroyed by damaging its focal point, a fairly difficult thing to accomplish, given that the point is small and has a tough surface. Once that focal point is destroyed, however, the creature's energy disperses in a violent electrical display. Inside the tiny ball that remains, there can be seen circuitry of metallic vein in a grainy, rocklike substance.

Energy ETs are the least likely of any ETs to directly intervene in human affairs. Typically, they merely observe. Sometimes, however, they will take action to destroy some human endeavor: an interplanetary craft, an advanced computer installation, or perhaps even a major nuclear power plant. In such cases, the devastation they cause can spill over onto local populations.





Humanoid ETs

Strength:	3	*Education:*	16	*Move:*	2/7/12/20
Constitution:	2	*Charisma:*	2	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/2
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	9	*Hits:*	16/30
Intelligence:	11	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: Humanoid ETs can communicate with each other telepathically. Some carry death-ray weapons and/or Dimension Walk devices.

These ETs are the staple of tabloid newspaper stories. (There is some evidence that they are the basis of some legends of elves and faeries, as well.) They look like hairless humans with small, slender bodies and overly large craniums. Their faces are small and delicate, with the exception of their oversized eyes, which are generally dark blue or black with no visible whites. Their features betray no emotions. They travel about in saucer-shaped vessels that are little more than flying laboratories.

The most frightening thing about these creatures is their utter disregard for individual human life. Like soulless laboratory workers, they collect specimens of humanity (or occasionally other terran creatures), conduct psychological or surgical experiments with them, then destroy or discard the test subjects when they are finished.

Most humanoid ETs stay very close to their vessels. Some of the most human looking, however, will sometimes infiltrate human society, if there is an end to be gained. They might join the research staff of a scientific facility, for instance, to sabotage its work.



Insectoid ETs

Strength:	5	*Education:*	8	*Move:*	4/12/20/30
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/4
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	24/50
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing:*	2D6

Special: Armor value (1) – versus melee only. Animal Empathy 10 (insects only-see below), Project Thought 6.

Insectoid Grubs

Strength:	10	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	3
Constitution:	13	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D10
Agility:	3	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	40/60
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6

Insectoid ETs want humans for one purpose only: as food. But they would like to keep that food supply running for as long as possible. So, like cattle farmers, they work to keep their herds placid and productive. In the case of human cattle, this means maintaining social and political systems as well as feed and medicine. For this reason, insectoid ETs have been among the Dark Minions most directly involved in terran politics. many of the megacorporate strongholds in urban areas are actually nests of insectoid ETs-their outer blocks maintained in terran style as a facade of normalcy, but their inner regions transformed into bizarre, chitinous tunnels, oozing with moisture, and filled with hungry ET grubs. it is a terrible thing to be captured by these ETs and deposited in the nests as grub food. Even though the grubs are slow, there are multitudes of them, and a person cannot run indefinitely.

The adults have a specialized form of Animal Empathy that works only with insects. By use of Project Thought, they are able to command any insects they are in empathic contact with (including their own grubs).

In appearance, the adults are roughly human size and look something like a terran cockroach, but standing upright like a mantis. The grubs are somewhat larger, averaging two meters in length and a meter in diameter, with pale, bloated bodies and glossy black heads.

Tentacular ETs

Strength:	11	*Education:*	6	*Move:*	2/4/8/15
Constitution:	11	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6*/5
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	26/50
Intelligence:	11	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	2D6

* Each does 1D6 attacks per action in melee combat, due to their multiple tentacles.

Special: Swimming 10.



The tentacular ETs are perhaps the most hideous looking of the ET races described here. They are amphibians that look something like a cross between a human and a squid. A fleshy, bulbous head surmounts an upright, fleshy torso, ringed by manipulative tentacles at shoulder level, and heavier, "walking" tentacles at floor level.

tentacular ETs are hideous to look at with their skin being slick and appearing to be covered in a slime. The slime refracts colors like an oil slick when seen in light, which they do not like. These ETs do not have vocal cords,and instead rely on a mechanical box to "talk" to their human minions. However, their preference is to fix the minion with a cyborg implant that allows the ETs to communicate—and command—the minion directly .

Their purpose is simple: conquer the Earth and make it their own. Fortunately for humans, there are very few of these creatures, so far, and they prefer to remain near the oceans.

For more detailed information on tentacular ETs, see the ***Conspiracy Lives*** setting book.

Fey Folk

The word "faerie" has not always meant only "of delicate beauty and magical charm" (as Merriam-Webster puts it). Many of the creatures in faerie legends are beautiful but cruel, and best avoided if at all possible. In former times, these were sometimes called the "fair folk," a euphemism used to avoid drawing their attention, but not entirely accurate. And humans who seemed touched by them were called "fay," meaning prone to faerie visions, or "fey," meaning doomed or fated. It is from the latter that we coined the term "fey folk" to represent the Dark Minions that spawned the faerie myths.

In legend, these creatures are strong with magical power, particularly the power of illusion (in fact, no one can be quite certain what they really look like), and they dwell in a world that touches our own but is somehow one step removed from it. In Dark Conspiracy, their entire purpose is to beguile in order to enslave or destroy. They are dangerous creatures, masters of terror and illusion, and they like nothing better than to drive people to madness and death.

The fey folk all are highly empathic, and they are so skilled at projecting thought images that they can give a victim waking dreams, creating a totally illusory world, if desired.



Banshee

Strength:	7	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	9	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/10
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	20	*Hits:*	16/32
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Willpower Drain, Dimension Walk.

The historical creature projected its image as a wailing woman in white cloak and robes, often at a stream or river, washing bloody cloths in the water. Legend is that it appears to a family when a death is imminent. In actuality, the banshee brings about those deaths by luring its victim away from safety—usually into a woods or marsh—and then using its Project Emotion skill to drive its victims to despair. If necessary, the banshee will use Willpower Drain to prepare the victim for the project emotion attack. Once the victim has been weakened, the banshee presses its attack physically.

Barghest

Strength:	16	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	4/15/30/60
Constitution:	14	*Charisma:*	6	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/12
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	18	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Animal Empathy, Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Willpower Drain, Dimension Walk.

Like the banshee, the barghest haunts its intended victim for days before finally attacking. At night, it sends horrible dreams of pursuit by ferocious hounds. During the day, it projects an image of a great mastiff, always prowling at the edge of vision, seen only in from corner of the eye. Finally, when its victim's terror has peaked, the barghest attacks. This attack always comes at night, and always when the victim is alone. Some people have tried to protect themselves by surrounding themselves with friends, but the barghest is expert at drawing its victims away from protection. One theory is that it projects an image of a friend to lure the victim out, then drops the illusion just before it attacks.

Dark Elves

Strength:	6	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/10/20/35
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	9	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/4
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	10	*Hits:*	20/40
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	2D6

Special: Dimension Walk.

The dark elves are apparently very human in appearance, although fairer than average. Legend is that they dwell in vast subterranean caverns, where they maintain entire underground civilizations. But the dark elves have always taken a great interest in . humanity, a perverse interest which derives pleasure from human suffering and ruination. As a result, individual dark elves often join human society, where they pass themselves off as human, generally preferring to pose as artists, poets, musicians, or magicians.

The dark elves are incredibly cruel. In human cities, they prowl the most elegant night spots, looking for victims to invite to a "very private party. " Once a sufficient number of people have been collected, the dark elves lead them to an isolated spot and slaughter them in the most hideous ways imaginable. (For example, one particular slaughter involved a locked warehouse and a threshing machine.) In rural regions, pairs of dark elves will pose as travelers in need of shelter for the night, only to turn on their hosts and murder them in their beds.

The dark elves are quite capable of using any human technologies, although it is doubtful that they ever develop new technologies of their own. The one exception to this is the creation of animator spirits (see above), which the dark elves are quite accomplished at.

Dwarf Gremlin

Strength:	3	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	*3/11/18/35*
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	*5/1D6+2*
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	9	*Hits:*	*14/28*
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	*2D6*

Special: Computer Empathy, Demolitions, Electronics, Engineer, Lockpick, Mechanic and Telekinesis, each at the appropriate attribute level. Dwarf gremlins do not have Darkling Empathy.

Stunted, twisted and wholly malevolent relatives of the dark elves, dwarf gremlins are as adept at manipulating the workings of machines as their larger brethren are at warping the perceptions of humans.

Physical Description

Dwarf gremlins are small humanoids just over one meter in height. Their bodies are often misshapen and misproportioned, with overly long arms, bloated stomachs, large feet, mismatched ears, etc. Dwarf gremlins wear no clothes, and they have mottled green and black skin covering their bodies.

Modus Operandi

Like other fey folk, dwarf gremlins thrive on human pain and misery. A dwarf gremlin's raspy laugh has been the last thing many a person has heard before meeting his doom. Dwarf gremlins achieve their ends through the devices people rely upon, rather than by directly attacking people. In the technological world of Dark Conspiracy, the creatures seldom lack for devices to use. They spread chaos and destruction wherever they go in the fond of seemingly accidental mechanical failures, circuit overloads, power outages and structural weaknesses, among other things-usually with fatal results.

Dwarf gremlins use both physical and empathic means to sabotage vehicles, equipment, and sometimes even buildings. Unless severely pressed for time, dwarf gremlins never do their damage in a careless, unthinking manner. Rather, they plan out the most efficient way of generating the most damage and horror from their attacks. When possible, they sabotage things so that human operators will not recognize that anything is wrong until it is entirely too late to stop it and so that lots of things suddenly fall apart, all at once, increasing human feelings of despair at the situation. Because of the dwarf gremlins' Telekinetic abilities and high mechanical aptitude, referees are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild in determining what sorts of "mischief' the creatures are capable of accomplishing.

Due to their small size and relative weakness, dwarf gremlins use their superior speed and stealth to avoid confrontation if they can, but fight viciously if cornered. Their strong jaws (well exercised from chewing through power cables and electrical wires) and many teeth can prove dangerous, especially to unarmored characters. A dwarf gremlin's innate destructive talents are useful in combat as well, as any unfortunate attackers discover when their weapon belt clasps suddenly come undone, the safeties on their guns click on in the middle of firing, the pins on their grenades all mysteriously fall out, their pistols discharge while still holstered, etc.

Technology and Empathy

A dwarf gremlin's understanding of technology is solely for the purpose of manipulating it to destroy its users. The creatures do not construct or employ any devices of their own. The dwarf gremlin race neither possesses its own technology nor adopts that of other races. Instead, each dwarf gremlin relies entirely upon its natural abilities.

Furthermore, a dwarf gremlin's empathic power applies only to nonliving material. The creatures cannot empathically affect other living beings—they have no capacity to sense or project human emotion, project thoughts or drain willpower. They do not even possess the normal Dark Minion power of Darkling Empathy. Even without empathic assistance, however, their repulsive appearance inspires fear and loathing within most people who encounter them.



History

Although dwarf gremlin influence has been felt since World War II. it was only in the chaos of the Greater Depression that they arrived in number. Thereafter. the creatures multiplied and spread rapidly. Most urban centers across the nation are host to secret dwarf gremlin communities. contributing to ever-rising accident rates. Although the majority of rural communities are too far from the rich urban hunting grounds to attract dwarf gremlins. some of the larger towns across the countryside suffer from small, transient groups wreaking havoc when and where they can.

Larger groups of dwarf gremlins combine their Telekinesis to produce truly amazing results. They cause airplane crashes. complete power outages in medical districts. train derailments. plant and factory explosions. etc. Dwarf gremlins are able to exist in the busiest metropolitan areas. hiding in air ducts. sewer tunnels. automated industrial complexes and the like. They survive undetected on garbage. small animals. and occasionally the remains of their human victims.

Fuath

Strength:	10	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	5/10/30/60
Constitution:	8	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/8
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	12	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	2	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Makes grappling attacks to subdue, then drowns its victims.

Fuathas (pronounced "fyathas"), or pookas, are a collection of various amphibious creatures that haunt bodies of water, in the guise of animals, intending to trick people in to drown. One of the most reported is the each-uisge ("ek-wiskey"), which appears as a horse, tempts people (particularly children) to ride, then carries them underwater.

A related creature is the shellycoat, which lurks underwater waiting for a chance to grab unwary victims and pull them in.

Will o'Wisp

Strength:	7	*Education:*	5	*Move:*	*2/8/15/30**
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	2	*Skill/Dam.:*	*7/2D6*
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	10	*Hits:*	*50/100*
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	2	*# Appearing*	*1*

*These scores are for swimming. A will o'wisp's movement on land is at half these rates.

Special: Telekinesis.

The Mythology

Many times, beauty is merely a cover for something ugly. This is certainly the case with the legend of the will o'wisp. Individuals or small groups of people occasionally see small motes of lights dancing about playfully in the middle of a swamp. Or they see lights moving about below the surface of the water just over the edge of a boat or along some deserted stretch of beach. These lights are so beautiful and entrancing that individuals are drawn to them, following them until becoming lost in the swamp or drowning in deep water.

The Reality

Individuals lured by these faerie lights soon meet the true will o'wisp, which is by no means a beautiful creature of light. The dancing lights are nothing more than a simple but effective lure to draw prey.

Physical Description

In their natural state, will o'wisps are hideous creatures to behold. They have very long, limbless, serpentine bodies. Their eyeless heads display trilateral symmetry-their mouths have three jaws. The teeth at the end of their jaws hook backward so that when they bite, they latch firmly onto their prey. The creatures also have a set of secondary jaws inside the first. Each secondary jaw ends in a single tooth which is actually more like a razor-sharp claw. They have a long, hollow "tongue," itself tipped with nasty barbs.

Combat Abilities

When they attack, will o'wisps latch on to their victim's torso with their outer jaws. The inner teeth then tear through muscle and bone so that the tongue can find its way into the victim's internal organs and consume them. A will o'wisp prefers to have its tail anchored to some submerged object when it attacks, so that it can pull the prey below the surface to finish it off.

On the first attack, the damage is used primarily to figure "controlling hits," but half is also considered actual damage. After successfully latching onto their prey, the creatures cause an automatic 2D6 damage each subsequent phase to the hit location grabbed until the victim is dead. They may try to pull their prey below the water surface on the same round as they achieve sufficient controlling hits with their outer set of jaws. The victim then suffers the effects of drowning in addition to those of combat.

Psychology

Despite the fact that will o'wisps have no manipulative limbs, the creatures are actually quite intelligent, using Telekinesis to manipulate objects when desired, and using Project Thought and Project Emotion to create the illusion of "faerie lights" by which they Jure their prey. The creatures are very evil and cruel, enjoying toying with unsuspecting individuals and then devouring them.

Telekinesis

Not only can will o'wisps use their Telekinesis for fine manipulation of tools and objects, they can also use it to defend themselves in combat or even to conduct an attack. When used defensively, each power level achieved gives the creatures 1 point of armor, a sort of telekinetic force field that helps them to feed undisturbed. But this field is only effective against melee and gas attacks-it provides no defense against firearms or beam weapons.

Offensively, the creatures use Telekinesis to make ranged attacks, causing oars to attack their users, stones to leap from under the water and attack, and so on. The creatures much prefer to attack physically and will only resort to telekinetic attacks as a last resort.

Dwellings

This marine race has numerous cities in the oceans of the world and some in larger lakes. Will o'wisps have a tightly structured and ordered society based upon rule by the largest and most deadly. The largest, deep-sea dwellers are big enough to consume whales or wreck sailing ships (and are likely a source of sea serpent legends). Those encountered in swamps are the outcasts of their society.

Gargoyle, Rock

Strength:	8	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	15/25/40*
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1D6+4
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	7	*Hits:*	28/56**
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	2D10

* Movement given is flying rate. On foot, rock gargoyles travel at human rates.

** Rock gargoyles have I point of armor on all hit locations.

Physical Description

The inspiration for the leering stone guardians adorning many medieval churches comes from a creature generally called the rock gargoyle. Individual rock gargoyles vary in appearance, but most are greenish-gray humanoids with reptilian skin and yellow eyes. Rock gargoyles usually have long, sharp claws on both their hands and feet, as well as pointed teeth and one or more horns. They have no visible hair on their entire bodies. Sprouting from a rock gargoyle's back are two huge, batlike wings. Those rock gargoyles . that can speak do so in a low, gravely voice.

Broodhome

The creatures are most often used as guards by the Dark Lords and their more powerful minions. When a spot needing live-in guards is identified, a rock gargoyle queen may be brought in to establish a brood at the location to be guarded. The rock gargoyles fiercely defend their new nesting ground, becoming unwitting but fanatical guards for whoever placed them. Well-established Demonground locations can have quite large rock gargoyle populations that have been living and growing there for many years--this is one of the reasons so few who wander into a such a place ever wander back out.

Most rock gargoyles prefer to live in caverns or abandoned buildings where a network of easily defensible chambers have to be traversed by any attacker wishing to reach the queen and her eggs. In urban areas, the creatures make use of any sewer systems or large buildings for their lair. They are fanatically territorial and will fight to the death, even against the most overwhelming odds, in defense of their home and eggs. All rock gargoyles in a particular broodhome are related, having all hatched from the eggs of the same queen. Rock gargoyles are nocturnal and do all their hunting at night, although they keep watch over their territory 24 hours a day.

Reproduction and Expansion

The queen is the only member of the community that is not asexual. A single queen lays a clutch of some 20 to 30 eggs per year in the community dung heap. These eggs then grow for a period of five years, absorbing nutrients from the decaying dung and constantly increasing the size of their shells, adding new layers on the outside as the inner layers are reabsorbed by the embryo. At the end of the gestation period, the eggs hatch into fully grown rock gargoyles which are immediately taken into the community.

At irregular intervals, one of the newly hatched rock gargoyles is a queen. When this happens, the new queen and the other rock gargoyles in that clutch form a new brood. If a Dark Lord desires to plant a new group of rock gargoyles, the brood may be transported to the new location to start a community. Or, if the local area is large enough, the new broodhome may be established in the same vicinity as the old one. If neither of these occurs, the queen and the rest of the hatchlings take flight in search of a new lair. Over time, this has produced many scattered and isolated groups of rock gargoyles which are no longer under the direct influence of a Dark Lord.

Rock gargoyles are not evil in themselves. They have no designs of conquest or desire to destroy. Like humans, rock gargoyles are chiefly interested in a secure, continued existence for themselves and the members of their community. Conflict arises when that security is threatened, rock gargoyles being savage fighters easily provoked by any intrusion.



The Dark Lords prey upon these characteristics in using rock gargoyle communities to their own ends. A new queen and associated followers placed in a small rural town will cause a slaughter of the human inhabitants as the rock gargoyles establish a home for themselves. But those rock gargoyles who are free from a Dark Lord's influence can peacefully coexist with humans, as they nest in remote areas and hunt whatever small animals are in the area.

Mental Abilities

Under most circumstances, rock gargoyles are not familiar with human culture or technology, including language. Groups existing near human communities, or individual rock gargoyles whose groups have broken up due to death of the queen or some other reason, will sometimes gradually come to understand human ways. In extremely rare instances, rock gargoyles may even be encountered making use of captured or discarded human equipment. Gargoyles of this sort have higher Intelligence and Education ratings than those listed. Queens are generally 1 to 2 points higher in all respects.

Although some rock gargoyles may eventually learn to speak human languages, all rock gargoyles communicate with each other via empathic links.

Combat Tactics

Rock gargoyles are strong fighters. Their scaly hide provides them with resistance to damage, their claws and teeth strike out like daggers, and their skills are formidable. The rock gargoyle queen will enter combat only if absolutely necessary for the survival of the brood, as the loss of its queen is fatal to a community. The queen will never be encountered outside the confines of the lair. The closer a combat takes place to the rock gargoyles' lair, the more tenacious the creatures will be.

When possible, a rock gargoyle enters combat from above. It takes to the air, closes rapidly with its opponent and swoops down upon him using the claws on both hands and feet. During the first phase in which an airborne rock gargoyle attacks, it does double damage with its attacks, representing the additional impact of the dive. A maximum of two rock gargoyles may attack a single human-sized target from the air. A favorite tactic when rock gargoyles outnumber their opponents is to double up on an enemy, with one gargoyle remaining in melee to keep him busy while the other flies away to perform successive diving attacks.

The rock gargoyles' inability to utilize their special attacks and tactics within the enclosed spaces of their lair is an additional reason that they will fight to stop any intruders from ever reaching the entrances to the caves, tunnels or buildings in which they dwell.

Ghosts

Ghosts are disembodied spirits that basically can be subdivided into three distinct types. Most people believe that ghosts are the psychic residue of dead humans. In actuality, ghosts are merely another type of Dark Race.

Haunt

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	—
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	—/—
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	16	*Hits:*	—
Intelligence:	—	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6÷2

Special: Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Project Thought, and Willpower Drain.

The first type of ghost, sometimes called a "haunt," has no ability to physically affect reality, instead relying upon the power of emotion to take its prey. Even without a physical presence, however, a haunt can kill, either by overstressing weak hearts or by driving their victims to suicide. These beings rely heavily upon their empathic skills to cause havoc with the living. The Human Empathy is used to establish empathic contact with the victim. Once that link is formed, either Project Emotion or Project Thought follows. Project Emotion is used to drive victims to a frenzy of fear. Each stage of power level with this skill temporarily makes all skill checks by the victim one level more difficult. (For instance, a Stage Two success at Project Emotion would make all of the victim's skill checks two levels more difficult.) Project Thought is used to command victims to self-destructive acts, from throwing themselves out of upper-story windows to killing themselves or attacking their companions. If necessary, Willpower Drain is used to soften the victims up.

Poltergeist

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	—
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	—/—
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	12	*Hits:*	—
Intelligence:	—	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6÷3

Special: Telekinesis at double the Stages of Success. Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Project Thought, and Willpower Drain at regular success levels.

The second type of ghost, often called a "poltergeist," is able to move objects, and so to make physical attacks. Occasionally, these ghosts will attack empathically as a haunt, but they prefer to use their telepathic ability. For example, a poltergeist might telepathically lock the only door to a room, telepathically short circuit an electrical outlet to set the curtains afire, then begin projecting sounds of insane laughter or empathically exaggerate the size of the fire. Note that poltergeists get double the normal effect for Telekinesis.

Bleak

Strength:	—	Education:	—	Move:	50
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	—/—
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	—
Intelligence:	—	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Dimension Walk, drains life, immune to normal weapons.

Looking like animated shadows of cloaked figures, bleaks prowl deserted streets and desolate locations, waiting for lone humans to feed upon. The creatures have no actual corporeal existence but are instead merely psychic manifestations of utter human despair. Somehow, they psychically feed upon the life force itself, aging their victims in the process. To do this, the bleak must be within melee range of its victim. Each successful attack causes aging, with the amount varying, depending upon the power level of the bleak's attack. A victim ages one year per point of power level the bleak scores.

Because they are incorporeal, bleaks cannot be damaged by physical weapons. Bright lights (floodlights, automobile high beams, etc.) will drive them away but do no real damage. Bleaks can be destroyed by empathic characters, however. To do this, the character needs only establish empathic contact with the bleak, using the Human Empathy skill to tap into its despair and drain it away. Any level of success destroys the bleak, but the quality of success determines what effect the empathic character suffers. To determine this, the character should roll a Difficult test of the Empathy statistic and calculate a power level for that roll. The character will then age a number of months equal to 32 minus the points of power level scored.



Reaver

Strength:	10*	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	—
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1D6
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	18	*Hits:*	—
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6÷3

* When manifesting itself physically.

Special: Dimension Walk, Telekinesis.

The Mythology

Almost all human societies throughout history have recorded stories of the "hungry dead," the disembodied spirits of those who have died but who "live" on to wreak havoc, despair and death among the living. These spirits are known by many names-ghosts, haunts, wraiths and, in many places, reavers. Many tales claim that the spirits of the dead remember their identities and the events of their lives, and that their own descendants or those who loved them in life are their preferred victims.

The Reality

Regardless of their appearance and actions, and contrary to popular tales, reavers are not the spirits of the dead. They are, in fact, free-willed and autonomous Dark Minions, similar to haunts. Reavers are more powerful than haunts, however. They are also more intelligent, and more skilled at empathy, which they use to instill terror, despair and suicidal depression in their chosen victims.



Appearance

Reavers are normally invisible, although they can sometimes be detected by infrared or thermographic imaging systems as amorphous areas of lowered temperature. The temperature decrease caused by the presence of a reaver is usually only a few degrees, too subtle a change for most humans to detect. Many animals seem more sensitive to the presence of a reaver. Dogs, in particular, can sense their presence, and react with general unease. This does not mean a dog can track the actual position of a reaver (and communicate it to its master), however. Instead, animals generally just react with shivering and whining, and will not voluntarily enter the area ..

Reavers can become visible as shifting, translucent manifestations of a human figure. In this form, the creatures are visually indistinguishable from haunts.

Unlike a haunt, a reaver can take on the appearance of a specific individual, drawing an image from the mind of its chosen victim. This requires the creature to establish a connection with the victim through Human Empathy. The reaver will always draw from the victim's memory an image of a loved one-perhaps a relative who is deadand will assume that appearance to strike fear into the heart of the victim.

Reavers are unable to truly speak or comprehend any human language-their mental "architecture" is too unlike that of humans. But they are able to repeat phrases or words the victim remembers the loved one speaking, partially imitating the voice of the loved one.

The creature's empathic connection with its victim allows it to select phrases that are highly charged emotionally. A reaver cannot truly converse with its victim, and sometimes its selection of emotionally charged phrases will be inappropriate to the situation.

Combat Abilities

A reaver can attack physically, in unarmed melee. A successful strike inflicts 1D6 damage, in the form of intense and enervating cold. A reaver can also attack telekinetically by hurling objects, as can a poltergeist.

In visible form, a reaver can manipulate physical objects directly, not only through Telekinesis, and it has great physical strength. It will frequently use this ability to enhance the fear that its appearance generates, picking up "props" around it.

Like a haunt, a reaver can use Project Emotion to drive its victim into a frenzy of fear. Each stage of power level achieved with this skill temporarily makes all skill checks by the victim one level more difficult. Project Thought is used to command victims to self-destructive acts, from throwing themselves out of upper-story windows to attacking their companions. If necessary, the creature uses Willpower Drain to "soften up" the victim.

Reavers sometimes use their empathic abilities to convince the weak-willed that they truly are the disembodied spirits of dead loved ones, being kept on Earth and tormented by the actions of the Dark Minions. Frequently a reaver will convince its victim that it should be protected or "freed from its torment." The task that must be performed to "free" the soul is always destructive to the victim persuaded to perform it.

Reavers cannot be harmed or killed by physical attacks. They can only be destroyed by the use of Project Thought. If a character achieves at least a Stage Three power level against a reaver, the creature's life force is disrupted, and it is permanently destroyed.

Reavers are also adversely affected by fire. A reaver will not pass through a barrier of flame, and it will avoid sources of flame. If characters determinedly attack with burning weapons, the creature will use Dimension Walk to escape. Thereafter, however, it will attempt to track the movements and actions of the characters who attacked it so that it can prey upon them in a moment of weakness.

Glimmering

Strength:	9	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	15/30/60
Constitution:	9	*Charisma:*	8	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/3D6
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	2	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Limited Dimension Walk abilities (see below).

Highly reflective-one level more difficult to observe than normal, one level more difficult than normal to hit in combat, and impervious to lasers.

Glimmerings are creatures from another dimension which were accidentally unleashed upon the world by the Dark Ones. The glimmerings inhabit an "antidimension" which exists in parallel to our own, but as a twisted reflection of it. The creatures may cross the boundary between the dimensions only when an empathic mind strays close to theirs, a phenomenon that occurs when an empath looks into a reflective surface and imagines (even if only subconsciously) that the reflection has a life and depth of its own. At that point, the empath serves as a beacon for the glimmerings to head toward, and they arrive seemingly through the mirror. Any reflective surface will serve—a store window, a pool of water, a wet street—as long as it is sufficient to give the empathic viewer an illusion of depth.

Physical Description

Glimmerings are about the same size and shape as a large, tailless dog, and they move on four powerful legs. That's where the similarities stop. A glimmering is almost completely reflective when in our world, like an animated, 3-D mirror, a shiny chrome animal. Only the eyes are different, appearing as black holes in the creature's head.

The front paws of a glimmering are long and slender and can operate as hands when desired. But they are also armed with heavy claws to match the creature's wicked fangs. It is possible that legends of the *loup-garou,* a quadrupedal werewolf with no tail, may have been originated from early sightings of glimmerings.

Abilities

Glimmerings serve as servants of another entity (as explained below), and they are generally sent as assassins.

The creatures possess a rudimentary intelligence, sufficient to assure that they will always recognize their target, and able to make them fairly cunning at times. Unless there is a definite need for quick action, they are willing and able to patiently await the best opportunity to strike their prey. If there is a hurry, more than one glimmering may be assigned the same target.

While in our world, glimmerings are very difficult to watch for any length of time, due to their reflective nature. In combat, this makes them one level of difficulty harder to hit, and they reflect laser weapons away harmlessly.

If necessary, glimmerings can manipulate human tools, though it is difficult for them to aim firearms, given their quadrupedal stance.

Battle for the Antidimension

Secret teams are working, both among humans and Dark Minions, to discover a means of using the antidimension as a method of nearly instantaneous mirror-to-mirror travel. What the minions know that human researchers do not, however, is that the antidimension is inhabited, and that it also contains a Dark Lord who is actively working to thwart entry by others. The glimmerings are this being's servants, and it uses them to mercilessly slay anyone who gets too dose to discovering a way to its hidden home.

No one has crossed over into the antidimension and returned. Worse yet, many researchers have unexpectedly died bloody deaths under mysterious circumstances.

As human researchers have yet to survive to report the appearance of glimmerings, no connection has been recognized between these deaths and mirrors, not even when one researcher was found slashed to bloody ribbons in his bathroom, right beneath the bathroom mirror.

At this time, it is uncertain whose "side" the creatures of the antidimension are on with regard to the conflict on Earth.

Among those few members of the empathic underground who know of the antidimension and the glimmerings, some confusion has been caused by the fact that the glimmerings have thus far been most active against the machinations of the Dark Minions.

Gremlin, Entropic

Strength:	*	*Education:*	3	*Move:*	*
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/*
Agility:	*	*Empathy:*	5	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1

*Because the entropic gremlin has no physical form. these statistics are dependent upon the machine it possesses.

Special: Telekinesis.

One of the most alien abilities of the Dark Minions is their power to create animator spirits. Humans have been able to mimic many of the minions' empathic abilities and have a limited understanding of how some of the their twisted technology works, but there is nothing known to humanity that remotely resembles the processes involved in the creation of an animator spirit. What these life forces actually are is unknown, but the entropic gremlin is almost certainly the creature that inspired their creation.

Basic Nature

Entropic gremlins prefer to infest complex manufactured items. Automobiles and aircraft are their favored haunts, though space vehicles, with their millions of components, and old suits of armor, with thousands of hours of human effort put into careful hammering, etching and engraving, are both perfect for the entropic gremlin's use.

An entropic gremlin will not always seek to control what it has taken possession of. The creature might be content to possess a car, for instance, but let the human owner climb in and unwittingly go for a drive. Then, halfway through the trip, the gremlin might decide that it doesn't like where it is being taken and attempt to wrest control from the driver. In some cases, this becomes a contest between the human's Strength and the gremlin's Empathy, but in many devices the human is entirely unable to prevent the gremlin's takeover. This is particularly true in a "drive-by-wire" situation where there is no direct mechanical connection between the device and its controls. If an entropic gremlin decides to take control of an untended machine, its success is automatic.

Feeding Habits

An entropic gremlin receives its life energy by increasing entropy's effect on whatever device it has taken control of. A car will feed an entropic gremlin for about a day. A more complex machine, like an aircraft or computer, will supply nutrition for as long as a week. One of these creatures could fee on something as complex as a spacecraft or advanced robotic unit for as long as a month. By the end of the feeding period, the possessed device will have been transformed into a rusted, worn-out piece of junk.

This is not to say that problems won't crop up after mere minutes of an entropic gremlin's entry into an object. If the first failure in a computer was its microprocessor, then that unit would be useless to any human operator, though the entropic gremlin would still be able to get a week's worth of energy from it. The first failure in a car could be a vital part of the engine, or it could be the radio, the cigarette lighter, or the horn. No matter what problems initially crop up, the end result is always the same. If the entropic gremlin is allowed to maintain its possession of a machine, then the machine will ultimately be irreparably destroyed.

When a gremlin first invades something, the referee should decide how long that machine will feed it, based upon the information given above, the device's current condition of repair and what the referee decides is the personality of the invading gremlin. Then 1D10 should be rolled, with the result multiplied by five, to determine at what percentage of the feed time the object will suffer a critical fault and become useless to its owner. For example, if the BMW 1700xhi that a PC purchased were to become infected, it would feed a gremlin for about 48 hours (the 1700 is more advanced than a mere car—ask any owner!). A 1D10 roll yields a seven, which is multiplied by five for a result of 35. So, in about 17 hours (35% of 48 hours) the BMW's engine will blow, its axle will break or some other serious fault will develop.

It is possible, though, that an entropic gremlin will choose to hold a broken piece of machinery together. When a breakdown occurs, the gremlin may make a Telekinesis roll in order to keep the machine running by holding the broken piece together or even telekinetically propelling moving parts. (The referee should set the difficulty level to match the seriousness of the damage: Difficult for things such as blown or missing engines, Average for broken axles and the like, Easy for simpler things like worn out bearings or flat tires). Because of this, it is theoretically possible to drive a gremlin-infested car even though it has a broken axle, a couple of flat tires and no engine to speak of!

Before any gremlin-infested object is completely destroyed, the entropic gremlin will seek to abandon it and move into a replacement. When this time comes, the creature will try to bring the old into physical contact with a new host in order to transfer itself to the new item. This process takes an average of one hour. During this time, the two objects must remain undisturbed or the entropic gremlin will be unable to complete its transfer. If one of the objects is moved, the gremlin will be forced to remain in the original object and must recover its spent energy by feeding at double rate for one hour per 10 minutes spent in the exchange.

Machine Empathy Roll Modifiers

DM	*Reason*
-1	Per minute less than five spent concentrating.
-1	Per meter over five away from the object to be affected.
-5	If the object to be affected is out of the gremlin's line of sight.
+2	Per additional gremlin cooperating with the Machine Empathy attempt.
+1	Per minute beyond five spent concentrating on the object.
+5	If in physical contact with the object to be affected.

Machine Empathy Power Levels

Power Level	*Result*
Basic Success	The gremlin turns the object on or off, or causes it to malfunction for one combat phase.
Stage Two	The device malfunctions for 1D6 phases. On a 1D10 roll of 10, it fatally malfunctions.
State Three	The device malfunctions for 2D6 phases. On a 1D10 roll of 8+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Four	The device malfunctions for 2D6 complete turns. On a 1D10 roll of 6+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Five	The device malfunctions for 1D6 hours. On a 1D10 roll of a 3+, it fatally malfunctions.
Stage Six	The device fatally malfunctions.

Extermination

There is no sure way to remove an entropic gremlin from a possessed machine. It might be lured out by placing another, more advanced piece of machinery near the first one, but this is a hit-or-miss tactic at best. The only way to actually destroy an entropic gremlin is to destroy the object that it is in possession of. The machine does not need to be burned into ash or ground into powder, but it must be damaged enough to be useless as a food source for the gremlin. An entropic gremlin possessing a car, for instance, would begin to suffer dissolution almost immediately if the car is crushed sufficiently to freeze up its major moving parts.

Many times the simplest way to destroy an en tropic gremlin is to trap the machine it inhabits in a place with no other food source, then leave it for a period longer than the equipment can feed the gremlin. In effect, the gremlin starves to death. But this technique is risky since it is possible to overlook a prime food source in what appears to be a vacant building or empty stretch of desert, and the entropic gremlin will likely be very angry about the attempt.

Gremlin, Torgol's

Strength:	3	*Education:*	8	*Move:*	35/70
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/1D6
Agility:	15	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	6*	*Initiative:*	7	*# Appearing*	1D6

*Gremlins have a Willpower of 10.

Special: Gremlins have only three empathic skills: They have Dimension Walk and Computer Empathy at their attribute level, and Machine Empathy at twice that level. They are very difficult to be spotted by observers. Due to the creature's high Agility, aimed shots cannot be conducted against a gremlin, unless it is unaware of the firer. The gremlin has long been linked to tales of misfortune and tragedy. These tales seem to become more prevalent the more mechanized human society becomes.

The Mythology

The myth of the innocuous, fun-loving gremlin could not be further from the truth. True gremlins love nothing more than inflicting pain and misery on the human racethe greater the pain, the better. They wreaked much havoc-from the Great Chicago Fire, to Three Mile Island, to the Challenger incident. They will not physically confront humans unless the odds really favor them. Instead, they use their Machine Empathy to cause machinery to malfunction and do their mischief for them.

Machine Empathy

The gremlins' Machine Empathy skill is apparently a very specialized version of Telekinesis. In order to best use its Machine Empathy skill, a gremlin must be stationary and undisturbed for five minutes while in close proximity to (within five meters of) the object to be affected. At the end of that time, a power level is rolled for the skill, with die roll modifiers from the Machine Empathy ROll Modifier table.

The effects of Machine Empathy on the object are listed at below, by power level achieved. If fatal malfunction is rolled, the object becomes totally useless until repaired and can, at the referee's option, be hazardous to those around it. Repairing a malfunction requires a skill test of either Mechanic or Electronics (referee's option). The difficulty level is established by the power level achieved by the gremlin. Basic Success requires no roll; Stage Two or Three requires an Easy test; Stage Four or Five requires an Average test; and Stage Six requires a Difficult test.

Camouflage Ability

Torgol's gremlins are almost impossible to spot when hiding in any sort of shadow. If they are standing still, they are never spotted by casual observers. If a viewer is specifically searching the shadows and succeeds at a Difficult test of Observation, stationary gremlins are seen dimly. If the gremlins are moving, casual observers will notice them only if successful at a Difficult test of Observation, and viewers specifically looking for them will succeed by passing an Average test of the skill. Failure at any of these tests will cause viewers to think they have merely seen some trick of the light

Physical Description

Gremlins are roughly humanoid, standing less than a meter tall and weighing less than 10 kilograms. They have smooth, black, leathery skin covering their hairless bodies. Their arms are very long in proportion to their bodies, dragging on the ground even though gremlins walk erect. The creatures also have "wings" of a sort-a flap of leathery skin from elbow to hip, which they can use to glide through the air like flying squirrels. They can sail up to 20 meters from a single jump. Gremlins have large, bulging eyes, which allow them to see nearly 360-degree in all but absolute darkness as if it were daylight. Bright lights or flashes of light cause them to suffer blindness for 1D6+1 phases after exposure and cause them to instinctively freeze in their tracks. Consequently, gremlins do not like to go out in the daylight or go into well-lit rooms, and they do most of their activity at night.

These gremlins are native to a proto-dimension and were "accidentally" discovered by a 12th-century alchemist named Torgol, who had been working to open a portal for the Dark One he served. Torgol found a world filled with gremlins. He also found that his very presence inflicted pain upon those creatures that were near him, pain caused, apparently, by his own empathic emissions. When he actively used any of his empathic skills, the gremlins nearest to him died. Using this ability as a threat, Torgol forced the gremlins into his personal slavery for centuries, killing thousands of them in the process. Then a mutated type of gremlin appeared who was unaffected by Torgol's empathic emissions. As their numbers mounted, they overthrew Torgol and killed him.

Fortunately for other humans, the gremlins still have not recovered from Torgol's reign, and only the new mutation can safely pass through to Earth, as they are the only ones unaffected by Human Empathy. Soon after the gremlins found the way to open the dimensional doorway to Earth, they realized they were too small in number and size to overtake the humans. But they had a great affinity for the machinery humans created. With humanity growing increasingly dependent upon machinery, the gremlins had found the perfect tool with which to strike.

Harpy

Strength:	*4*	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	Fly: 15/30/50* Ground: -/5/10
Constitution:	*2*	*Charisma:*	2	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D6
Agility:	*6*	*Empathy:*	2	*Hits:*	16/32
Intelligence:	*3*	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6+1

* This is flying speed; harpies walk 5 and run I0 when grounded.

Special: Drop stones (treat as thrown weapon attack for I D I0 damage).

Harpies are filthy, vulgar, flying humanoids with a taste for human flesh. Most stand about a meter tall, with relatively human heads and torsos, but with the lower legs of a vulture, and with wings instead of human anus. Like blood vultures, they are primarily scavengers; but flocks of them have been known to attack living creatures, if the odds are greatly in their favor. Their preferred method of attack is to drop stones on their quarry (treat these as thrown weapon attacks doing 1DlO damage). Of course, this requires a suitable supply of stones and ample time to resupply between each attack. If time or head room is limited, they will hover within melee range of their victims and tear at them with their clawed feet. Harpies usually haunt the wildernesses of the planet, but they can sometimes be found in the employ of other Dark Minions, occasionally even in inner cities.

Hellfire

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	5
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	10/*
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	5	*Hits:*	24/48
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing:*	1

* Due to its incendiary nature, a hellfire causes damage as per the rules for burning gasoline. Once per combat turn, the creature may gust flame and cause double that damage for one combat phase.

Special: A hellfire has no physical body as such and thus has no physical statistics. Only substances capable of extinguishing flames can damage Hellfires. A fire extinguisher does 1D6 damage, a fire hose does 2D6 damage, a water cannon does 3D6 damage, and a water bomb (aircraft portable) does 5D6. The hits listed are for the creature's core. In each of its Initiative phases, the hellfire may move at the rate listed above, leaving behind a two-meter-wide wall of fire. Each square meter of this fire is worth 1 hit point for purposes of extinguishing it.

Every day, the men and women of the world's firefighting organizations risk their lives to extinguish the blazes that occur in human habitations. The majority of these fires are caused by electrical faults, arson, human carelessness, etc. Once in a while, no reasonable cause can be found for a fire, and it is blamed on a freak of nature. And sometimes firefighters talk of how the flames in one of these strange fires seemed" almost alive." The firefighters may not be far from the truth-they have unwittingly encountered a creature known as hellfire.

The Mythology

Some people claim that hell fires are spirits of the damned who somehow escape the nether regions and come back to the world above to wreak havoc upon living humans. Hellfires have no physical bodies, they explain, because they are formed from the substance of their supposed eternal prison-fire! Other people insist that the creatures are spirits native to some dimension of elemental fire, mistakenly lost in our own dimension and striking out in a great agony of coldness. Still others claim that hellfires are incredibly advanced animator spirits that some Dark Minion race links to flame, creating a terribly destructive (though relatively short-lived) servant.

The Reality

Whatever the creature's origins, when a hellfire comes into existence on Earth, it immediately begins to set ablaze anything and everything within its reach. Although it is almost totally indiscriminate as to what or who it ignites, the creature is not unintelligent. It possesses a cunning mind and enjoys mocking its victims, and if threatened it will take quick steps to neutralize its enemies.

Recognizing a Hellfire

Typically, when a hellfire is first encountered, an individual may notice that the fire does not seem quite right in its appearance and/or behavior. Observers who succeed at a Difficult test of Foreboding or Observation will recognize this wrongness. Although they will not recognize the hellfire as a living entity (unless they have encountered one before or make a outstanding success on the aforementioned "test), they will realize that this is much more than just an out-of-control

barbecue. The problem is that most such people do not realize the intelligence and purpose behind the fire until it is too late to escape.

Being Stalked by a Hellfire

When the hellfire recognizes that someone is a threat to its existence, it will spread fire around that person in an attempt to cut off any escape route. Once this is completed, it will shrink the ring around its victim, taking great pleasure in watching the person suffer from oxygen starvation, then scream as clothes and hair ignite, to fall as a cindered husk.

Battling a Hellfire

Fortunately for humans, hellfires, once spotted, can easily be tracked, isolated, and either doused or let burn out. Hellfires have a mind of their own and are therefore slightly more difficult to track and isolate than are normal fires-they sneak through any opening left to them and leap gaps that normal fires could not. But a hellfire is an individual, and' humans band together to fight fires, using their considerable technology to do so. In the end, traditional firefighting techniques always succeed in extinguishing the fire, although entire city blocks may have been destroyed in the meantime.

Hell fires recognize that they are doomed to live a very short life, so they devote themselves to wreaking as much damage as they possibly can, killing as many beings as possible in the process. Apparently, they do not much care whether their victims are human, animal, or Dark Minion, although they do general1y prefer intelligent creatures to unintel1igent ones, so that they can take greater pleasure in a victim's suffering and in the horror the victim shows when it recognizes the hellfire for what it is.

Hungry Woman

Strength:	11	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	6/12/20/34
Constitution:	15	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2D6
Agility:	9	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	16/32*
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing:*	1D6÷2**

* Because of their barklike skin, hungry women are considered to have an armor value of AV 2 on all hit locations except their limbs, which have an armor value of I. Any single attack that penetrates with at least 4 points to a limb is considered to sever it.

**Round up.

Special: It can make unarmed melee strikes, using the Skill/Dam. statistics listed above, but it prefers to grapple its prey to immobility (roll normal damage to determine points of control), then drain that prey's body fluids (see below).

The Mythology

According to the mythology, before the Earth and sky were made, there lived in the spirit land an insatiably hungry woman with mouths on her wrists, elbows, ankles, and knees. Because her appetite was insatiable, Quetzalcoatl (the heroic Celestial Dragon) and Tezcatlipoca (the deceitful Dark Mirror) seized the woman and cast her out of the spirit land. She landed upon water, and when the two gods tried to push her under, she broke in half. Seeing this, the other spirits came and used her lower half to make the sky. With her upper half they made living plants of her skin, trees of her hair, pools of water from her eyes, mountains from her shoulders and valleys from her nose. Now, when it rains, she drinks. When plants wither or when living creatures die, she eats. But still she is not filled. And sometimes, at night, her cries for food can be heard on the wind.

The Reality

Scattered reports ranging from Arizona to Peru tell of encounters with a creature that could fit parts of this description. According to eyewitnesses, the thing is roughly humanoid-approximately 1.5 meters tall-but is apparently at least partly vegetable in nature. Its rough, dark body somewhat resembles a rotting log, and shaggy gray-green hair hangs from its lumpy head like Spanish moss, making its large, black eyes and gaping mouth nearly invisible. Stick-thin arms and legs protrude like branches from the body, with a cluster of stiff rootlets at each joint.

The creature feeds through these rootlets. Once it has immobilized its prey—typically by wrestling it to the ground-the hungry woman jams these rootlets forcefully into the victim and drains its liquids, leaving in the end a withered husk. This attack can puncture armor up to armor value 1 and does 4D6 damage per phase to the hit location punctured, plus half that amount rolled to every other hit location. (As most NPCs are considered to have only one hit location. they therefore only take the 4D6 damage.)

When the hungry woman is physically immobilizing its prey, some of its limbs are pretty much occupied just holding the creature still. Referees will have to judge just how many limbs are occupied, based upon the size of the victim and the exact situation. But in general, a human-sized victim will require three limbs to immobilize; a creature half that size will require two limbs; and a creature one-quarter human-sized or smaller will require only one. The hungry woman can then attack to drain with each free limb—the referee should roll randomly to generate a hit location and each limb will do damage as described

above. if necessary, the hungry woman can simply strike a target with unarmed melee attacks. Armor has its normal effect in this case. The skill and damage ratings given in the statistics section above are for this type of attack. Hungry women are perpetually hunting (even immediately after having fed) and will attack nearly anything they encounter. as long as there is at least a one-to-one ratio of hunter to prey. They will not attack if outnumbered. Frequently, they panic groups of prey into splitting up. In such cases, the hungry women remain hidden from their prey (their mossy hair and thin. dark bodies are perfect for hiding in most vegetation, making Observation tests to spot them one level more difficult than normal), and they make their hunting cry, which sounds like a woman moaning plaintively. Most creatures find the sound terribly unnerving.

If necessary, hungry women can survive on the fluids of plants, but they require the juices of animals in order to reproduce. If a hungry woman can absorb hit points equal to 10 times its own in a single 24-hour period, it can bifurcate (split in half) and become two. This reproduction process requires an additional 24 hours to complete, during which time the original creature grows an extra head and set of limbs, preparatory to the split.

Because of their partly vegetable nature, hungry women are highly sensitive to herbicides. As a consequence. they tend to avoid areas of intensive agriculture, such as corporate farms. Instead, they frequent the wilds, especially the wilds of Demonground. As can be seen, then. these creatures fit the hungry woman mythology fairly closely-given their plaintive cries, long hair and method of feeding, as well as the fact that they reproduce by splitting in half. Interestingly, the legend attempts to render the mythic creature harmless by using it to create the sky and Earth. But the attempt is to no avail-in the end, the hungry woman still cries out to be fed .

Khar'Lanki

Strength:	+1*	*Education:*	+0*	*Move:*	3/10/18/35
Constitution:	+0*	*Charisma:*	+1*	*Skill/Dam.:*	+1*/**
Agility:	+2*	*Empathy:*	+2*	*Hits:*	**
Intelligence:	+0*	*Initiative:*	+1*	*# Appearing*	1

* These are bonuses applied to the original human attributes once the process of change from the original human form has been completed. The poison damage rating listed is for the khar'lanki's poison claws.

** These values are figured normally from the appropriate attributes and skills.

Khar'lanki are a race of once-human people who now enjoy feeding on human cerebrospinal fluid and stealing human memories. According to ancient traditions they hold, their name means "soul drinker." One German scholar (who chose to remain anonymous), after learning of their tendency to live among human communities while masquerading as normal humans, was prompted to call them Mitinwohner ("dwellers within").

Physical Description

Some Dark Races are more obviously not of our world than others. The khar'lanki are of the "not-obvious" variety. They are human-looking, highly social and conversant on a wide variety of common human topics. Although outwardly they have an entirely human appearance, khar'lanki can recognize each other instantly. Some experts believe this is a natural, subconscious empathic ability.

Each khar'lanki was once entirely human. But like the mythic vampires, a current khar'lanki creates new khar'lanki from human victims. This is the races' only means of reproduction.

Unlike the vampires of myth, khar'lanki are not immortal. Each khar'lanki lives to be up to 500 years old, if left to die of natural causes. But khar'lanki are as subject to damage from weapons and the like as any normal human, and they tend to die very violent deaths if humans discover their true nature

Feeding Habits

Khar'lanki fingernails hide hollow, retractable claws that inject a powerful poison into their victims, a poison that paralyzes mammalian nervous systems. If they successfully break an opponent's skin with these claws, they inject a powerful paralyzing poison. Although damage is calculated for this poison normally, it does no true damage. Rather, once it has achieved a critical level of hits to the target's chest, it renders the victim paralyzed for a number of hours equal to 12 minus the victim's Constitution.

Once the victim has been paralyzed and the khar'lanki has no further distractions, the creature grasps the victim's head tightly and extends a long, tentacle-like second tongue into the victim's mouth. This tongue worms its way upward through the victim's nasal passages and finally burrows into the cranium. The procedure takes roughly 60 seconds to accomplish.

Once in the cranium, the tongue serves as a drainage tube for drawing off the victim's cerebrospinal fluid. Each combat phase, it will drain 10 milliliters of the fluid. Normal adults contain roughly 95 to 140 milliliters total in the cranium and spine (90+CONx5). The victim suffers 3 points of damage to the head for each 10 milliliters lost.

For some reason not completely understood (most likely empathic), the khar'lanki also steals flashes of memory from the victim by means of this process. In fact, for the khar'lanki, the experience of stealing memories is as intensely pleasurable as the drinking of the cerebrospinal fluid.

When a khar'lanki feeds, it need not kill its victim; it can snack instead, drinking only a few milliliters of cerebrospinal fluid. This results in the victim suffering subsequent blank spots in his memory (particularly of the feeding period), fatigue and a terribly painful headache. Because these symptoms so strongly resemble a hangover, the victims rarely suspect that they have had an encounter with a monstrous creature. And even if they did, few of their acquaintances would believe them.

Reproduction

Khar'lanki reproduce by turning normal humans into new khar'lanki. These new creatures are subservient to the khar'lanki who created them, a factor of the empathic link created by the process of change. To create a new khar'lanki, the prospective "parent" must find a human of the same gender. It burrows its tongue into the victim's cranium as usual, but this time to infect the victim with a mutating virus. This virus spreads to every cell in the victim's body and joins irrevocably with the cell nucleus. Then the victim begins growing a set of retractable claws, poison glands and a tubular tongue. By the end of one month, the unfortunate human will have transformed fully into a khar'lanki.

How frequently a khar'lanki creates a new member of the race is entirely a matter of the "parent's" choice. But most tend to avoid doing so very often, as the race's existence depends upon secrecy, and an excess of khar'lanki would cause a suspicious decrease in the human population.

Behavior

The khar'lanki are unusual in that they try to pretend they are still human. They are fascinated by human thoughts and emotions. When they feed completely, draining their victim completely of cerebrospinal fluid, they receive a sufficient lump of the victim's memories to allow them a gain of 1 point in whatever was the victim's highest skill. This feeding habit causes the khar'lanki to remember bits and pieces of memory from all its victims, leaving the creature with a mild multiple personality disorder.

To most humans, this makes the khar'lanki seem pleasantly strange and very knowledgeable, adding a charming eccentricity to their mystique.

Lilitu, Stranglers of Babes

Strength:	12	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/10/20/35
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	10	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/2D6
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	14	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: The Skill/Dam. statistics above are for a normal unarmed melee strike. However, a lilitu's preferred attack is to grapple its opponent, then drain the victim's blood through the orifices in its hands (see below). All lilitu possess the ability to Dimension Walk.

The Mythology

References to Lilith, the "queen" of the lilitu, date back to biblical times. According to legend, she was a demon who strangled newborns and seduced men in their sleep, draining their blood in a fit of ecstasy. The legends go so far as to claim that she was created by God out of filth and mud to be Adam's first wife. From their union sprang a host of demons—the lilitu.

The lilitu appeared in various mythologies as demons who had long, scraggly hair and no mouth. They served as a suitable explanation for the sudden deaths of infants during the night. Sadly, these quiet, midnight deaths of innocents continue to this day.

The Reality

Today, we categorize the deaths of healthy, slumbering newborns as SIDS-sudden infant death syndrome. But this is merely a label placed on what is still a conundrum to medical science. Science needs to look deeper into the Darkness to uncover the horrible reality of the lilitu, who, among others, are the culprits.

Physical Description

The body of a lilitu looks very much like that of a thin, human female. It appears almost frail, with pinkish skin and long, gangly limbs. The lilitu's dark eyes are sunk deep into its skull. Hanging down well past its shoulders, a lilitu's hair is a matted tangle of mud, dried blood and grit. A lilitu has no mouth on its face, but has a small, mouthlike orifice in the palm of each hand. It is with these that a lilitu steals the "breath of life" from slumbering babes and drinks the blood of sleeping men.

Reproduction

Typically, lilitu venture into our dimension for only one reason-to become impregnated. To reproduce, a lilitu must strangle a human infant, drawing the baby's last breaths through the orifices in its hands. Invigorated by this, the lilitu then uses its Project Emotion ability to seduce a sleeping male, preferably the dead child's father.

During the sexual act, the lilitu drains blood from the hapless man. This blood does not feed the lilitu (what does sustain them is unknown), but is stored in the creature's body and will be used to nourish its developing fetus. The lilitu does not drain so much blood as to kill the father, but will return to him once a month to take more blood until the child is born (approximately six months later). Because the blood of any human male will suffice, the lilitu will attempt to kill the father if its midnight feedings are somehow discovered.

Female offspring from this unholy union become lilitu themselves and venture into our world to become pregnant upon reaching the tender age of 13. Thus, in human terms, the apparent age of any lilitu encountered ranges from 13 to about 70. It is believed that male offspring look much like their father and much less like their lilitu mother. What happens to them upon birth is unknown, but is rumored to be horrible beyond imagining. In game terms, a li1itu can automatically score a stranglehold on a sleeping newborn. Unless someone interrupts the strangling, the infant is doomed.

When seducing a sleeping man, the lilitu uses its Project Emotion ability to instill the victim with feelings of uncontrollable lust. The normal rules for determining the results apply, but the difficulty level for the lilitu's skill rolls is Average. The victim remains asleep during the ordeal and has only vague memories of an erotic, frightening dream upon waking (and is probably very weak due to blood loss).

In rare cases, a very desperate lilitu may attempt to seduce a conscious male. In this situation, the difficulty of its task attempts is one-quarter the skill level, due to the lilitu's horrid appearance. The man has complete recall of what has occurred, which can result in severe emotional trauma-he has been ravaged by a ghastly fiend, and remembers every moment of the ordeal. In order to avoid the tale's spread, the lilitu will typically slay conscious victims.

Combat Abilities

Though it appears quite fragile, a lilitu has a grip of steel. Once it has grappled an opponent, usually by grasping the limbs or neck, the creature begins to drain blood through the mouthlike orifices in the palms of its hands. The mouths cannot penetrate armor, but can bite through normal clothing. Each orifice inflicts 2 points of damage to the location bitten, followed by 206 damage per phase to the victim's chest, representing general blood loss. The lilitu stops draining blood as soon as the victim suffers a serious wound, unless it is trying to kill. Because the creature's saliva contains a local anesthetic, the victim feels very little pain while his lifeblood is drained away.

If legends of the lilitu are true, and it seems they are, these creatures have been preying upon us for thousands of years. During this time they must have produced millions of children, not solely female, but male as well. What becomes of these baby boys? Perhaps one of your male characters will receive a knock at the door one night to find a young boy standing there with a strange glint in his eye and a familiar face: "Hello, Father. I've traveled a long, long way."

Marterkind ("Torture Child")

Strength:	1	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	2
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	—/—
Agility:	2	*Empathy:*	9	*Hits:*	20/40*
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

*Due to the constant rapid mutation of its form, a marterkind js only affected by fire or explosive damage. Bullets and melee strikes have no effect on it.

Special: Empathic drain (see below).

History

It is a documented fact that Adolf Hitler was a great believer in the occult, but few people realize just how deep his faith in the dark forces was. During the fall of 1943, Hitler personally authorized the creation of a top-secret scientific department, specializing in the field of genetics and biochemistry, to work on a new form of weaponry that could be used against the Allied forces and eventually on civilian populations.

The purpose of this research unit was to ensure the continuation of the Third Reich by creating a genetically perfect human-based, of course, upon the Aryan ideal-a human who would then become the "supersoldier" of the German race. Hitler believed that this could be accomplished by combining the scientific expertise of his knowledgeable geneticists with the powers of his most trusted astrologers.

By impregnating 12 female test subjects with genetically altered and psychically charged embryos at an advantageous juncture of the planets, the project began.

Unfortunately, 10 of the 12 test subjects died within their first six months of pregnancy, consumed from within by a metastasizing growth that autopsy proved had begun from within the womb (interestingly enough, all signs of the fetus itself

had disappeared). But, two of the women involved in the experiment survived to see their "children" delivered. The first of these offspring was a faceless abomination, gaunt and sickly in appearance. Fortunately, it was stillborn.

The second child exploded into the world at 3: 15 a.m. on a cold winter night in 1944. Unable to hold any particular physical form for more than a moment, it was a mutating nightmare, creating mouths and eyes in its flesh for just seconds before transforming again. Before it could be brought under control, the mother, two orderlies and three guards died horribly, their lives literally drained from their bodies, all while the monstrosity lay writhing and spasming on the birthing table.

Dr. Heinrich Muller, head of the project. informed the Fuhrer of his failure, expecting harsh retribution from his master. However, after studying his report, Hitler ordered him to commence work on another batch of the creatures.

It is unknown whether Muller ever completed this second project, as his laboratories were captured by the Allies in the summer of 1945. It is quite possible, however, that his "children" still live, as no evidence of the project was found in Hamburg. Dr. Muller is known to have died in 1978 in Brazil, but information concerning his creations

Physical Description

Each marterkind appears to be a constantly mutating and undulating mass of bilious flesh. Orifices and twisted, malformed limbs constantly form on their bodies and then degenerate into other forms. They are incapable of holding a single physical form for more than two or three seconds, and are reportedly oblivious to the environment around them, as they have no way of maintaining sensory receivers for any length of time.

Behavior

According to the most detailed reports, a marterkind survives by draining the neural energy from the nervous systems of intelligent creatures.

The marterkind has no physical means of attack.

In game terms, in order to drain a target's mind, the creature must first create an empathic link by Human Empathy. The marterkind must reach beyond the target's basic emotional state and at least into its surface thoughts in order to establish a stable channel for draining the mental energy (this means a minimum Stage Two success is required, higher if the marterkind wishes to reach out to a dozen meters or more). Once this is accomplished, a successful Average test of the marterkind's Empathy attribute will begin draining first the target's Empathy, then its Intelligence. A result of Basic Success will drain 1 point per phase; a Stage Two will drain 2 points; a Stage Three, 3 points, etc. If the marterkind fails at its Empathy test, the initial link is broken. Once its intelligence reaches 0, the target dies. (If rescued short of death, the victim regains 1 point per hour.)



Current Situation

The locations of any existing marterkind are unknown at present, although in August of 2004 the bodies of an entire tribe of Indians were found deep in Bolivia, bearing no marks of physical assault, in keeping with the description of the five original victims back in 1944. Also, there have been whispers among the empathic underground of late to the effect that at least one marterkind has been contacted by and is receiving empathic tutoring from an unidentified source, and that it has been learning such Darkling Empathy skills as Telekinesis and Dimension Walk. If such is the case, this marterkind has taken a quantum leap forward in its deadliness.

Mechaniacals

Not long ago, the tentacular ETs began to experiment with inventing a race of robots that could be sent on independent missions to dangerous proto-dimensions, without the necessity of having a living controller to monitor their progress and update their orders. What was needed was a robot that could extrapolate beyond its basic programming and that could continually resupply itself by scavenging parts from whatever environment it was sent to. A lab was built to conduct the experiments in secrecy on a world within an easily accessible proto-dimension. The experiments were successful in that a mechanical creature was created that could go to an alien environment and make a new body for itself from found materials-including living tissue, when and if it became easier to acquire than inorganic raw materials.

The robots were tested for use and put through several "generations" of evolution to see how they would adapt. Somewhere along the way, however, the new generations lost their programming restrictions and began to scavenge the lab and its personnel for "parts" from which to make new robots. When they met armed resistance, they moved out into the proto- dimension at large, devouring all material (whether metal or living) in their way.

For reasons known only to the tentacular ETs, rather than simply abandon the experiment and seal the proto-dimensional world off from Earth, the experimenters decided to invent another group of mechanical servants, completely metal warriors programmed specifically to hunt out and destroy the first type. These hunters thinned the scavengers-at first. But they were soon countered by the scavengers' development of a new weapon, an electrical burst that could scramble a hunter's programming. The hunters' self-aware programming soon showed a glitch that was passed on by the hunter coordination computer-their program mutated from "destroy the mechano-organic life forms" to "destroy all organic life." The coordination computer passed that programming on to the hunter robots.

Only a few of the ET experimenters survived the slaughter. The proto-dimensional world became covered with robot wars as the two species battled for dominance, scavenging parts from one another in an endless cycle of destruction and rebirth. The few ETs that did not immediately fall victim to their runaway creations survived by fleeing the proto-dimension. The story of their failure soon spread to the rest of the ET community, and a great machine was invented for the express purpose of permanently sealing off the infected proto-dimension.

But some of the ETs' Dark Masters find the denizens of the machine world useful on occasion. And the proto-dimension lies in such close proximity to Earth's dimension that environmental conditions such as elevated sunspot activity sometimes breach the barrier and let something wander in or out. Some of the warring machines escape to Earth one way or another, where they run amok, killing and destroying or slaying and building. The scavengers have become known as "symbiods" and the hunters as "steriloids." Together, they are sometimes referred to as "mechaniacals."

Symbiods

Strength:	+3	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	+0
Constitution:	+3	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	+2/x2*
Agility:	–1	*Empathy:*	0	*Hits:*	x2
Intelligence:	–2	*Initiative:*	+1	*# Appearing*	1D6+2

*Besides conducting melee combat, symbiods have the ability to fire, with skill level 5, an electrical pulse that does 1 D6 damage (triple damage to electrical machines, including robots) and has a short range of five meters. This pulse ignores any armor, automatically seeking openings or metallic parts through which to flow.

Special: Symbiods are devoid of feelings, so they cannot be affected by any Empathy skills. They are also technically dead, so they do not feel pain or suffer Initiative reductions from damage.

Hits to the head do quadruple damage to a symbiod. The statistics modifiers listed are for a symbiod with a mechano-organic body and should be applied to the statistics of whatever once-living creature the referee decides to base the symbiod upon (preferably one the size of a wolf or larger). Symbiods encountered before acquiring a body are equal to Mark I steriloids, minus armor protection. Symbiods with purely mechanical bodies are equal to Mark II steriloids, minus armor protection. These symbiods do not have steriloid weapons, however, they merely have their own electric pulse attack.

The symbiods are the product of a race of robots invented by the tentacular ETs. Built originally as exploratory robots for proto-dimensional missions, they resemble half-meter-long ladybug shells equipped with retractable tentacles and walker legs.

Body Building

Upon entering a new environment, a symbiod tries to find materials to build a new body more appropriate to that environment. It can use completely organic material only largish, mobile creatures are selected-if proper metal is not available. Frequently, a symbiod's body will be a mixture of both metal and organics because they find it easier to power organic tissue with their built-in motors than to build motors for purely mechanical bodies.

Building a body takes a symbiod an hour if it has a good supply of metal and electrical parts, and organic tissue. The resulting assemblage resembles nothing so much as a disgusting cross between a robot and an animated corpse, something like a dead cyborg model of the original creature, topped by the symbiod's original body as a sort of "head."

Building a body from only metal and electrical parts (they can't build from organics alone) takes three hours and makes a tall, clunking robot form. A symbiod using only metals takes 12 hours to build a more agile body.

Reproduction

This propensity to build from organics is not, in itself, what makes the symbiods so dangerous. It is the additional fact that they can reproduce at a relatively rapid rate, as long as the proper materials (refined metal or plastics, and electronic parts) are available. Given these materials, one symbiod can build another from scratch in 10 hours. Thus, the quantity of symbiods in an area can theoretically quadruple roughly every day, as long as supplies hold out.

Behavior

Symbiod psychology can be expressed in one word-multiply. Symbiods exist solely to build other symbiods and increase their numbers. If threatened, they can and will fight (preferring to use their electrical blast rather than close for melee). If outclassed or in danger of being destroyed, they will flee if possible, with the reasoning that a destroyed symbiod cannot make other symbiods.

Symbiods can't (or won't) communicate with anything but another symbiod. A captured symbiod could be wired to a computer net and probed with Computer Empathy, but its basic thought process would always be consumed with overwhelming desire to build a body if it didn't have one, or to create more symbiods if it did. Symbiods will attack humans (who are perfect for new bodies) and preserve the parts for use in future bodies.

Steriloids

Steriloids are killing machines, pure and simple, and they come in all sizes and shapes. For game purposes, though, they are divided into five basic types:

The steriloids were made for one purpose-to destroy the symbiods-but that one purpose has mutated to "destroy all life." They perform their new purpose very well. So well, in fact, that they are loathe to leave an area until they've seared it to slag. The small steriloids are mostly interested in hunting mobile life forms (birds, animals, people), while the larger (Mark III–V) models devote themselves to complete life-eradication.

Steriloids hunt anything that has working organic parts, so they destroy both symbiods and walking dead. The vehicle-sized steriloids are particularly fearsome, since they can vaporize whole cities, if given the time, and they are impossible to kill without tanks or other superheavy weapons normally reserved only for military use. They have their weak spots, though-high-precision weapons (such as rifles or stabilized tank guns) can be fired through gaps in their armor. This adds one difficulty level to the shot, but reduces the steriloid's armor by half for purposes of the shot's penetration. Alternatively, brave (or suicidal) individuals can scale up on the robots-braving the lethal pincers, grippers and claws that spring from the machines' sides-and plant shaped-charges on these vulnerable areas, achieving the same armor-halving effect.

The steriloids are all self-aware and intelligent, their intellect increasing in proportion to size. Mark Vs are highly intelligent and learn very swiftly, striving to learn everything, while the smaller models tend to concentrate their education on learning the combat tactics of their foes.

Still, the steriloids are normally used to referring any new and radical data to their master control brain, back in their machine proto-dimension. If trapped on Earth, they are cut off from their master control and forced to make decisions on new data themselves. If presented with a very confusing situation or a choice dilemma, a steriloid may hesitate.

For example, a Mark I or II pursuing two people is likely to hesitate for a phase or two if the targets split up and it can't pursue them both. It will eventually make a decision to follow one or the other, but a crafty foe can put this hesitation to good use. The overall effect is that steriloids seem stupid, slow and hesitant when they first encounter new situations (like being stuck on Earth). However, they soon learn enough about their environment to lose this seeming stupidity and to begin acting with complete confidence.

A human could communicate with a steriloid—the machines have radios and speakers for voice communications. Some of the larger ones might even seem quite loquacious. However, they treat communication as just another form of intelligence gathering and, in the end, cannot be swayed from their purpose of killing.

A Mark IV or V might be bargained with, perhaps to trade a small group of living beings (the PCs) for a larger group (perhaps a nest of insectoid ETs). But the bargainers should use the time gained to flee beyond the steriloid's range, for it will surely come back to destroy them after it's finished with the larger task. Steriloids are very thorough.

Do not inflict steriloids lightly on the average adventure group. A Mark I is an exciting and dangerous foe; a Mark II will require heavy weapons to kill; and the larger ones are projects for concerted military antitank efforts, with the expectation of high casualties.

Steriloid Types

Type	*Description*
Mark I	Small, meter-large machines made for stealth and assassination. Mark I's might move on multiple legs, wheels or tracks, or even hover.
Mark II	Hardier, man-sized machines. Mark IIs might move on multiple legs, wheels or tracks, or even hover.
Mark III	Car-sized and move on tracks or, more rarely, legs or wheels.
Mark IV	Tank-sized and tracked.
Mark V	Building-sized and have to move (very slowly) on titanic tracks.

Mark I (Nonvehicular Robot)

Price:	N/A
Weight:	60 kg
Initiative:	5
Agility:	5
Strength:	5
Constitution:	10
Skills:	Observation 8, Slug Weapon (Pistol) 8, Energy Weapon (Pistol) 8, Stealth 5, Unarmed Martial Arts 1, UCDR 7
Nightvision:	White spotlight
Combat Move:	35/25
Fuel Type:	N/A
Fuel Capacity:	N/A
Configuration:	Biped, Multilegger, Tracked, Wheeled, Hover
Armor:	Head: 1 Chest/Abdomen: 1 Arms/Legs: 1

Like a small (one-meter) version of its tentacular ET creators, the Mark I steriloid tends to have eight limbs—four arms and four legs. For combat purposes, these limbs are paired together, with each pair being treated as a single hit location on the bipedal hit location chart.

Integral Steriloid Energy Weapon, Level 1.

Mark II (Nonvehicular Robot)

Price:	N/A
Weight:	185 kg
Initiative:	5
Agility:	6
Strength:	20
Constitution:	20
Skills:	Observation 6, Slug Weapon (Rifle) 8, Energy Weapon (Rifle) 8, Stealth 3, Unarmed Martial Arts 1, UCDR 11
Nightvision:	White spotlight
Combat Move:	30/20
Fuel Type:	N/A
Fuel Capacity:	N/A
Configuration:	Biped, Multilegger, Tracked, Wheeled, Hover
Armor:	Head: 3 Chest/Abdomen: 3 Arms/Legs: 2

The Mark II steriloid is twice the size of the Mark I (roughly two meters tall). It tends to be configured the same as the Mark I, with eight limbs-four arms and four legs. For combat purposes, these limbs are paired together, with each pair treated as a single hit location on the bipedal hit location chart.

Integral Steriloid Energy Weapon, Level 2.

Damage:	Head:	0 0 0
	Chest:	0 0 0
	Abdomen:	0 0
	Rt. Arm:	0 0
	Rt. Leg:	0 0 0
	Lft. Arm:	0 0
	Lft. Leg:	0 0 0

Mark III (Vehicular Robot)

Price:	N/A	
Weight:	1.5 tons	
Initiative:	5	
Agility:	4	
Strength:	14	
Constitution:	10	
Skills:	Observation 3, Heavy Gun 6, Unarmed Martial Arts 8, UCDR 1D6+1	
Sensors:	Radar, thermal imaging, tracking	
Armament:	1 x 50-mm Main Gun, 2 x 20-mm Secondary Gun	
Ammo:	1,000 x 50-mm Shells, 2,000 20-mm Shells	
Cruise Speed:	120/70	
Combat Move:	30/25	
Fuel Type:	N/A	
Fuel Capacity:	N/A	
Fuel Consumption:	N/A	
Configuration:	Turreted	
Suspension:	Tracked (3)	
Armor:	HF: 8	TF: 8
	HS: 6	TS: 6
	HR: 5	TR: 5

The Mark III is the size of a car and is treated as a vehicle in combat. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark III cannot shoot. When the engine is destroyed, it cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. When the brain is destroyed, the MarkIII is dead and beyond repair. The Mark III has several energy beams and can use weapons it has picked up. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, at different targets. Because the Mark III is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it can, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and non vehicular robots. When the brain is destroyed, the Mark III is dead and beyond repair. The Mark III has several energy beams and can use weapons it has picked up. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, at different targets. Because the Mark III is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it can, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and non vehicular robots.

Damage:

"Crew" Servos: 0 0 0
Sensors (Sight/Vision): 0 0
Main Energy Gun: 0 0
Secondary Energy Gun 1: 0
Secondary Energy Gun 2: 0
Traverse: 0
Engine: 0
Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): 0
Suspension: Minor damage 0 Immobilized 0

Mark IV (Vehicular Robot)

Price:	N/A	
Weight:	45 tons	
Initiative:	6	
Skills:	Observation 3, Heavy Gun 7, Unarmed Martial Arts 7, Observation 5, UCDR 1D10	
Sensors:	Radar, thermal imaging, tracking	
Armament:	100-mm Main Gun, 2 x 50-mm Secondary Gun, 3 x 20-mm Tertiary Gun	
Ammo:	2,000 x 100-mm Shells, 4,000 50-mm Shells, 8,000 20-mm Rounds	
Cruise Speed:	100/60	
Combat Move:	25/15	
Fuel Type:	N/A	
Fuel Capacity:	N/A	
Fuel Consumption:	N/A	
Configuration:	Turreted	
Suspension:	Tracked (6)	
Armor:	HF: 60	TF: 55
	HS: 40	TS: 40
	HR: 35	TR: 25

The Mark IV is the size of a lank and is treated as a vehicle in combat. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark IV can no longer shoot. When the engine is destroyed, the Mark IV cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. When the brain is destroyed, the Mark IV is dead and beyond repair. The Mark IV has several energy beams. It can also use weapons it has picked up with the same skill of 6. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, firing each at different targets, if desired. Because the Mark IV is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged in melee combat; it can, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and nonvehicular robots.

Damage:

"Crew" Servos: 0 0 0 0 0
Sensors (Sight/Vision): 0 0 0
Main Energy Gun: 0
Secondary Energy Gun 1: 0
Secondary Energy Gun 2: 0
Tertiary Energy Gun 1: 0
Tertiary Energy Gun 2: 0
Traverse: 0
Engine: 0
Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): 0
Suspension: Minor damage 0 Immobilized 0

Mark V (Vehicular Robot)

Price:	N/A	
Weight:	800 tons	
Initiative:	6	
Skills:	Observation 8, Energy Artillery 8, Unarmed Martial Arts 6, UCDR 2D6+2	
Sensors:	Radar, thermal imaging, tracking	
Armament:	1 x Level 4 Energy Beam, 2 x Level 3 Energy Secondary Gun, 2 x Energy Tertiary Gun, 5 x Antipersonnel Energy Gun	
Ammo:	N/A	
Cruise Speed:	40/25	
Combat Move:	10/5	
Fuel Type:	N/A	
Fuel Capacity:	N/A	
Fuel Consumption:	N/A	
Configuration:	Turreted	
Suspension:	Tracked (30)	
Armor:	HF: 210	TF: 180
	HS: 150	TS: 130
	HR: 125	TR: 95

The Mark V is the size of a medium building and is treated as a vehicle in combat. Firing at it is two difficult levels easier than normal, due to its size. When the "crew" servos or sensors ("sights") are destroyed, the Mark V cannot shoot. When the engine is destroyed, it cannot engage in any activity, but it can be repaired. The Mark V has several energy beams of varying sizes. It can also use weapons it has picked up, with the same skill. It can use as many weapons simultaneously as it has "crew" servos, at different targets. Because the Mark V is considered a vehicular robot, it cannot be engaged In melee combat, it can, however, conduct melee attacks versus living creatures and nonvehicular robots.

Damage:

"Crew" Servos: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
Sensors (Sight/Vision): 0 0 0 0 0
Level 5 Energy Beam: 0
Level 4 Energy Beam 1: 0
Level 4 Energy Beam 2: 0
Level 3 Energy Beam 1: 0
Level 3 Energy Beam 2: 0
Level 2 Energy Beam 1: 0
Level 2 Energy Beam 2: 0
Level 2 Energy Beam 3: 0
Level 2 Energy Beam 4: 0
Level 2 Energy Beam 5: 0
Traverse: 0
Engine: 0
Brain (Hit on "Ammo" Hits): 0
Suspension: Minor damage 0 Immobilized 0

Steriloid Energy Weapon

Ammo	*ROF/Rld*	*Dam*	*Pen*	*Bulk*	*Rng*
Energy Beam, Level 1	1	5	1-1-1	3	20
Energy Beam, Level 2	1	10	2-2-2	8	15

Integral to the chassis

Steriloid Energy Turret Weapons

Weapon	*ROF*	*Range*	*Damage*	*Pen*
Level 5 Energy Beam	1	500	40	10/5/1
Level 4 Energy Beam	1	350	24	5/2/0
Level 3 Energy Beam	1	200	20	2/1/0

These weapons are integral to the vehicle it is mounted on and is included in the vehicle weight.

Medusa

Human Statistics

Strength:	4	*Education:*	5	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	6	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	9/5
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	25/50
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Poison-tipped tentacles on head and neck.

Tentacles

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	—
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1P1
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	—	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	—	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	2D6

* Each hit to a medusa's head has a chance of destroying tentacles. See below for details.

Special: Short melee combat range. Each tentacle attacks separately, and all may focus on different targets.

Medusas are an unusual type of Dark Minion, because they originated as terran humans. Each medusa has grafted onto its scalp and neck approximately a dozen independently minded, stinger-tipped tentacles, each about 20 centimeters long. These tentacles give the creatures poison attacks in melee combat, in addition to their normal human attacks.

In the tentacle statistics listed above, # Appear refers to the number of tentacles the creature possesses, and the skill rating is each tentacle's chance of hitting. Melee range for the tentacles is short. Each tentacle strikes separately, injecting its target with 1P1 of venom. Tentacles can even hit targets to the rear and sides of the medusa, and each tentacle can attack separate targets.

If the referee allows, damage to a medusa's head may count additionally as a chance that some of the tentacles are destroyed. Each wound should be counted separately, and is multiplied by 10 for a percentage chance that 1D6÷2 tentacles (rounded down) are lost. For instance, a blow that did 3 points of damage to the head would have a 30 percent chance of removing tentacles.

Many medusas let their hair grow long and thick to disguise the tentacles. Others prefer to wear wigs, hoods, scarves, turbans, or large hats.



Men-in-Black (MiB)

Strength:	13	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	12	*Charisma:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	9/1D6
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	28/56
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6+2

Special: Unlike many Dark Minions, MiBs are able to use many types of human equipment, including ranged weapons. They have a skill of Small Arms (Pistol) 6. They also may have Vehicle Use (Wheeled Vehicle) 2.

The Mythology

The folklore that has sprung up around UFOs and many other forms of nonhuman technology is full of tales of "men in black" or "MiBs"-mysterious figures thought by many to be members of a covert government or military agency striving to prevent investigators from uncovering secrets humanity is not meant to know. These tales tell of MiBs intimidating researchers into dropping their investigations, seizing or destroying evidence, confiscating notes and photographs, and even causing the disappearance of particularly tenacious investigators.

While most of those who believe in tales of MiBs think the mysterious figures are human employees of the government, and thus supporters of the status quo, a few suspect that the MiBs are actually aliens.



The Reality

This latter group is at least partly right. There is a race of Dark Minions who perform the functions of, and perfectly fit the bill as, the mythical MiBs. Among those few humans who know the truth, there is still debate as to the "direction of causality" involved. Is the race of Dark Minions behind all the stories of MiBs? Or were the folktales just that-until the Dark Minions appeared and took on the identity of MiBs, perverting the tales to their own ends?

In any case, the Dark Minion MiBs function in much the way that UFOlogists have always said MIBs act. They seem to be closely related to ETs, working subtly or not so subtly to prevent investigators from learning anything of consequence about extraterrestrial visitors or their technology. Whenever humans are close to discovering something important about DarkTek or about the nature of the invasion, MiBs frequently appear on the scene to squelch the research, destroy evidence, and occasionally abduct or kill the humans involved.

Physical Appearance

MiBs are quite human in appearance. They tend to be large, often 1.9 meters tall or more, with a very powerful build. Normally, they wear conservative dark suits, and overcoats or trenchcoats. They also wear slouch-brimmed hats, seemingly designed to shadow their faces, with mirrored sunglasses. All their clothes and their obvious equipment is human in design and origin, seemingly chosen to imply that the MiBs actually are humans, and government agents at that.

Beneath their clothes, however, MiBs are definitely nonhuman. Their skeletal structure and musculature are undeniably alien. While their broad faces appear, at first glance, to be human, on closer ex.amination their alien nature becomes apparent. Their thin-lipped mouths have too many teeth; their incisors and canines appear roughly human, but MiBs have two rows of molars.

Their eyes are their least human feature, having no whites, just large blue irises, and their large pupils are octagonal in shape. The creatures wear sunglasses to disguise this fact and to protect them from bright lights. Without their glasses, MiBs see exceptionally well in even the dimmest lights, and they can see far into the IR end of the spectrum. In all but total darkness, MiBs suffer none of the penalties to accuracy that humans suffer. When not wearing sunglasses or other protection in illumination brighter than sunlight, however, MiBs perform all tasks at one stage of difficulty higher than normal, due to the pain and distraction bright light causes them.

MiBs have a relatively high Education attribute, particularly for Dark Minions, and they frequently have education-related skills, such as Psychology, at high levels. All MiBs-or at least those that operate among humans-are fluent in at least one human language. Their voices are well modulated, and are low and powerful as a result of the large resonant space of their chests. They never have a discernible accent, always speaking in the ideal of whatever language they are using. Few MiBs are literate, however, and those that can read do so slowly.

Combat Abilities

Except in the most unusual circumstances, MiBs avoid combat, preferring to use intimidation and persuasion to achieve their goals. They use their Human Empathy and Project Emotion abilities to create a sense of despair and futility in whoever they deal with. If circumstances warrant it, however, they are dangerous warriors. A blow from a MiB's hand inflicts 1D6 damage. In addition, MiBs invariably carry some form of weapon, usually a human-built pistol or submachinegun, although occasionally they are armed with hand-portable death rays or other examples of DarkTek. Fortunately for humanity, MiBs seem incapable of accepting cybernetic enhancements. Sometimes they wear human-style body armor; this is usually limited to Kevlar vests.

MiBs can be fierce fighters, willing to battle to the death if a mission requires it. MiBs can and will commit suicide at will if necessary to avoid being questioned or examined. One combat phase after death, the body of an MiB bursts into flame and is totally consumed within one combat turn. An immolating MiB burns at a high temperature, easily high enough to ignite any flammable material in contact with the body. The flames of a burning MiB inflict damage on those in contact with the body as does burning gasoline. The temperature is easily high enough to "cook off' ammunition or explosives carried by the MiB.

Other Notes of Interest

There is some debate as to whether all MiBs are "loyal" to the Dark Ones. Some humans suspect that some MiBs are working to protect the few extraterrestrials who have not been suborned by the Dark Ones. Others, however, fear that the interest some MiBs show in the "free" extraterrestrials comes from their desire to hunt down and destroy these "renegades."

MiBs appear to be sexless. Various theories exist as to their mode of reproduction, but the creatures' disconcerting habit of bursting into flame upon death has kept these speculations as just that-unproven theories. It is thought that MiBs are omnivores. Again, this is unproven, as no MiB has ever been seen to eat (despite some people's assurances that they like strawberry ice cream).

Mesmer

Strength:	3	*Education:*	5	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	7	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/1D6
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	9	*Hits:*	20/40
Intelligence:	9	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

Special: This creature is so adept at projecting terrifying visions into its victims' minds that it effectively combines the Project Thought and Project Emotion skills into one skill—Project Terror, It has Project Terror and Animal, Darkling and Human Empathy skills at a level equal to twice its Empathy attribute.

It can be as simple as walking into a store or restaurant and suddenly losing consciousness. It can be traumatic enough to cause permanent insanity. The attack of a mesmer is incredibly difficult to resist and sometimes impossible even to detect until it's too late.

General Description

The mesmer is a special subtype of humanoid ET. As such, it looks basically human, but with an enlarged, hairless head and large, dark, round eyes. The creatures disguise themselves in bulky, hooded robes and such when in human company, and they can project an image of normalcy into a viewer's mind if they notice someone watching them closely.

Modus Operandi

Besides possessing the usual Darkling Empathy skills, mesmers have developed such an expertise with projecting terrifying images into a victim's mind that they have effectively created a new empathic projection skill-Project Terror. As with other empathic projection skills, an empathic link must be established with Human, Animal or Darkling Empathy (whichever is appropriate) before the projection skill can be used, and the quality of the link serves as a limit to the quality of the projection.

The Project Terror skill enables the mesmer to inflict an assortment of terrible hallucinogenic experiences upon its target. The specific experience the mesmer introduces depends on what the mesmer detects when it first establishes an empathic link. The mesmer uses its Human (or Animal or Darkling) Empathy skill to determine what the target's deeper fears might be at the moment, and if any particularly strong phobias exist. The fear it uses might be situational as well. A convenience store worker might be nervous about being robbed late at night, so a mesmer would probably project the illusion that some gang

members have just broken in and are threatening anyone in the store.

The level of terror generated can be so great that the victim is immobilized from fright. In order for this to happen, the mesmer has to achieve at least a Stage Four success with Project Terror. If this occurs, the target becomes paralyzed with fear and is not in any way aware of what is going on around him. This paralysis is in effect for as long as the mesmer maintains the projection. It can maintain the use of this skill and perform very simple actions (like opening doors or windows, walking across a room) but cannot operate any equipment or instruments.

If a target of the Project Terror skill is not paralyzed, he is still confused enough by the conflicting images of the projection and the real world that all task attempts are increased by one level of difficulty; the victim's Initiative rating is reduced by 1; and the victim cannot communicate more than three words at a time effectively.The target does not need eye contact with the mesmer and does not even need to know of the mesmer's presence for the projection to take place. If necessary, a mesmer will use Willpower Drain to reduce a target's resistance enough for a Stage Four success to be gained, if the target proved resistant to an earlier projection.

Catatonia Duration

Statistic Total	*Duration of Catatonia*
19+	1 hour
17-18	3 hours
15-16	9 hours
13-14	20 hours
11-12	2 days
9-10	7 days
7-8	14 days
5-6	28 days
3-4	36 days
*1-2***	Permanent

* Victim's Intelligence + Therapist's Psychology or Human Empathy (whichever is higher)
** Or failed 3-4 roll

Empathic Slavery

Once a target has been paralyzed, the mesmer will often take advantage of the situation to begin brainwashing the target to respond to commands upon a later order.This conditioning takes a total number of days equal to 3+ (2x Intelligence). For example, a character with Intelligence 4 would take 11 days to reprogram. Each day, the mesmer must reestablish a Stage Four success at Project Terror to maintain the process. The nature of the programming involves imprinting instructions into the target's mind.



Mesmers typically use humans to undertake complex tasks-usually involving some kind of sabotage. Targets of mesmers are, therefore, people who have some kind of access to sensitive areas such as airline mechanics, train station operators, bodyguards, air traffic controllers and the like. Victims become completely convinced that the only way of ending their walking nightmares is by doing whatever it is that the mesmer has planted in their minds.

Once the task has been completed, the victim generally slips into catatonia and has to be revived with psychotherapy and/or empathic therapy. The duration of the catatonia is based upon the character's Intelligence rating and the skillfulness of whoever is giving treatment. Consult the Catatonia Duration Table to determine how long the character remains catatonic. Catatonic characters must make an Average roll versus Intelligence to snap out of it, but they cannot attempt the roll until they are eligible according to the table. If they fail the roll, they will have to wait until the next longer period on the table to try again.

Thwarting the Plan

If the effects of a mesmer's brainwashing can be recognized early enough, they can be reversed before the victim completes the task assigned. To do so requires that the treater pass a Difficult test of Human Empathy, then scores at least a Stage Three success to reach the "real" person inside the shell of terror and programming left by the mesmer. For every hour the empath spends with the victim, the victim is eligible to make a Difficult roll versus Intelligence to recover. Victims who succeed at this roll have defeated their brainwashing and return to a normal state of mind. They are likely to have nightmares about the experience for quite some time, however.

Mimic

Strength:	2	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	6/10/20*
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	4*/1D6+1
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	6	*Hits:*	20/40
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Mimics possess Darkling Empathy 10, Observation10, Stalking 5 and Project Emotion or Thought 8.

Physical Description

The mimic, in its true form, is a gaseous creature, about the same consistency as tomato soup. Its color is usually a neutral gray, though it can change this at will. The mimic can, after observing an object for several minutes, change into an exact replica of that object. For some reason not understood, however, there is always one flaw in the replica. (For example, a mimic might imitate an analog clock, with the details perfect except that the hands are rotating counterclockwise instead of clockwise.) Mimics are usually detectable on success at a Difficult: Observation roll, but the difficulty of the test will largely depend on how obvious the referee makes the flaw and whether or not the character is looking for it.

Mission

Mimics are employed by Dark Lords largely for surveillance purposes. They can move from room to room to follow a conversation, or even eavesdrop by remaining on a person in an inconspicuous manner (disguised as a pen, for example). Mimics are superior to other means of eavesdropping for these reasons.

Abilities

There are few limits to what a mimic can imitate. Size is rarely a limiting factor because mimics can change their density at will. However, the larger the object is, the less solid it will feel if touched. A mimic may have trouble imitating humans or other animate objects, depending on the situation. Mimics only imitate outward appearances. They have no voice, communicating with their kind and others who can understand via empathy. So if a mimic were to imitate a human being it would not be able to talk or laugh.

Unlike other Dark Races, the mimic uses its Project Emotion and Project Thought skills not to cause terror, but merely to enhance the facade it has created. The mimic also utilizes its Stalking skill to keep up on those it has been assigned to monitor, should it not be able to somehow place itself on their person.

Combat

If a mimic is discovered, it will flee. If, for some reason, the mimic cannot escape (under a doorjamb, through a keyhole, etc.), it will expand its bulk so that it becomes a haze. A mimic may not expand more than this and may not contract to a size smaller than a tennis ball. it can not attack or be attacked in this gaseous form. Blows pass through the gaseous body, and it is too insubstantial to be much more than a breeze on a character's face.

If there is absolutely no other alternative, a mimic will solidify a portion of its mass to the hardness of bone with the general shape of a large club and will then attack with a Melee Combat (Armed) skill of 4. If a mimic is killed, its body dissipates into nothingness. The mimic uses flying as its main mode of movement, though it can also push itself along the ground at a rate of three meters per phase.

Social Habits

Most mimics live alone, although there are a few large groups of them (10 to 30) in most major metroplexes. These larger groups are typically assembled by a Dark Lord in order to keep them close at hand and in a central location. Mimics live mostly in dark, undisturbed places such as sewer systems, underground access tunnels, corners of subways, unused basements, etc. The larger groups generally dig their own tunnels somewhere in a small, sleepy suburb from which to base their operations into the city.

Morlocks

Strength:	5	*Education:*	3	*Move:*	3/8/12/20
Constitution:	3	*Charisma:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1D6
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	6	*Hits:*	12/25
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	4D6

Special: Blind, but excellent senses of smell and hearing.

In *The Time Machine*, H. G. Wells wrote of a far future in which the descendants of humanity had split into two separate races. One lived an idyllic, carefree life on the Earth's surface. The other race hid underground and cared for the first…because they used the surface dwellers as cattle.

Wells called that cannibalistic, subterranean race the morlocks. But he wasn't just writing fiction; the morlocks actually exist. They are short, pallid humanoids with incredibly developed senses of hearing and smell. Their eyes have completely atrophied, however, leaving nothing but smooth brow between their snow-white hair and their wide, quivering noses. Their jawbones are much smaller than are humans', which makes their pale, fleshy lips seem even more oversized, and their teeth are small and very pointed. Morlocks are primarily meat-eaters, their diet consisting mainly of worms, grubs, and raw cavefish. On the rare occasions when they can find warm meat, such as moles, mice, or bats, they go into a frenzy of ecstasy. But more than anything else, they prefer raw human flesh, torn with their teeth from a living victim.



The problem for the morlocks has been that humans are bigger and more technologically advanced than they are. Also, humans tend to slay above ground, where their sight gives them a long-range advantage over the blind morlocks. Below ground, however, it is a much different story. In the stygian darkness of subterranean caves, humans panic without their sight advantage, and the morlocks can attack them en masse. It is a terrifying thing to be lost in the darkness and hear the patter of scores of bare feet approaching.



With the worldwide chaos that the Dark Minions have brought to Earth, humans have become somewhat more vulnerable to morlock attacks. There have been many recent news stories of entire populations of isolated villages disappearing overnight. The only clues as to their whereabouts are fresh tunnels dug into basements and cellars. Few people have been brave enough to explore those tunnels afterward, and even fewer of those who were have ever returned.

Particularly frightening is the fact that numerous firearms and other equipment have disappeared into those holes, as well. All indications are that the morlocks are completely capable of learning to use human technology.

Nukids

Strength:	*	*Education:*	*	*Move:*	*
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	*	*Skill/Dam.:*	*
Agility:	*	*Empathy:*	*	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	*	*Initiative:*	*	*# Appearing*	2D6-1

* As normal NPCs, except one in 10 has an Empathy ratings of 1D6+4. Special: Empathic nukids have Empathy skills, including Dimension Walk, Human Empathy, animal Empathy, Computer Empathy, Project Thought, and Project Emotion.

Nukids is a collective term for street gangs composed of mutated humans. It originated as a reference to radioactive contamination ("that dude's been nuked for sure"), but has come to refer to mutations resulting from other sorts of contamination as well (chemical, for example). The prerequisite for membership to a nukid "family" is having a mutation of some sort. Most of these mutations are merely physical deformations. But roughly 10% of the nukids also demonstrate one Darkling empathic ability or another, falling into one of four different classes: geists, slimers, spooks, and torches. The term "geist" is a shortening of "poltergeist," and these nukids are highly telekinetic. "Slimers" are nukids with the Dissolution skill; they also tend to be slightly radioactive. "Spooks" are those with the Dimension Walk skill. And "torches" are pyrokinetic. All of these empathic characters also have other Empathy skills as per Dark

Minions (as explained under "Darkling Skills," above). Nukid gangs can be an excellent source of information for Dark Minion hunters, provided the questioners survive their first meeting. In particular, a number of the more hideously deformed gangs have taken up residence in the sewers, and some of these are great enemies to morlocks and dark elves. Unlike true Dark Minions, nukids are not actively out to ruin humanity. Instead, like nearly any other street gang members, they are merely unfortunate people in a dead-end life-style, with no hope for the future. Nukid gangs just have more to complain about than most others.





Ogre

Strength:	21	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	2/10/15/30
Constitution:	24	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/4D6
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	56/110
Intelligence:	2	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Long unarmed melee range.

Ogres are basically huge, filthy, brutish humanoids that love to tear weaker creatures limb from limb and eat them. Their average height is about three and a half meters, and they mass up to 250 kilos. Most of them work as watchdogs for other, brighter Dark Minions, but occasionally one will escape into the wilds of the Earth. These escapees maintain a very primitive existence, hunting with their bare hands and wearing untanned animal skins for clothing, giving rise to legends of bigfoot, yeti, and (in ancient times) cyclops.

The Pale

Strength:	8	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/10/20/40
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	7	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/1D6*
Agility:	8	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	26/52
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6÷2

* Leech heat from victims, see below.

Special: Dimension Walk.



Like the bloodkin, the pale are another source of humanity's vampire legends. These creatures are much more human looking than are the bloodkin, however. Members of the pale are tall and gaunt, with relatively short torsos but long, spindly limbs. (Generally the pale average a full two meters in height and about 70 kilograms in weight.) Their skin is incredibly pallid, and their hair (which grows thickly on head, neck, and shoulders, like a lion's mane) is pure white. Their eyes are pink, like an albino's. To disguise their inhumanly long limbs and short torsos, the pale tend to dress in billowy clothes and wear flowing cloaks. They prefer black because it make them less visible at night.

Despite their relatively human appearance, the pale do not feed like humans. Instead, they leech body heat from warm-blooded creatures, preferably from human beings, leaving their victims as cold corpses. (They can drain a body down to almost 0 centigrade—32 Fahrenheit—just short of the freezing point.) To do this, they must create an empathic link with the victim, while physically in contact, skin-to-skin. (In order to establish the link, a pale must have a few minutes to concentrate, which means that it may not do so during combat-but it could grapple a victim to immobility, then simply hold the victim while the link is created.) Without this link, they cannot absorb heat effectively, which is why nonliving heat sources will not serve them. Daylight, for example, might provide them with sufficient energy for survival, but it severely burns their sensitive skin and eyes. Similarly, rumor has it that two FBI agents once tried to keep a captive pale alive in a hot tub, but the creature died of hypothermia even as its outer skin layer was blistering away.

The pale are nocturnal hunters, shunning the bright, hot light of day. They almost always operate in packs. When prey is scarce or human resistance is strong, the creatures can enter a hibernative trance to wait for better times. They can only leave this trance by absorbing more heat, which means that a victim must be within the immediate vicinity.

The amount of heat that can be leeched from different victims varies considerably, of course (especially if the victims are of different species). As a rule of thumb, however, referees can estimate that for victims that are drained completely, each kilogram of body weight translates to about 45 minutes of activity for a pale. The heat from an average adult human (let's say 70 kilograms), for example, could maintain one pale for a little over two days (52.5 hours, to be exact), or two pales for



one day, etc. A good-sized rat might keep one pale active for an hour or so.

Some of the oldest and wiliest of the pale are able to stop feeding from their victims short of causing death, saving them to feed upon again and again. The average human can survive down to a body temperature of about 25 centigrade (77 Fahrenheit), but will become comatose in the process and require special care to be rewarmed. Humans can remain coherent and able to care for themselves with body temperatures down to almost 32 centigrade (90 Fahrenheit). Below this, they become delirious and eventually incapable of any activity at all. Following these guidelines, referees who wish to run pales that keep captive victims can multiply such victims' body weight (in kilograms, of course) by the number of degrees their temperature is lowered, then divide the result by 50 (100 if Fahrenheit), to determine the number of hours activity the pale gains. For example, a pale that leeched 5 C from a 70-kilogram human would gain about seven hours of activity (5x70/50=7). Assuming adequate food and shelter, the victim's body heat could certainly return to normal during that time, meaning the pale could feed once again.

Referees are encouraged to enhance the frightfulness of adventures involving the pale by having player characters captured by the creatures. Other PCs will certainly be horrified to finally find their friends locked in some damp cellar, shivering and blue with cold, and mumbling incoherently about tall, gangly, pale men.

Penanngalan

Strength:	5	*Education:*	5	*Move:*	1/6/12/22
Constitution:	6	*Charisma:*	4*	*Skill/Dam.:*	4*/1D10
Agility:	4*	*Empathy:*	17	*Hits:*	40*
Intelligence:	9	*Initiative:*	3	*# Appearing*	1

*These attributes are doubled when the penanngalan is in its "flying head" form.

Special: Telekinesis (for flight only). Limited Dissolution (see below).

Penanngalan suffer no damage from hits to any location but the head. They do not suffer double damage from head hits, and they heal very quickly from wounds (as per the rules for blood kin vampires). Neither penanngalan nor the bodies they inhabit suffer Initiative reductions from damage taken. The bodies become unusable after taking a total of 20 hits, however.

The Mythology

Over the centuries, penanngalan have appeared in numerous mythologies, most accurately represented in the Malayan version of the vampire tale. The Malayan vampires were abominations consisting of essentially undead humanoids able to detach their head and internal organs from their body. Once free of their torso, they could fly about at will, feeding upon the blood of the living. The Malayan tales come close to the truth, but are not completely accurate.

Recent Reports

Of late, reports of modern penanngalan attacks have been radioed out of Malaysia. At first, there was only one highly questionable account, but more quickly followed. Now there have been reports from virtually every continent, including several from North America.

All reports are essentially the same-the witnesses tell of seeing a man approaching them. Then, as he neared, his head tore free of his torso, dripping the red and black slop of his internal organs. The head was said to fly with extraordinary agility, deftly maneuvering itself over a victim, which it throttled with its dangling organs. Some few who have reported these incidences also claim to have seen insectile protrusions dangling from the thing's neck, protrusions which were forced into the victim's eye sockets.

One strange fact keeps most folks from believing in the existence of the penanngalan: Many of the so-called "victims" of the attacks are seen in perfect health the very next day. All such "survivors" fervently deny that anything unusual

has happened to them. Medical examinations have verified their good health, casting the eye of disbelief on many formerly reputable witnesses.



The Truth

The true form of a penanngalan is rarely seen, as they spend most of their time in a partially dissolute state inside the heads of human hosts. If they are spotted within a few combat phases of leaving a host, they appear as a head flying through the air with lungs, heart, and stomach dangling below. A successful Difficult check of Observation when first encountering a penanngalan in its flying head form will reveal the presence of insectile limbs hanging within the mass dangling beneath the head.

Physical Description

Once they have had a chance to remove the detritus of their last host from themselves, penanngalan resemble nothing so much as a black jellyfish on roach's legs. No facial features are readily discernible in the mass, though careful examination will reveal several dark spots which contain the thing's only sensory apparatus. The creature's legs are useless for any sort of movement (they use Telekinesis to fly) and are mainly used to grasp onto a struggling new host. Then the creature uses Dissolution to pass itself through the host's scalp and skull, permeating the victim's brain, effectively becoming a new part of the host 's body.

Penanngalan must have a constant supply of new hosts. As parasites, they die quite rapidly if not encased in a human body. The creature's gelatinous composition is only truly safe within the confines of another creature's skull, most desirably a human's Feeding Habits Penanngalan feed very little, requiring the equivalent of only 2 damage points a day of blood, drained from their host. While infested by a penanngalan, a host is fully aware, but unable to break free of the control imposed on its body. Penanngalan are fond of causing harm to a host's loved ones, relishing the horror it invokes. Once a host is near death, the penanngalan will use the victim's last energies to find another host.

Combat Abilities

If forced to engage in combat, a penanngalan's host is often so damaged that the penanngalan must leave rather abruptly. The penanngalan occupies the head of the host and can only be damaged by head hits. However, the host body will become nonfunctional after sustaining 20 hits, and the penanngalan will be forced to depart. To do so, it reverses its Dissolution ability, becoming very solid, thereby causing the host's head to burst apart, upon which the penanngalan leaves the now headless body.

This trauma of being outside a protective skull causes a penanngalan 2 points of damage every combat phase (after the first) that it remains without a host. Once a target is chosen, the penanngalan will attempt to grapple it. On a 1D10 roll of 4–, any character attacking the penanngalan during the grappling will strike the wrong target. As the penanngalan is only large enough to grapple its foe's head, this is where any missed attacks aimed at the creature will hit.

Targets that are successfully immobilized by the penanngalan's grappling are then subject to infestation. Three phases after they have been pinned by the penanngalan, the creature will have penetrated the skull. At this point, the penanngalan is in total control of its target and cannot be removed by any means short of killing the host. Medical examinations will reveal nothing out of the ordinary, though X-rays might reveal a slight cloud within the skull (assuming that a penanngalan would submit to being photographed in this way).

Plagueling

Strength:	3	*Education:*	7	*Move:*	2/8/15/30
Constitution:	4	*Charisma:*	9 (1)	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/3P4*
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	4	*Hits:*	20/40
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	4 (3)	*# Appearing*	1D6+3

* Plagueling poison damage works a bit differently than normal—it is not truly poison, but disease. The number before the "p" is still the immediate damage done by the method of exposure (in this case, a clawing attack), but the second number is the damage done per day rather than per phase. As with poison, all hits are considered to be applied to the chest, though symptoms will manifest all over the body. Once sufficient points have been accrued to cause death, the victim liquefies into a puddle of rot and decay.

Special: Reverse Dissolution at skill level 8—the creatures can liquefy at will, but must roll to become solid. Plaguelings prefer to move and fight in a dissolute state, which is their original form. Attributes listed in parentheses reflect their abilities in their dissolute form.

The Reports

Humanity has forever been involved in an ongoing war with disease. With the coming of the Dark, new and ever more hideous diseases have arisen. Of late, some locales are reporting a particularly horrific plague which breaks down the connective tissues in a human body and, over a period of several days, reduces its victims to puddles of slime. Those in the know believe that plaguelings were the products of years of experimentation conducted on humans by ETs. It is thought that many of the more inexplicable plagues and mass disappearances of the time may be traced to these creatures. Whatever the case, plaguelings are one of the most hideous threats to humanity's survival.

The Reality

The "disease" being reported is actually the digestive process of a creature that infects its victims with digestive organisms, then returns to soak up the resulting nutrients at a later time. Some members of the empathic underground have begun calling the creature the "plagueling."

Physical Description

Plaguelings are liquid creatures in their natural state, able to fit through any space that is not completely airtight. In this amorphous state, they look like puddles of pink oil with clotted, dark clouds and strings of sandy matter swirling within. Their smell is atrocious, stinking of decay and rot, and is easily detectable at 20 meters or more.

Plaguelings are rarely seen in this form, however, as it immediately makes them a target. Normally, they masquerade as humans, at which they are quite adept. Though their odor is less intense in this state, they must mask it with perfumes and colognes. Animals can still easily detect the stench and will not come anywhere near a plagueling if they can help it. Humans are not nearly so perceptive and will need to make a Difficult test of Observation to notice the odor. The only other distinguishing feature of a plagueling masquerading as human is its long, black fingernails, dark with concentrated digestive viruses.

Dark Disease

Plaguelings feed on human flesh. However, they have no internal digestive tract and must rely on specially tailored viruses-the "plague" organisms-to predigest meat for them. The plagues themselves are vile things, with varying symptoms, all resulting in the breakdown of tissues into a nutrient puddle.

Plaguelings must reach their target's blood system. In human form, they do this by slashing with their black fingernails. In their natural form, they enter one of the target's body orifices to get at the more tender blood vessels inside and scour them open with their internal grit. The results are the same in either case. Over the course of a few days, victims begin to "rot." Their hair and teeth fall out; huge, pestilent blisters form all over their bodies; and at last they die and liquefy into a putrid black and yellow mess.

Normally, victims are captured by the plaguelings and taken back to their lair to allow the disease to run its course. If an infected person escapes, however, things can get a bit more interesting. The digestive viruses are highly contagious and, in their final stages, can even be air-vectored over short distances. People who come into close contact with a person showing symptoms must make a Difficult test of Constitution to avoid contracting the virus-if they are close enough to smell the decay, they are close enough to become infected. Failure of this test indicates contagion, with the new victim beginning to show symptoms in 1 D6+2 days. Obviously, then, the viruses are deadly and contagious with or without their plagueling carriers.

Infected persons can be cured by Empathic Healing any time before death and dissolution. This will kill the diseases, but an additional roll must be made to heal damage. Even if the first roll is failed, an empath can attempt to heal hit points, thereby prolonging the victim's life—at the expense of also prolonging the suffering.

Ptero-Raven

Strength:	2	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	20/40/80
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/2
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	6/12
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: Ptero-ravens possess only three Empathy skills: Human Empathy, Animal Empathy and Thought Projection (the latter two only usable on birds).

The Mythology

The raven has long had a black name in many cultures' mythologies: harbinger of doom, bringer of night, mysterious bird imbued with secret knowledge. While the legends seem to have been referring to real ravens, the "terror-raven" (derived from the name ptero-raven) seems more likely to fit the bill

Physical Description

A ptero-raven looks like a cross between a very large raven and the extinct protobird Archaeopterix. It weighs about two kilograms, is bird-shaped and is covered with glossy black feathers. Its wing joints sport small manipulative claws; its feet are taloned; and its beak is festooned with wicked teeth. Its tail is long, like a lizard's tail turned into a bird's. Its eyes are large and reflect the light, seeming to "glow" in the dark.

The creatures come from a dimension of pure evolutionary horror, a place where survival requires cunning and guile. Ptero-ravens are scavengers, and they delight in tormenting wounded or sick creatures, tearing pieces from their victims and taunting them as they do so.

Psychology

Ptero-ravens are a marginally intelligent species, having a well-defined and expressive language and giving one another a great deal of social cooperation and communication. They are frightfully curious, though inclined to sadistic morbidity. They are attracted to those in emotional pain, drawn by the feelings of anguish.

Ptero-ravens desire to know everything that happens, and they are assisted by excellent day/night vision and a keen sense of hearing. Thus, a ptero-raven learns much just by watching and listening, then flies off to tell its mates. What one ptero-raven learns, others in the area will soon know as well. (Ever notice the black birds cawing loudly to one another in the trees? Ever wonder what they're doing? They're gossiping to each other!).

Although they can chat to one another, ptero-ravens can only squawk disjointed words of human speech, barely enough to get their idea across.

These creatures are malignant in the extreme, detesting all species but themselves. They are very useful to the Dark Ones, since they voluntarily serve as spies, snoops, watchers and thieves for the servants of darkness. Many so-called sorcerers, empathic pawns of the Dark Ones, have gained information from ptero-raven "familiars."

Combat Abilities

On their own, ptero-ravens are pretty much harmless, although they can summon up mixed flocks of birds to plague their enemies. They love to taunt the frustrated and depressed, staying just out of harm's way and tormenting their victims with utterances : of doom (some researchers have suggested that Poe's poem resulted from such a "haunting").

If attacked, a ptero-raven will attempt to flee. If one ptero-raven is killed, others will flock about the killer in vengeance, hounding the person and drawing the attention of any Dark Minions in the area until the killer is dead.

For the referee, ptero-ravens are useful as Dark Minion spies, snatchers of small, shiny objects, and general background color with which to annoy player characters.

Rover

Strength:	4	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	5/15/30/60
Constitution:	6	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	4/1D6
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	16/32
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: Dimension Walk (see "Special Abilities").

Rovers are a DarkTek byproduct of body-grafting experiments by the humanoid ETs. They have since been fashioned to serve as reconnaissance drones, messengers and spies. Their name was apparently given to them by the ETs themselves, in a grotesque pun upon the creatures' mobility and doglike faithfulness to their masters.

Physical Description

The ETs fashion rovers out of various body parts and have developed large, double-bed-sized construction tanks in which to make them. These clear tanks are filled with a green, viscous liquid, nearly opaque, through which the careful observer can dimly make out the dozens of operating tools moving around inside (scalpels, tongs, drills, specimen restraints, grafting scourers, nerve removers, brain vacuums, etc.).

These vaguely arachnoid creatures have eight to 12 spindly legs, each ending in a curved, bony talon which the creature walks upon. The body is a yellowed, fleshy platform composed of various human body parts stitched together in a hodge-podge of eyes, ears, mouths and hands, interrupted by spiky tufts of hair. the body is given its lumpy shape by an interior skeleton composed of various bony plates (skull parts, pelvises, shoulder blades and even knee caps) grafted together into one large disk, housing a confusing collection of internal organs and scattered lobes from various brains.

Because of their multitudinous eyes, rovers can see in all directions at once, making them extremely difficult to sneak up on.

Intellect

Rovers are not particularly intelligent and will not enter combat unless they have to. They much prefer to clatter away on their sharp legs and hide. The creatures can scuttle across any terrain at incredible speed.

Due to their low intelligence, the humanoid ETs empathically program the rovers with simple instructions. These are normally orders like "Spy on X and report back when you're relieved" or "Stay here and note who comes by and what they do." Rovers are then deprogrammed by the ETs, who empathically "download" the information stored in their memory. In this way, the ETs may easily scout out their enemies and potential enemies. When humans encounter a rover, then, it is of the utmost importance that it not escape back to its masters.

Combat Abilities

If caught with no way out, a rover will fight ferociously, like a living ball of whirling blades. If killed, the biomass will disintegrate into a yellow puddle within a few hours' time. Within 10 hours, it will dry to a crusty stain.

Special Abilities

Some rovers may be programmed with the ability to Dimension Walk. This type of programming is a long process, and the ETs only take the trouble on rare occasion. Such rovers are the sneakiest kind and are almost impossible to catch before they "blink out" of existence.

Rovers may also be programmed to perform various special functions. For example, a rover could be programmed with Project Thought if the ETs wished to drive someone mad with horrible hallucinations.

Rovers can also be used as very good messengers and couriers. Occasionally they are used as assassins, although they are not as adept at this.

Rovers are used a great deal when spying on corporations and their activities. They are just about small enough to be able to scuttle around in an air-conditioning shaft, keeping watchful eyes on board meetings and other activities. They also utilize city sewer systems, which allows them to remain unseen by most humans when going about their business of fact finding.

Stalker

Strength:	12	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	3/10/20/35
Constitution:	8	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5*/7*
Agility:	10	*Empathy:*	6	*Hits:*	40/60**
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6

* Unarmed. Stalkers typically use a darkness dagger (see below).
** Takes no damage from fire, lightning, oxygen deprivation or poison. Increase difficulty to hit stalker by one level in poor light conditions.
Special: Dimension Walk.

Activities

Dark Lords send stalkers out on assassination missions either singly or in pairs. They are also sent in small groups to promote mayhem, confusion and destruction. They are excellent agents for the Dark Lords in either case because of their extreme dedication to the tasks set before them, and because the stalkers themselves consume none of the energies that their actions release-it is all available to their master for channeling.



General Description

Stalkers appear as cloaked humanoid forms wielding large daggers. They are composed entirely of inky blackness, with no visible features. Their knives and cloaks are likewise entirely dark. A stalker's touch is slightly insubstantial and icy cold. Its voice is a low hiss, and it never displays any emotion. A stalker moves with almost unnatural grace and speed, and displays incredible physical strength. It does not use its empathic abilities to project fear or dread, preferring not to draw attention to itself.

Stalkers are shadowy creatures that subsist entirely on the energies of the proto-dimension of their origin. For that reason, no stalker makes Earth its home. The creatures exist on Earth only temporarily, and must return to their proto-dimension for sustenance and replenishment of lost energy. A stalker forced to remain on Earth continuously without a direct other dimensional link will lose one point from all physical skills and characteristics for each 24-hour period, as well as being unable to recover from any wounds suffered. A stalker that is able to open a proto-dimensional portal may draw energy through it to itself.

Due to a stalker's otherworldly origins and makeup, it suffers no ill effects from such things as fire, electricity, asphyxiation, poison, etc. It suffers normal damage from physical attacks. When a stalker is injured, it bleeds liquid darkness of the same approximate consistency as human blood. The liquid will not stick to or stain any surface-it simply disappears back to its proto-dimension as it dries. The corpse of a slain stalker likewise disappears the turn after the stalker is slain.

A stalker never uses any missile weapons, attacking in melee combat with its dagger or going hand to hand if disarmed. Stalkers generally have no familiarity with Earth cultures or technology, although they usually have a rudimentary understanding of the language in their current location. Only after many missions to Earth does a stalker become familiar with Earth life, and on its own it will not use any human technology more complex than an elevator. Beyond this, Earth machinery is too alien to a stalker and requires specific instructions from its master. For example, if a stalker is sent to a security installation, it may be given the information to punch in a security code, but it would be completely unable to comprehend dialing a telephone. This is not to say that stalkers are unintelligent-they are highly cunning, clever and ruthlessly single minded in completing their tasks.

Water is an unfamiliar element to stalkers. While it does not damage them and they cannot drown, stalkers do not float and cannot swim. A stalker will not willingly enter a body of water deeper than its own height.

Darkness Daggers

Darkness daggers are constructed of an unidentifiable, slightly insubstantial, nonmetallic, nonreflective, jet-black material with special properties. Its blades radiate a localized field of intense cold which is completely insubstantial to inorganic material. The blades weigh approximately one kilogram.

A darkness dagger has a short armed melee combat range and a +2 hit modifier, and does 1D10 + ½ STR damage. In addition, armor worn by the target has no effect. The blade in its field simply passes right through it. The field extends to the hilt of the dagger as well. If a PC should somehow acquire a stalker's weapon, the character may use it. The character would, however, be sought by other stalkers seeking to retrieve the blade and slay its possessor. Due to the extreme cold, any character wielding a darkness dagger will take 1 point of damage per phase to the arm in which it is held. Gloves will not insulate a character against this damage.

Stick Indians

Strength:	10	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	2/7/13/25
Constitution:	12	*Charisma:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1D6
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	24/48
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	2D6

Special: Stick Indians have extremely tough skin, at least as thick and as hard as well-cured leather, which gives them 1 point of armor. They use their minimal skills at Human Empathy and · Project Thought to appear to be speaking the language of their observer, although in a pidgin version with some words that do not translate. All Stick Indians Dimension Walk.

The Mythology

The Indians of the northern Rockies have long known about a race of aboriginal beings that live in the remotest parts of the forest and seldom come out. Each tribe has its own name for these small beings, but they have come to be known as Stick Indians because they appear sometimes to be almost a caricature of the tribesmen who live there.



The Reality

Stick Indians appear to be a very primitive people. They use no tool more complex than a stick or stone. They dress in uncured animal pelts, usually deer hide or beaver pelt. They stand no more than a meter in height and may be almost that wide. Their bodies are square and brown, covered with a thin mat of coarse black hair through which the skin can easily be seen. Their arms and legs are grotesquely thin, with swollen joints at elbows, wrists, knees and ankles, also lending to the impression that the creatures are made of sticks.

Despite their small size and awkward appearance, Stick Indians are said to be prodigiously strong. Their faces are squarish and covered with hundreds of wrinkles of dark brown skin. Their eyes are small, beady, black, and set close together. Their noses are large and flat, spread over half their face, often overhanging their flabby lips and jowly chin. They have coarse black hair which hangs down behind their heads in a wild, dirty mane, and males often have a sparse mustache and beard.

Their teeth are in poor condition, often consisting of a few broken incisors and sharp yellow fangs. The ears are large, stick out like jug handles, and are distinctly pointed. The creatures have six gnarly fingers on each hand. and six splayed-out toes on each broad flat foot.

Stick Indians roam the wilderness, apparently at will, doing whatever they wish. The native American Indians say the creatures like to cause avalanches, raid traplines and hunt. Stick Indians sometimes speak to hunters who meet them in the forest, generally to demand tobacco or some other gift. If refused, they have been known to injure or kill the human.

They have great curiosity about children, and will poke and jabber with great excitement whenever they see one. If the child begins to cry, the creatures will howl with laughter, leaping up and down in their glee. Children who disappear or are lost in the wilderness are said to have been taken by the creatures.

Origins

There is no satisfactory origin myth for the Stick Indians in any tribe's cosmogony. They are definitely not part of the animal people of Indian myth who are said to have lived on Earth before humans came up out of the land below. Sometime within the last couple of hundred years, these humanoids simply appeared in the northern Rockies and took up their curious life-style. The natives of that territory prefer to propitiate the Stick Indians with small gifts and never to speak of them within the forest where they might be overheard.

Super Rats

Strength:	2	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	5/10/20/40
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/2
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	8/12
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: Individual super rats may know how to use human weapons (75% chance); some have Darkling Empathy. Super rats have Small Anns (Rifle) 4 and Thrown Weapon 6.

History

Rats have been around since the dawn of mammals on this planet; it is thought that they may have a common (and very distant) ancestor with humanity. However, it seems that ever since humans learned to till the soil, rats have sought to steal the fruits of their labor. As humans moved together to live in cities, rats followed, living off the trash and garbage thrown away by a careless humanity. And whenever new advances enabled human populations to increase, rat populations increased right along with them. When humanity discovered biological sciences, a new use was discovered for rats. Rats are biologically quite similar to humans, and they are small enough to keep in laboratories. In addition, they behave much like people in psychological stress experiments, so they quickly became popular as subjects for cerebral studies, as well as physiological experiments. In fact, the tenn "lab rat" all but replaced "guinea pig" when indicating a being subjected to various experiments. People treated lab rats in much the same way the humanoid ETs came to treat their human victims.

When research was conducted on genetics and enhanced evolution, using knowledge provided by friendly humanoid ETs, lab rats were used as subjects once again, this time with human genetic material injected. The experiments were successful, but the results were never triumphantly trumpeted to the public. The rats that were produced were too smart, too well-evolved and too big (up to a meter long)-they were super rats. These super rats were destined to be a serious threat to humanity's welfare and, consequently, were scheduled to be destroyed. Before that could be accomplished, however, these rats established an empathic contact with some of the Dark Minion ETs and arranged to be rescued-the entire research project disappeared one night, and none of the researchers were ever seen again.

The super rats began showing up time and time again, in sewers, snooping around government installations, creating nests beneath cities and towns. They seem to have become a sort of Dark Minion underground, interested in breeding (super rats can breed with normal, wild rats, producing super rat offspring) and preying on humans. Some of the super rats are content to bide their time and protect their nest communities; others actively seek unprotected humans as food. Yet others actively aid ETs as specimen procurers and lab assistants, thereby taking their revenge on their former tormentors.

Combat Abilities

Many super rats use weapons. Most favor small crossbows. Some wield small (Bulk 0 or 1) pistols or ET weapons. They also favor hand grenades, if they can acquire them and find the right location to use them. They can use nets to entangle and enmesh victims if they wish to capture their prey alive (usually for supply to humanoid ET vivisectionists). Following super rats to their lairs (there is almost always more than one) is dangerous. The creatures are adept at rigging traps—deadfalls, nets, crossbow traps and spike traps are favorites. Furthermore, they often coat their crossbow bolts and spikes with filth, increasing the danger of infection. Characters who are stricken by such weapons and who fail a Difficult test of Constitution will require twice the time to heal from these wounds. Treatment with antibiotics within a few hours of wounding will reduce the Constitution test to Average.

Small Crossbow

						Recoil		
Ammo	***ROF/Rld***	***Dam***	***Pen***	***Bulk***	***Mag***	***SS***	***Brst***	***Rng***
Small Bolt	SS	-1	Nil	1	—	3	—	5

Toxic Mother

Strength:	3	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	3
Constitution:	5	*Charisma:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	3/1D10
Agility:	1	*Empathy:*	15	*Hits:*	140/200
Intelligence:	7	*Initiative:*	2	*# Appearing*	1

Special: Toxic mothers do not normally move, their bodies generally being far too bloated for normal locomotion. However, they may, in extreme duress, pull themselves along by their vines at a movement rate of 3.

Background

For decades, humanity has been dumping all manner of toxins into the planet's oceans and rivers. Organizations have dumped heavy metals, industrial waste and other poisons until there was no way to keep track of where they had disposed of what. And now it's time to pay the piper, because the toxins are coming back.

Physical Description

Toxic mothers generally look like huge, bloated women, covered with slime and dripping pinkish froth from innumerable suppurating wounds. Their huge rolls of cancerous fat completely hide their now vestigial legs, making movement almost impossible. Their arms, too, have become nearly useless, shriveling into twiglike appendages that twitch and spasm in response to the creature's agitation. Their only useful limbs are actually fleshy "vines" that radiate from their body (3D10 vines per mother). These vines are tipped with barbs that stick into the flesh of creatures that they strike.

Some toxic mothers have blended into their surroundings more completely. These appear as repulsive masses of septic refuse, reeking of decay and poisons. In this form, they are virtually indistinguishable from the trash surrounding them. The underground lairs of toxic mothers are only found in the most loathsome locales—landfills gone putrid, illegal toxic waste dumps, foul sewage ponds and, of course, Demongrounds. Their lairs can normally be smelled for hundreds of yards. And the creatures' very presence further corrupts the areas so that even the air becomes somewhat corrosive. Anyone standing unprotected within 30 meters of a toxic mother's lair will suffer 1 point of damage to the chest location every 10 minutes. This represents the accumulation of airborne toxins in the character's system. Difficult [Constitution] checks are required of all characters actually entering a toxic mother's lair. Failure indicates uncontrollable retching that incapacitates the character for 1D10 combat phases.

Behavior

Few people would be aware of toxic mothers if they had just stayed in their dumps. But the mothers are in constant agony from the chemical soup that rages through their bodies. The only manner in which they can ease this pain is through the act of expulsion, an act that requires human agents.

Every few months, a toxic mother disgorges a tiny seed into the air. This seed contains a minute fragment of the creature's awareness, its empathic powers. The seed is borne on the winds until it reaches human habitation. There it falls to the ground and begins emitting a psychic summons. In game terms, this is treated as a use of the Project Thought skill against everyone within a one-kilometer radius. Those who receive the summons and fail an Average test of Empathy or Willpower (whichever is higher) will be impelled to seek out the seed.

Once the seed has attracted someone to it, it opens a direct empathic link to the toxic mother, and the mother uses Project Thought to lead the victim to her lair. A Difficult test of Empathy or Willpower is required to break her control. When those summoned arrive, they are forced to nestle in close to the toxic mother. She then plugs her vines into them, pumping them full of her blood while drawing out their own. This helps the mother rid her body of toxins, and also nets her a few human slaves. Those pumped full of her blood have the same statistics as animator zombie, but are fully under her control.

The mother uses her "toxikids" to send humanity'S waste back to it. The zombies haul loads of waste back to the city, dumping loads of septic sludge into the water supply, spreading radioactive waste in the streets, or whatever else they can do. This usually ends up drawing attention to the toxic mother. However, by that time, much damage has already been done. Many are the abandoned villages that dot this proud country, their inhabitants fled from or slain by the toxins delivered by the toxikids.

Tulpa

Strength:	—	*Education:*	—	*Move:*	—
Constitution:	—	*Charisma:*	—	*Skill/Dam.:*	—
Agility:	—	*Empathy:*	2D6+1	*Hits:*	—
Intelligence:	—	*Initiative:*	½ EMP*	*# Appearing*	1

* Round down.

Special: Telekinesis. Tulpa have no actual physical existence, but they use Project , Thought to create an illusion of existence and Telekinesis to move things about while acting as if they are physically carrying them.

A tulpa is a phantom form, indistinguishable in all respects from whatever thing it represents. The creatures are created by the power of thought and imagination alone! Only empathic creatures may create a tulpa, but they can be brought into being either intentionally or unintentionally. Once created, a tulpa becomes a being in its own right and will. Unless destroyed, it will remain in existence forever. It has a mind of its own and may act as it wishes. Almost all tulpa feel a certain bonding to their creators and remain loyal to them, but some do not. Many famed "wizards" of history have created tulpa. Some created them to assist them in their work, some for pleasure, and some for darker reasons. Energy ETs often create tulpa to serve as laborers. Other Dark Races are likely to use tulpa in their plans, as are highly empathic humans who are students of "magic."

Unintentional Creation

Some tulpa come into being almost instantaneously as a result of any intense emotion from a highly empathic character-including emotions resulting from suicide or violent death. A tulpa that comes to life in this way is always less than perfect in its appearance. The flaw may not be instantly apparent, but something, somehow will be very wrong with these creations.

Intentional Creation

Most tulpa are brought into being through a deliberate act of will-a long and painstaking process, typically requiring weeks of meditation and visualization before the first manifestation of the desired being. If the creation of a tulpa is intentional, the creator must decide exactly what type of creature is desired. This may range from an animal, to a human being, to a hideous creature of imagination. Then the creator must maintain continuous concentration until the creature becomes real. Any distraction will cause the creator to fail, requiring him to begin again.In most cases, the process of creation takes several weeks. During that time, the creator must go without such luxuries as sleep and food, remaining instead in a semicomatose state of meditation. This ability is beyond the capacity of most beings.

Process

Intentionally creating a tulpa requires a series of successful tasks in addition to a calm environment. Prerequisite skills are Project Thought, Project Emotion and Willpower. Creators must be experienced in meditative techniques and must have received instruction in the technique (perhaps by studying in India, etc.).

A creator must first decide—very specifically—what he desires in the creation. The creator must then pass a test of Empathy to enter a trance, with the difficulty being one level more strenuous than usual for the empath's environment. Next, the creator must pass a Project Thought task and achieve no lower than a Stage Five power level. He must make a successful Difficult test of Willpower each week during the process to maintain concentration.

The referee decides exactly how long concentration must be maintained, but the following guidelines will help-a tulpa dog would probably take one week to create; a , human would take one month; and a huge, shape-changing demon might take years. The creator may take no other action during the creation time and may not be distracted. If the creator is distracted, the whole process is spoiled. Finally, the creator must make a successful Project Emotion task and achieve nothing less than a Stage Five power level. Once the process is completed, the form becomes a reality and the tulpa is real! The referee should determine the (slim) possibility of the tulpa being hostile to the creator. Obviously, creating a tulpa is a very difficult process. Only the most dedicated characters—or the most emotionally distraught—will succeed.

Destroying a Tulpa

Destroying (dispelling) a tulpa can only be accomplished by besting it in an empathic contest of wills. Both the tulpa and the character attempting to destroy it roll for a power level with their Empathy statistic. (Tulpa have no Willpower rating for this contest.) Whoever achieves the highest total wins the contest. If the character wins, the tulpa is destroyed. If the tulpa wins, it takes control of the character's body for a number of hours equal to the difference between the two power levels. The creature can cause the character to do anything short of committing suicide (including attacking friends).

Weres

Weres are creatures that have or should have one form but have been transformed or can assume another form quite different from the original. In some cases, this is a permanent transformation. In others, it is an illusion. In still others it is a transformation that takes place temporarily. The classic werewolf is but one type of were in ***Conspiracy Rules***.

True Weres

True weres are bestial creatures that can walk either upright like humans or, more quickly, upon all fours. They vaguely resemble normal terran animals such as wolves, bears, boars, or even tigers but are able to disguise themselves by empathically projecting an image of human shape and features. Except during the period of the full moon, that is, weres have a monthly rutting season which is tied to the lunar phases, and when the moon is full, they revert to bestial habits, dropping their human guise and mindlessly attacking nearly any terran creature they meet up with. It is not possible for a human to become a were, but it is possible for the two races to interbreed, with a 60% chance of producing were offspring.

Contact with sodium, silver, or other gate material disrupts a were's ability to use their empathic powers, including the projection of its normal human facade.



Werebear

Strength:	13	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/9/15/40
Constitution:	15	*Charisma:*	4	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D10
Agility:	4	*Empathy:*	7	*Hits:*	36/50
Intelligence:	4	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	1D6÷3

Special: Automatic human image projection. Silver disrupts Empathy.



Wereboar

Strength:	11	*Education:*	2	*Move:*	3/6/10/18
Constitution:	12	*Charisma:*	3	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2D6
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	26/50
Intelligence:	3	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	1D6÷2

Special: Automatic human image projection. Silver disrupts Empathy.



Wererat

Strength:	5	*Education:*	6	*Move:*	3/9/17/32
Constitution:	2	*Charisma:*	7	*Skill/Dam.:*	7/1D6+1
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	10	*Hits:*	16/30
Intelligence:	8	*Initiative:*	5	*# Appearing*	2D6

Special: Automatic human image projection. Silver disrupts Empathy.



Weretiger

Strength:	17	*Education:*	3	*Move:*	3/9/18/35
Constitution:	15	*Charisma:*	6	*Skill/Dam.:*	8/3D6
Agility:	6	*Empathy:*	8	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	5	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6÷3

Special: Automatic human image projection. Silver disrupts Empathy.



Werewolf

Strength:	8	*Education:*	4	*Move:*	3/9/17/32
Constitution:	6	*Charisma:*	6	*Skill/Dam.:*	62D6
Agility:	7	*Empathy:*	9	*Hits:*	22/44
Intelligence:	6	*Initiative:*	6	*# Appearing*	1D6

Special: Automatic human image projection. Silver disrupts Empathy.

Moreau Weres

A special subclass of weres is made up of humans who have been bestialized in ET experiments. Some have been surgically modified, having cat's eyes implanted to improve night vision, for example. Others are the result of chemical treatments that thicken skin, stimulate adrenaline production, etc. Some have even been created by genetic manipulation, resulting in creatures that are truly half human and half beast.

Very few of these experimental subjects survive. Of course, most are severely crippled. Only very rarely do individuals result who are favorably modified. Statistics for these creatures are as varied as their types. Generally, the referee should choose standard NPC statistics, then add a special facility, such as the ability to spray like a skunk or to cause extra unarmed melee damage with claws. These creatures are called Moreau Weres in honor of H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

Zombies

In voodoo myths, the word zombie generally refers to a dead body brought back to life to serve as a mindless slave, usually for agricultural work. In Dark Conspiracy, there are two different sources for these myths, plus one more modern type of zombie.

The first source of the zombie myths is a specialized form of animator (see above), one powerful enough to restore an entire corpse to physical function. Like mummies and animated skeletons, this sort of zombie is not actually brought back to life; instead, it is moved telekinetically by the animator dwelling within it. (This is a special use of Telekinesis that requires no rolls for success or effect.) Like other animators, these zombies are usually created by ETs or fey folk, to function as guards and troops. As a result, they are typically made with very low Intelligence, Education, and Charisma statistics.

It is possible, however, for zombies to be created with high scores in these statistics (which ought to give the PCs quite a shock the first time they encounter one). The statistics listed above are for average zombies.

Animator Zombies

Strength:	9	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	2/8/15
Constitution:	7	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	5/2D6+1
Agility:	3	*Empathy:*	1	*Hits:*	30/60
Intelligence:	1	*Initiative:*	2	*# Appearing*	2D6



The first source of the zombie myths is a specialized form of animator (see above), one powerful enough to restore an entire corpse to physical function. Like mummies and animated skeletons, this sort of zombie is not actually brought back to life; instead, it is moved telekinetically by the animator dwelling within it. (This is a special use of Telekinesis that requires no rolls for success or effect.) Like other animators, these zombies are usually created by ETs or fey folk, to function as guards and troops. As a result, they are typically made with very low Intelligence, Education, and Charisma statistics. It is possible, however, for zombies to be created with high scores in these statistics (which ought to give the PCs quite a shock the first time they encounter one). The statistics listed above are for average zombies.

Moss Zombies

Strength:	*	*Education:*	*	*Move:*	*
Constitution:	*	*Charisma:*	*	*Skill/Dam.:*	*/*
Agility:	*	*Empathy:*	*	*Hits:*	*
Intelligence:	*	*Initiative:*	*	*# Appearing*	1D6

* As per appropriate NPC level.
Special: None.



Moss zombies are apparently the result of an experiment in biological weaponry gone awry. They are not actually corpses brought back to life, but are instead living creatures infected with a bizarre form of plant life.

The zombie moss can only survive in warm, wet climates, such as Southeast Asia and Indonesia, and it only affects mammals. Apparently, when a mammal encounters the moss, it inhales airborne spores. Those spores remain dormant through much of the year, but during the rainy season, they suddenly sprout within the circulatory system of their victims, giving their blood (and skin) a greenish tint. As the infection mounts, it causes a chemical imbalance in the host which gives rise to murderous rages, much like rabies. The significant difference is that while rabies produces blind, unreasoning violence, typically occurring only when the subject is somehow provoked, the zombie moss produces a cold-blooded, cunning murderousness in which its victims stalk others of their kind. (There has been speculation that the murders are actually intended as mercy killings, to prevent others from later contracting the infection.) By the end of the rainy season, the infection has completely filled the host's circulatory system, and the victim dies. Within two to three days, the corpse bursts open from the moss' rampant growth, and new spores are released into the air, beginning the process all over again. There have been some isolated reports of moss zombies in Oregon.

Yellow Zombies

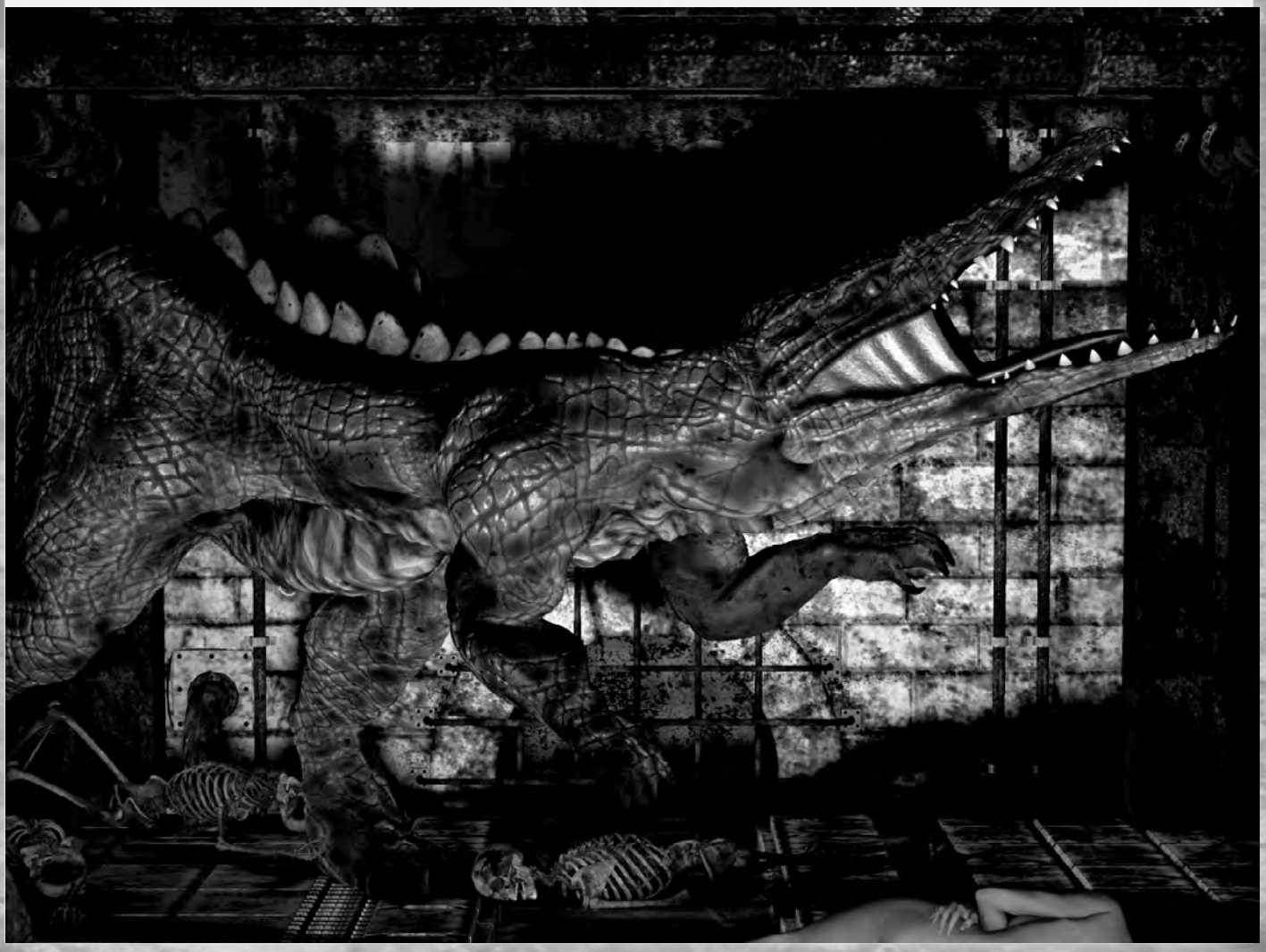
Strength:	8	*Education:*	1	*Move:*	2/7/13/25
Constitution:	9	*Charisma:*	1	*Skill/Dam.:*	6/2D6-1
Agility:	5	*Empathy:*	3	*Hits:*	18/36
Intelligence:	2	*Initiative:*	4	*# Appearing*	3D6

Yellow zombies are so named because of the putrescent, curdled, yellowish fluid that swells their skulls and nerve paths. This fluid consists of a type of microorganism that combines to form a community intelligence. It feeds on human nervous tissue and is able to stimulate muscle activity in the same way that nerves do. In other words, it is able to invade a human body, consume the nervous tissue there, and replace it at the same time, keeping the body functioning as long as there is any nervous tissue remaining for sustenance.

Unfortunately, living humans move too quickly for the organism to invade, so it generally settles for corpses, then uses those bodies to create more corpses from the living. The zombie organism begins its invasion with the brain, then works its way outward toward the extremities. Note that the organism does not actually return life to the corpse, only movement.

After all of the nervous tissue in a corpse has been consumed (a process that takes approximately three days), the zombie organism must move on to a new body. Each hour that it spends in a used-up corpse, portions of the community begin to die away, and control of the body steadily worsens. Generally, when the community finally leaves the old body, it does so by oozing out skull openings such as the ears and nostrils. Of course, it attempts to leave the old corpse while in the vicinity of several new ones, in order to split up and expand.

If the organism can invade a living human, it can feed for nearly a week, as it does not have to compete for its food with normal corrupting organisms. A living victim will slowly lose its personality, memories, and physical control over the course of the first few days of this period, and will spend the time in a horrific waking nightmare during which it has trouble separating hallucinations from reality. When running such an infected NPC, the referee should use the NPC's normal statistics to begin with, then slowly adjust them to reflect the infection's taking control.



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) come in several varieties, but their distinction is based on the level of detail in their development. Detailed NPCs can be as complete as a player character in terms of development. In this case the referee has used the character generation procedures to produce an NPC adversary (or ally) with an equivalent level of detail as the characters themselves. Detailed NPCs are almost always named and have some background to them. Some NPCs will have a lesser amount of detail showing specific capabilities other than just the combat ones. These lesser detailed NPCs will also be named, but typically have their motivations aggregated using the playing card motivations described below. The last variety is the stock NPCs. These are cardboard cutouts used for situations where a mass of non-detailed characters are needed—guards, technicians, by-standers, etc. Stock NPCs will not have much background other than what can be drawn from the story and with just enough stats to describe their combat or other important capabilities. Some specialty skills will be included in their descriptions, but no background rationale on how those capabilities came about other than being a member of the stock NPC class.

NPCs in Combat

In terms of combat statistics, the majority of NPCs are ranked as one of four levels of experience—Novice, Experienced, Veteran, and Elite—and these experience levels dictate their Initiative, attributes, and combat skills. The table below reveals those stats for each experience level. Detailed NPCs will have an Initiative rating, skills, and combat stats drawn from the character creation process.

NPC Hit Capacity

	Wound Levels		
	Slight	***Serious***	***Critical/Dead***
Standard Human	10	10	>20

Should the Hit Point listing for a detailed NPC show a different number than the standard 10/20 combination, the hit points are allocated 50-50% to the Slight and Serious wound levels.

NPC record forms should have boxes representing these allocations that the referee—or players for follower-type NPCs—use to record the NPC's wound level. Similarly to characters, when an NPC first takes a wound, he is considered slightly wounded and suffers a –1 to Initiative. Once the first section (Slight) is filled in, excess points are marked off the second row (Serious), and continues until all boxes are marked off—in which case the NPC falls critically wounded dies if immediate care is not received. The NPC suffers all the effects to Initiative listed on page 104. With the first point marked off the second, the NPC is considered seriously wounded and suffers effects to Initiative. Seriously wounded NPCs must also check for consciousness like NPCs.

Note that NPC damage is not assigned to specific hit locations, as it is for PCs. However, hit locations should still be rolled. If an attack on an NPC strikes an armored hit location, the armor takes effect normally. Also hits to an extremity that result in a Serious Wound will prevent the use of that limb.

Other NPC Skills

Of course, an NPC will have more than just combat skills. For many NPCs—perhaps most—the characters will never have occasion to know their combat skills. Instead, they will be known for their expertise in some other field. While an average skill level from the NPC Stats table is mapped to the experience level of an NPC, specialty skill levels should be assigned by the referee as appropriate to the situation.

NPC Motivations

Motivations are the drives that guide an NPC, giving a character reason for acting as the individual they are. In many cases, the motivations of NPCs are either obvious or unimportant. The referee need not work up detailed motivations for NPCs performing mundane tasks, such as driving a cab, or making change. However, some NPCs will have slightly more detailed motivations because of their role in the story, but even these motivations can be straightforward. For most NPCs, motivation will depend upon the role the character plays in the adventure.

But some NPCs play such a large part in the characters' experiences that details of their personalities become very important. In such cases, referees have one of two choices. They can invent NPCs motivations themselves, based upon what they think the NPC should be like, or they can generate the motivations randomly with a deck of playing cards using the system described here. Either way, the referee can use these "cards" as a short-cut to the NPCs principle motivations.

Random NPC Motivations

To generate an NPC's motivations, draw two cards from a standard deck of 52 playing cards—without jokers. The card with the highest value determines the NPCs primary motivation; the lower reveals the secondary motivation. Each card's suit dictates the direction that motivation takes, and its face value determines the motivation's strength or its particular bent.

Aces and face cards—jacks, queens, kings—indicate special motivations. If a special card is drawn, it is automatically the NPCs primary motivation. If two special cards are drawn, the NPC has two primary motivations competing with each other for dominance.

The various card possibilities are summarized in the table below. The paragraphs following describe the motivation's meaning by suit and ace or face card special motivations.



Clubs: Violence

Violent NPCs have a greater likelihood of reacting with violence than do most people. Generally, if the situation calls for violence or some other response, these NPCs will choose violence. Even a high violence rating does not, however, necessarily indicate that the non-player character is brutal or a bully. For example, a "very violent" NPC who was also "very sociable" could be described as friendly, good-natured, and loyal, but also a good person to have with you in a fight.

Somewhat Violent: The NPC is not frightened or intimidated by threats of violence and will not hesitate to use force if the situation seems to warrant it.

Moderately Violent: The NPC is aggressive and inclined to view violence as the preferred means of resolving disputes.

Very Violent: The NPC loves a good fight and either is or wants to be a warrior.

Jack, Murderous: This NPC is subject to sudden, uncontrollable, murderous rages. Chances are such NPCs have already killed at least once in a fit of rage. If not, it certainly will not be long before someone crosses them at the wrong time and dies…

Queen, Stubborn: Such NPCs are so stubborn that once they have made up their minds about something, it is nearly impossible to persuade them differently. They tend to scoff at innovation and insist that the "old ways" of doing things are best.

King, Brutal: These NPCs are sadistic brutes who enjoy causing other people pain and grief. They often serve as tools for the Dark Minions, most of them without ever realizing it. Frequently, they are dupes who find themselves propelled to power, seemingly because of unassailable luck, but actually because of Dark Minion manipulation. Just when they think they are most secure, however, their unseen masters suddenly bring them to ruin, and the victimizer becomes the victim.

Ace, War Leader: The NPC is an unusually good leader in battle, able to inspire confidence in others, and receiving complete obedience from followers. In terms of combat rules, treat such NPCs as having an Initiative of 6 (they never panic or rout),and allow them to predict their opponents' general strategy and be prepared for it.



Diamonds: Greed

The greed motivation drives the NPC to seek wealth.

Somewhat Greedy: The NPC will be fairly easy to convince to take a particular course of action as long as money is involved.

Moderately Greedy: The NPC will drive a harder bargain, but will actually be more willing to take larger risks, provided the payment is sufficient.

Very Greedy: The NPC will do virtually anything for money, but will insist upon very high fees, and will perhaps attempt treachery if it seems that even more money can be gained by doing so.

Jack, Coward: This NPC is a total coward and will run from danger at every opportunity. One could say such characters are greedy about their own safety. If escape is impossible, a coward will cower and refuse to fight.

Queen, Lustful: These NPCs are driven by lust for the opposite sex. Depending upon the circumstances, the referee may interpret this as an impersonal lust for all members of that sex or as an obsession for a particular person.

King, Selfish: A selfish NPC never helps without demanding payment and will never give away anything. Such NPCs are convinced that everyone else is just as selfish as they are. As a result, they will demand higher payment than they are due—believing their employers to be holding out on them—and they will jealously guard their own possessions being convinced that everyone else is just waiting for an opportunity to steal them. NPCs this selfish are likely to steal what other people do not guard very closely.

Ace, Generous: In terms of the Conspiracy Rules world, these NPCs are extremely generous. Those who have another heart card as a secondary motivation are so generous that they will gladly giveaway anything they have to others in need, even if this leaves them with nothing. All others will tend to make generous deals and will refuse payment for favors, unless those favors directly relate to their normal line of business.



Hearts: Sociability

NPCs motivated by sociability are highly influenced by their love of people. They tend to be friendly, loyal, and just.

Somewhat Sociable: The NPC will be amiable, talkative, and cooperative with most everyone.

Moderately Sociable: The NPC will have a strong sense of duty and loyalty to their group.

Very Sociable: The NPC will have a strong commitment to justice and the welfare of all people, and will look for the good qualities in everyone, but will react with anger to injustice and brutality.

Jack, Wise: The NPC is unusually wise, either as a result of years of experience, or simply because of astute observation. Such NPCs almost always exhibit good judgment and, if asked, offer sound advice.

Queen, Loving: This NPC loves some other person devotedly, perhaps a spouse, parent, child, or close friend. Such NPCs would willingly sacrifice themselves for the one they love. Alternatively, the NPC may be loving toward absolutely everyone. The choice is up to the referee.

King, Honorable: Honorable NPCs are scrupulously honest in their dealings with everyone. In many cases this is not so much from any concern for others, but from pride in saying that their word of honor is their bond. Such NPCs will typically carry out their promises and social obligations even if it means facing death. In this, they can be as difficult to deter as a stubborn NPC (Club Queen). Honorable NPCs have utter contempt for liars and oath breakers.

Ace, Just: This NPC sees justice as the greatest virtue a person can display and the only truly important consideration in deciding upon a course of action. Such characters have no respect for cheats and swindlers, and they will wholeheartedly assist any attempt to right an injustice.



Spades: Ambition

Ambition motivated NPCs are driven to seek personal power and influence.

Somewhat Ambitious: The NPC will be inclined toward boastfulness and a desire to impress other people.

Moderately Ambitious: The NPCs are driven to attain positions of high responsibility.

Very Ambitious: The NPC will be overwhelmed by a desire to manipulate and control others.

Jack, Pompous: Pompous NPCs are conceited and arrogant in their dealings with others. They consider themselves to be clearly superior to everyone around them, and they make no secret of that conviction.

Queen, Ruthless: This NPC will let nothing stand in the way of achieving any goal and feels no concern for the needs of others. Such NPCs can feign affection, devotion, sincerity, or anything else that serves their purpose, but actually they feel nothing.

King, Deceitful: This NPC has no respect for honesty. Depending upon the referee's decision, deceitful NPCs may be pathological liars, or they may use the truth deceitfully, giving just enough information to guarantee their victims are misled. The actual direction of their deceitfulness usually depends on their secondary motivation.

Ace, Charismatic: The NPC is a charismatic leader who naturally draws others to themselves. Often, such NPCs have high empathic and leadership skills. Some of these NPCs are honorable and just, others are cruel and manipulative. The referee decides based upon the adventure situation or the particular NPC's secondary motivation.

NPC Motivation Cards

♣ Clubs: Violence		♦ Diamonds: Greed	
Card	***Motivation***	***Card***	***Motivation***
Ace	War leader	*Ace*	Generous
King	Brutal	*King*	Selfish
Queen	Stubborn	*Queen*	Lustful
Jack	Murderous	*Jack*	Coward
8-10	Very violent	*8-10*	Very greedy
5-7	Moderately violent	*5-7*	Moderately greedy
2-4	Somewhat violent	*2-4*	Somewhat greedy

♥ Hearts: Sociability		♠ Spades: Ambition	
Card	***Motivation***	***Card***	***Motivation***
Ace	Just	*Ace*	Charismatic
King	Honorable	*King*	Deceitful
Queen	Loving	*Queen*	Ruthless
Jack	Wise	*Jack*	Pompous
8-10	Very sociable	*8-10*	Very ambitious
5-7	Moderately sociable	*5-7*	Moderately ambitious
2-4	Somewhat sociable	*2-4*	Somewhat ambitious

Stock NPCs

As we have mentioned, in describing NPCs it is often helpful to appeal to stereotypes to most quickly sketch out the most important information. As a matter of fact, there are a number of types of NPCs that will be encountered so often that it just does not make sense for referees to envision them from scratch each time. These NPCs are called stock NPCs. They work something like extras from central casting and include such things as gang members, innocent bystanders, and security guards. Descriptions for a number of these sorts of characters are given below. Referees may wish to create standard descriptions for others that they find recurring frequently in their adventures.

Each of the following characters has a short description, an experience level that determines attributes and combat skills, and a notation of any special skills or abilities not related to the experience level. Players should note that the skills are given as levels not assets. To get the asset the skill level should be added to the attribute level listed in the NPC Stats table. The referee should give them whatever equipment seems appropriate for their skills and the current situation. The stock NPC listings include equipment and weapon recommendations.

Beat Cops

With the constant increase and concentration of urban populations, local police forces have returned to putting walking patrols back on the streets. Beat cops patrol in

NPC Stats

Level	***Initiative***	***Attributes***	***Skill***	***Melee Damage***
Elite	5	7	6	3
Veteran	4	6	5	2
Experienced	2	5	4	2
Novice	1	5	2	1

Level: A descriptor of the NPC's experience level.

Initiative: The NPC's Initiative rating.

Attributes: The NPC's average attribute level.

Skill: The NPC's average skill level of the NPC's combat or other non-specified skills. Asset is the sum of *Skill* and *Attribute*.

Damage: The number of damage dice the NPC causes in an unarmed combat attack, that is, the NPCs UCDR.

NPC Panic: NPCs use the same panic/rout system as characters (see "Panic" on page 106).

NPC Hit Capacity: It is entirely too much of a headache to keep track of multiple wounds and their locations on every NPC, especially for large firefights. For this reason, non-detailed human NPCs, regardless of experience level, are assumed to have a standard, Slight and Serious hit capacity given in the NPC Hit Capacity table, below.

pairs, at a minimum, and they live in the neighborhoods they patrol.

These cops do not try to deal with every crime they see. Rather, they think of themselves as something like dampening rods in a nuclear reactor, keeping the reaction from running completely out of control. Nonetheless, they are heavily armed and armored, and they are under constant radio surveillance by their headquarters.

Few citizens are foolish or desperate enough to start a battle with their neighborhood cops.

Level: Veteran.
Skills: As per Veteran NPCs, plus Leadership 6, Interrogation 4, Observation 6, and Streetwise 6.
Armament: Kevlar jacket and pistol, with a pump shotgun or assault rifle available in their vehicle (if any).

Bikers

The breakdown of law and order in rural areas has led to an increase in brigandage. Due to the poor state of most rural roads, motorcycles are natural sources of mobility, because of their off-road capability. These gangs, which usually include one or two dozen bikers (typically 4D6), are well-armed and murderously violent.

Level: Veteran.
Skills: As per Veteran NPCs.
Armament: Knives, pistols, shotguns, and occasional submachineguns.

Cultists

One consequence of the worldwide depression has been the rise of literally millions of street-corner prophets, each teaching their own brand of apocalyptic "truth". As a result, the streets are filled with religious disciples of every stripe. Some few hold to justifiable teachings of tolerance, kindness, and hope. But most just devote themselves to blindly following a highly charismatic leader, many even to death. By cultists, we mean the latter type. Those tend to be fanatically evangelical, forming barricades across city streets and accosting citizens as they pass by. Generally, they have two messages for their listeners—the first is that love and peace can be found in their leader, and the second is that they need money to spread the message.

Unfortunately, their peace and love cannot survive far from the presence of their leader. If these cultists are separated from their group, they tend to become panicked and confused, then despondent or even suicidal.

Level: Novice.
Skills: As per Novice NPCs, plus Persuasion 2.
Armament: Improvised, if needed.

Derelicts

Derelicts are the unemployed and homeless who have given up any hope of regaining a normal life, but who lead a solitary existence, rather than joining a corporate sanctuary or cultist enclave. They can be of any age; many are alcoholics, drug addicts, or mentally ill.

The main secret of living as a derelict is to know how to avoid trouble. One way of doing this is to avoid drawing attention to oneself. If that fails, then the other method is to move on to somewhere else.

Successful derelicts can be wellsprings of information, if they trust someone enough to tell what they know.

Level: Novice.
Skills: As per Novice NPCs, but additionally with Act/Bluff 4, Luck 6, Observation 7, and Stealth 5. Some also have Foreboding 3.
Armament: Knife or club.

Dobies and Gidgets

In almost every society, there will always be some people who never look outside themselves. They blithely accept whatever they are taught by those in authority, and they never even get a hint that there are other cultures that see things differently.

In earlier times, these people were called "clods", "peasants", or perhaps "good old boys". In the world of Conspiracy Rules, such men are called Dobies (after "Dobie Gillis" from an American sitcom of the '60s), and such women are called Gidgets (after a series of popular movies from around the same time period).

Because of the reduced travel of the Greater Depression and the increased suspicion of outsiders, most villages, towns, and even small cities can be considered to be populated primarily by Dobies and Gidgets.

Level: Novice.
Skills: As per Novice level, plus one career skill of the referee's choice at level 4.
Armament: None.

Eco-Warriors

With any cause, if victories are slow in coming and the general public turns a deaf ear, the people of the cause begin to become militant. Such is the case with eco-warriors.

These people have devoted themselves to halting humanity's ruination of the Earth, with violence if necessary. Of course, as that violence escalates, the eco-warriors find themselves forced to adopt ever more advanced, and more destructive, weapons. Eventually, many of them become so caught up in the battle that they lose sight of what they are fighting for.

Pretty much every city and town in ***Conspiracy Rules*** has a clandestine group of eco-warriors. In most places, they operate as terrorists, blowing up politically important facilities to pressure local governments to meet their demands. The targeted facilities are not necessarily ecologically harmful, nor are the eco-warriors' demands always concerned with improving the ecology.

Level: Veteran.
Skills: As per Veteran NPCs, plus Demolitions 5, Squad Weapons 6, Intrusion 4, and Ground Vehicle (Wheeled) 6.
Armament: Pistol and submachinegun. Explosives are often used as well.

Gangers

If anything, street gangs in the Conspiracy Rules universe are even more widespread than in the present. That only makes sense: the cities are fuller, and a higher percentage of the populace is unemployed and hopeless of a brighter tomorrow. The need to belong to something, and the need to release frustration, give rise to street gangs.

Gangs always have some flashy name, and they usually have a uniform of some sort, even if it is only a colored scarf or an emblazoned jacket. Members are considered "family," like pre-modern clans, and gang wars tend to concern either clan territory or vengeance for clan deaths.

Most of the time, street gangs only battle each other. But sometimes, just for fun, they will terrorize neighborhood citizens who are not gang members.

Level: Experienced.
Skills: As per Experienced NPCs, plus Stealth, Streetwise 7.
Armament: Knives, zip guns, revolvers, and occasional submachineguns or assault rifles.

Gizmoids

Gizmoids are bright people with a natural talent for one of the mechanics, electronics, or biology fields, but who, for one reason or another, do not have a steady job in that field. For some of gizmoids, it is because they couldn't get official training. For others, it is because they have some personality quirk that prevented them from keeping a job once they got it. Possible personality quirks might range from inability to take orders to such brilliance that they are always working on something new instead of finishing the job at hand.

Most gizmoids satisfy themselves with working at their field of interest as if it were a hobby, supporting it with some menial job, or possibly even selling enough specialty gizmos to keep themselves solvent, if barely. The latter are seldom picky about working on illegal equipment, whether building or repairing.

Gizmoids do tend to be careless dressers and social klutzes; and in stereotypical fashion, tend to wear thick glasses.

Level: Novice.
Skills: As a Novice NPC, plus Biology 8, Electronics 8, Mechanic 8, Physics 8. Also generally Business 4.
Armament: None.

Good Samaritans

For Dark Minions, one of the most frustrating things about humans has been that in the very worst of times is when many of them become the most selfless and loving. In every locality, there are people who are open-handedly helpful, just for the sake of making the world a little brighter for others. This is what is meant by the term" Good Samaritan".

In addition to the material aid Good Samaritans offer player characters toward accomplishing their missions, they also offer them hope, reminding them that there are still bright spots in the world and that the Dark Minions have not yet won. As personalities, they tend to be tolerant of others and full of hope.

In terms of adventure pacing, Good Samaritan NPCs serve to relieve players from a constant sense of impending doom, which, perversely, can make that sense of doom fresher when the players return to it.

Some examples of Good Samaritan NPCs would be the faithful bowery priest and the warm-hearted old couple who takes in strays.

Level: Novice.
Skills: As per Novice NPCs, but often with high empathic (typically mystic) and Medical skills, as well.
Armament: None.

Government Agents

Generally well dressed and always coolly impersonal, government agents stalk the streets, constantly seeking information that can be used to shift the balance of power into the hands of their agencies. These NPCs can show up with no prior warning, whether to lend the player characters an unexpected hand in their current mission, or to warn them off. In either case, though, government agents are likely to treat the player characters as rank novices who would screw things up completely without the help they offer.

Government agents tend to have lots of nifty equipment to pass out when the going gets tough, but they are likely to be very picky in their judgment a s to when that time has arrived.

Level: Elite.
Skills: As per Elite NPCs, plus Act/Bluff 7, Disguise 6, Forgery 4, Interrogation7, Observation 8, Stalking 6, and Stealth 7.
Armament: Pistol.

Igors

Igor is the term commonly used among characters when referring to humans who serve the Dark. These servants can be of nearly any sort, but most are of less-than-outstanding intelligence, although they may be cunning, and are brutal, sadistic, selfish, and completely dishonest, much like their masters.

Igors often work in groups, especially those who are too stupid or cowardly to accomplish much on their own. Every city has its share of Igors lurking in the shadows, just waiting for a chance to do some mischief for their masters.

Level: Experienced.
Skills: As per Experienced NPCs.
Armament: Various.

Mother Earthers

Despite the collapse of a widespread farm economy, many people have refused to leave their farms or villages. They remain on the land that their families have owned for generations, raising gardens large enough to support their own needs, and hunting the abandoned fields around them for wildlife. As a result, they have regained a number of skills



that had been largely forgotten in the 20th century.

In general, these people have come to be called Mother Earthers. They tend to be wary of strangers, but if convinced of a traveler's harmlessness, they can be very openhanded in sharing what they have. Most Mother Earthers are more than willing to help out in any sort of task against the corporate farms that financially ruined them.

Level: Experienced.
Skills: As per experienced NPCs, plus Farming 8, Animal Handling 7, Mechanic 3, Medical 2, Navigation 6, Observation 5, Stealth 5, and Tracking 7. Some, at the referee's option, may have moderate empathic skills at an average level 3.
Armament: None.

Security Guards

One of the most plentiful occupations in the **Conspiracy Rules** world is that of security guard. For one thing, valuables require much more protection than before. For another, the turnover rate among security guards is high, and not because of retirement—it's a pretty dangerous job.

Like beat cops, security guards are almost always found in pairs, and they tend to be heavily armed and armored. While cops are concerned with maintaining some level of civic peace, however, security guards are concerned only for protecting two things—their posts and their lives. Often, their motto is "If in doubt, shoot it. Let the cops ask the questions".

Level: Veteran.
Skills: As per Veteran NPCs.
Armament: Kevlar jacket, pistol, and either an assault rifle, shotgun, or submachinegun.



Better Days
By Lee Williams

Farrell continued stumbling ahead, moving away from the cacophony and confusion he had left behind. He didn't know how he had managed to break through the magnetically sealed gate, though he was pretty sure he hadn't laid a finger on it. All he felt now was a crippling pain right in the middle of his head and an overwhelming desire to flee the scene.

Moving away from the floodlit security gate Farrell was plunged into the welcoming darkness. The pain in his head ebbed away slightly, and he realized that he held a Colt Krait in one hand. Tucking it into his belt, he took a deep breath and tried to compose himself a little.

"Gotta try and remember what I saw," he told himself.

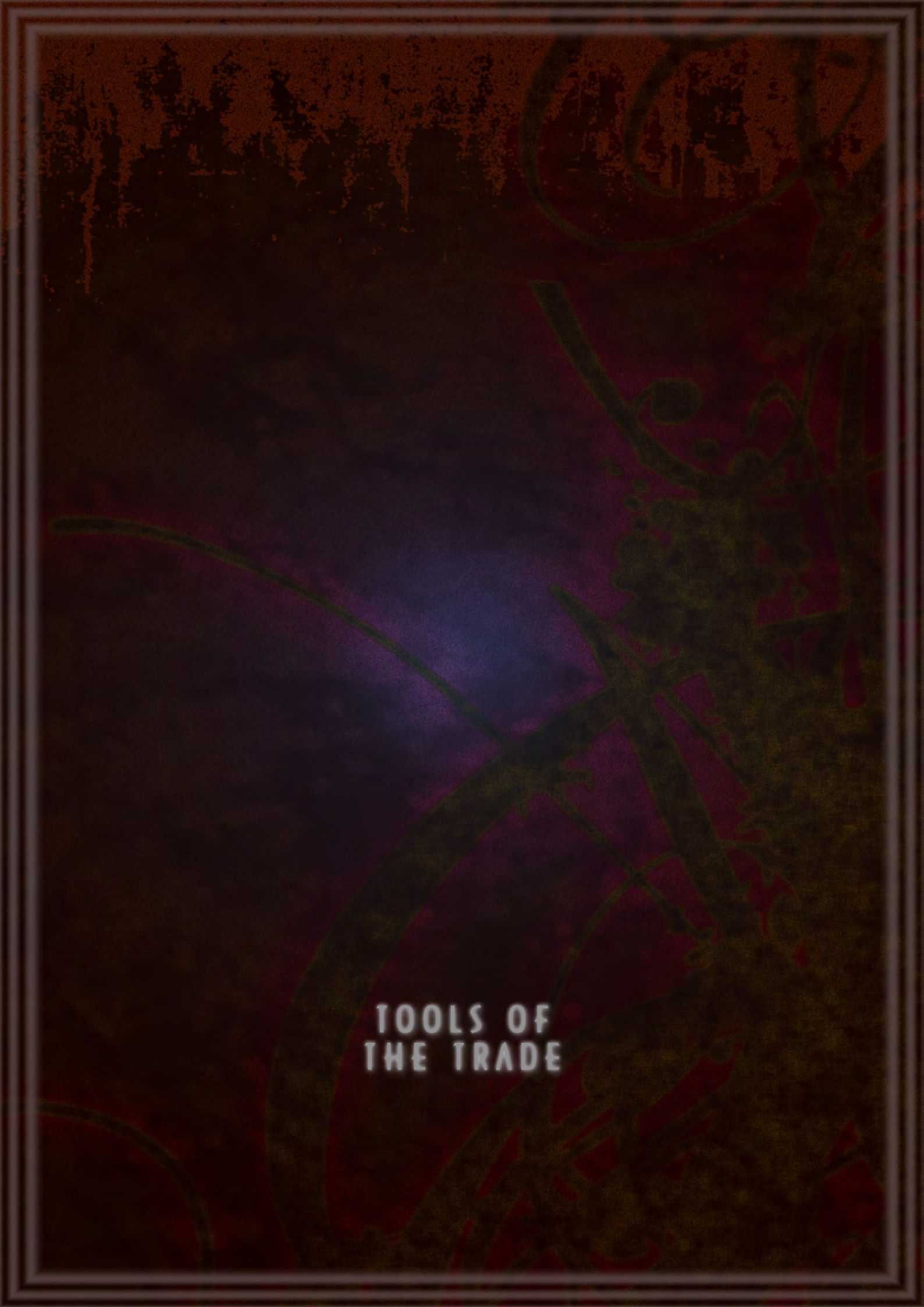
A scraping noise from across the street startled him and he instinctively dropped to the ground. Before him, a manhole cover was lifting, and a hooded head peered out of the hole and regarded him intently. He felt a weird sensation in his own head, and realized that the other person was studying his thoughts and emotions in some way.

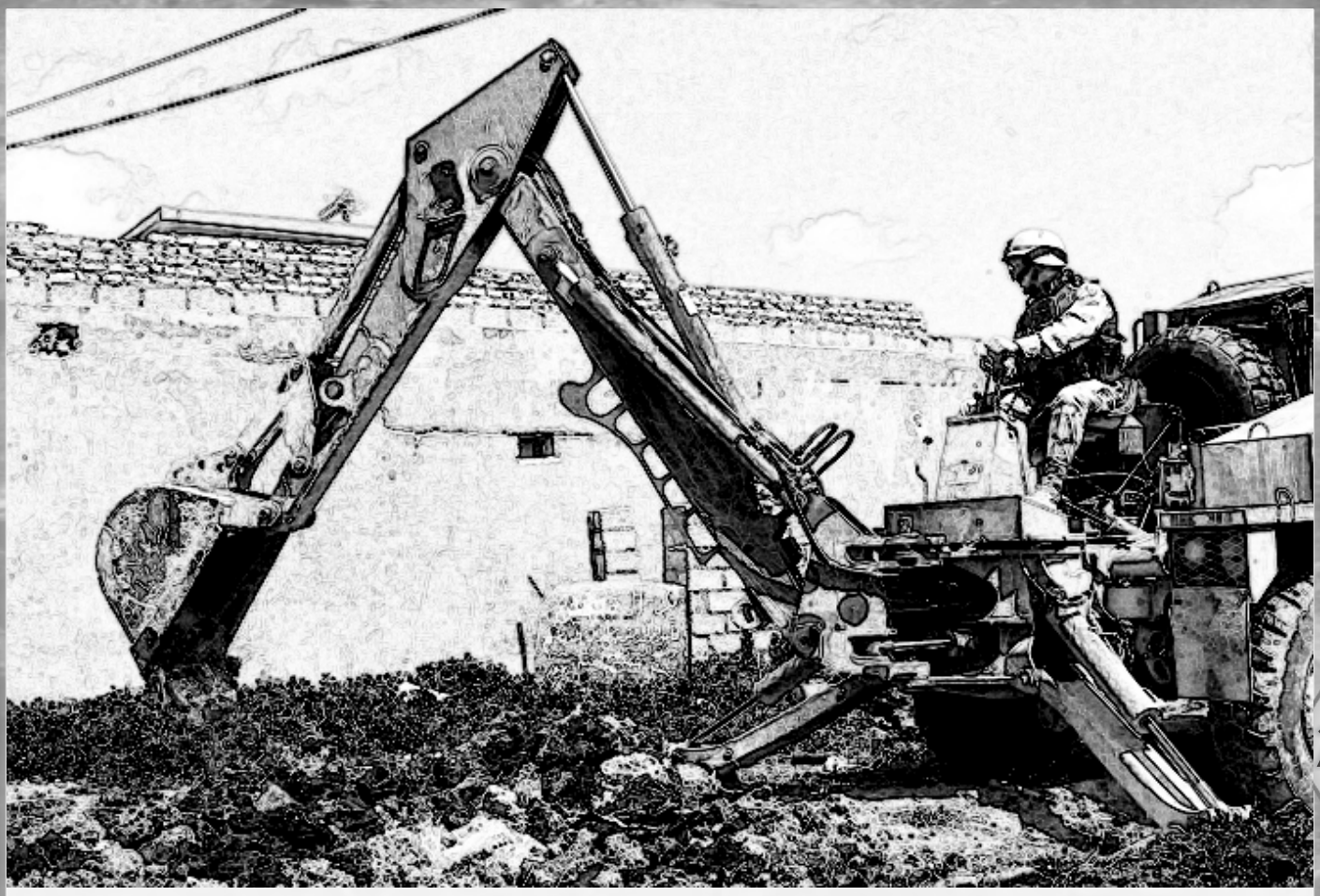
After a few seconds, the sensation stopped, and with it the incredible headache Farrell had experienced. Gasping with relief, he shakily got to his feet. The figure in the manhole waved an urgent come-here gesture, and as Farrell trotted across the street the hum of helicopter engines became audible. He made it down the ladder, and the other dropped the lid into place just as a searchlight stabbed into the dark street from above, turning the night outside into daylight.

"Say, thanks for getting me out of the open" Farrell whispered. His benefactor grunted a reply, and motioned him to go on ahead down the tunnel. As Farrell peered into the gloom he felt suddenly uneasy. Just being in here gave him the creeps. He looked around to see his new companion lunging at him with a large knife. Farrell leapt back, causing the knife to swish a mere fraction of an inch past his stomach. Pulling the Colt, Farrell backed down the tunnel as the figure tensed to lunge at him again.

"I've had better days," Farrell muttered to himself as he clicked the safety to the 'Fire' position…




TOOLS OF
THE TRADE



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Gear consists of normal day-to-day equipment available to players. Acquiring this gear is based on a character's Social Standing or type and depth of Contacts. Specialized equipment that characters may encounter or require is listed to provide the basic equipment available in a modern setting.

Classes of Technology

In the world of ***Conspiracy Rules***, the lines between the haves and the have-nots are usually very clearly drawn. Nowhere is this more apparent than with technology, and the style and availability of equipment varies widely. The telephone is a good example of differences in technological class, with normal payphones available to Proles, blocky brick-like cell phones with limited coverage areas for Mikes, and state-of-the-art satellite smart-phones for Nomes and high-ranking military personnel. This shows that a single type of item varies widely according to its class.

The classes of technology are explained here:

LoTek: Also called RetroTek, this is the cheapest type of technology and the one that the player-characters would see every single day. Ubiquitous and plentiful in Prole and Mike areas, RetroTek refers to things such as large bulky desktop telephones, cathode ray tube TV sets, and boxy radios receiving on the AM waveband, whereas LoTek refers to the cheap limited lifespan plastic items. Cheap automobiles are small and squared-off following the tenets of easy and efficient manufacture, with manual transmissions and no luxuries such as air conditioning. The majority of items in this class may as well have come straight from the years between 1965 and 1995, and indeed several smaller European and Pacific Rim corporations have gone back to replicating the designs of those decades as a cost-saving exercise after the Greater Depression.

ConTek: Consumer Technology (ConTek) is the normal level of technology available to the majority of Mike classed citizens. Items in this class are generally roughly equivalent to the technology of the turn of the 21st century. Almost without exception these items are cheaply-made imports, and while they are perfectly adequate for their task, the designs are visually dull and unappealing and have limited functions, missing what we in the real world take for granted. You want HDTV, instant messaging, and cellular communications in one phone? Sorry, no can do!

Another thing to bear in mind is that what is common ConTek in one corporate city enclave may be as rare as hen's teeth in another, depending on factors such as trade agreements and the levels of isolationism each corporation dictates. We didn't make it, you can't get it here.

HiTek: Consumer products with this level of technology are

usually only available to the Nome social class. This is the real shiny futuristic stuff, and includes such things as three-dimensional holographic videos, fully autonomous robotic servants, or autonomous driving automobiles. Based on advances in modern real-world technology, HiTek is where the future intersects with the reality of the ***Conspiracy Rules*** world. A prime example is in the case of corporate security guards who get to use HiTek daily but mainly live a Mike lifestyle. HiTek can be summed up in these words: very expensive, quite rare but always very shiny. For the military, HiTek means technology representing a differentiating capability during war, such as, heat signature reducing battle armor, chemical pulse laser rifles and cannons, and tactical network implants. See MilTek for differences with HiTek definitions. Basically military grade HiTek is not available to the population, since its distribution is guarded.

MilTek: This HiTek/LoTek differentiation also occurs in military technology, referred to here as MilTek. For example: US Special Forces are issued with the very latest word in hardware. Rumors abound about man-portable plasma guns that can burn through a meter of concrete with one shot. Meanwhile the regular military have top of the line conventional weapons—the bulk of the MilTek definition. But way down the pecking order are the National Guard conscripts responsible for maintaining martial law across large areas of the USA. They receive a lower technology MilTek, such as their standard issue long arms, the M-4 and M-16A2/A3. Many of these "MilTek" weapons are left over from the First Gulf War and are starting to show their age a little.

BioTek: Biological breakthroughs involving living tissues and including all manner of genetics are rolled into BioTek. BioTek includes biological warfare, genetic manipulation, and cellular technology, such as tissue rejection suppressants.

Price, Weight, and Availability

Each item of gear has an associated price. This is the normal market price if all the right contacts are in place. The referee can set a higher or lower price according to the situation and the campaign environment. Weight is provided for use in determining the load—the total weight a character is hauling that sets the encumbrance level. Availability is given in parentheses showing how a character can acquire the item through contacts or over the counter—or if at all.

Weight: Each item has a listed weight in kilograms to allow the computation of the load a character is carrying. For weapons, both a loaded and unloaded weight is given. Players should note that weapons with add-on equipment may have a different weight than that listed for the item.

Price: Each item also has a price associated with it. The prices are in US dollars and should be adjusted for the campaign and the locale.

Availability: Each item is assigned an availability code to limit how it can come into a character's possession. The code to the left of the slash means availability status without contacts; the code to the right of the slash means availability with contacts.

V (Very Common): The item is available everywhere and if the price is right, easily attained.

C (Common): The item is available if you know who to ask. For the price, it's yours.

S (Scarce): The item has limited or restricted availability. It will be hard to find one the shelf, and serious inquiry is necessary.

R (Rare): The item has limited or restricted availability and is highly sought after. Good negotiation skills are typically needed to acquire rare items as the owners are not always anxious to part with the item.

– (Not available): The item is unique, available from only one source, or not generally available in markets known to the characters. Availability of such items is always at the referee's discretion.



FIREARMS

Term		Description
Ammo	This lists the type of ammunition used.	
ROF	It is possible to fire more than a single bullet from most weapons in a five second action phase based on the weapon's rate-of-fire (ROF). All weapons in the game have either a reload (Rld) rating or an ROF rating. Some weapons are single-use—such as the AT-4 tactical missile—and the firing mechanism (launcher) cannot be reloaded after being used. This type of weapon does not have reload stat. Weapons with a reload rating hold only one round in the weapon at a time, and after firing that round must reload before firing again. The reload rating is the number of reload actions necessary to prepare the weapon to fire again. Weapons with an ROF listing have either a letter code or a number. The various letter codes are listed below:	
	SS (Single Shot)	This weapon can only fire one round and then must be reloaded.
	BA (Bolt Action), LA (Lever Action)	These weapons can fire one round per phase. Each time a round is fired from one of these weapons, the bolt or lever must be worked to eject the spent casing and chamber a new round. But this can be done in the same phase in which the weapon is fired.
	PA (Pump Action), DAR (Double Action Revolver)	These weapons may fire up to three rounds per phase. Pump action refers to shotguns, and involves working a lever between shots to eject the spent cartridge and chamber a fresh one. A double-action revolver cocks its hammer with the first part of the trigger pull, and then fires with the second. This makes the trigger pull somewhat harder than in a semiautomatic pistol.
	SA (Semiautomatic)	Semiautomatic weapons may fire up to five shots per combat phase. Each squeeze of the trigger fires one round, and the force of its firing automatically recocks the weapon.
	3, 5 ,10 (Automatic Fire)	Weapons with a number instead of a letter code are capable of fully automatic fire as well as semiautomatic fire. The number shown is the number of bullets in a typical burst from the weapon. Each automatic weapon can fire up to either five individual shots or five bursts per fire phase. As a practical matter, however, no character may fire at more than three different targets in the same fire phase.
	Rld (Reload)	If a weapon has a reload rating listed, it indicates the number of actions necessary to reload the weapon between shots.
Dam (Damage)	For ranged combat weapons, Dam indicates the number of D6 to be rolled for each round that hits the target. A listing of "-I" means roll 1D6-1. Listings of "C:5," "B:20," etc., indicate explosive rounds.	
Pen (Penetration)	This indicates how many D6 the damage rating is decreased by per point of armor on the target location. Nil means the damage rating is decreased to 0. If there are multiple listings, the first applies to short and medium range, the second to long, and the third (if any) to extreme. Each die of damage rating reduced becomes 1 point of blunt trauma damage to the target.	
Blk (Bulk)	This is an indication of how clumsy the weapon is to move, and serves as a modifier to Agility when determining which of two characters with the same Initiative will act first.	
Mag (Magazine)	All small arms have a Mag listing (short for magazine) which consists of a number and, in some cases, a letter code. This shows the type of feed device used for ammunition in the weapon and the number of rounds in it. The most common form of feed device in small arms is a box magazine that attaches through the stock or pistol grip. Weapons with no letter code after their Mag values are fed by box magazines, each of which contains the number of rounds shown. One reload action is sufficient to detach an empty box magazine and insert a full one. Other forms of feed devices are noted by letter code as explained below:	
	R (Revolver)	A revolver's feed device is a non-detachable revolving cylinder that usually holds six bullets. If loaded individually, three bullets can be put into the cylinder per reload action. If a speed-loader is available (a circular clip holding six cartridges which enables all six to be dropped into the open cylinder at once), one reload action is sufficient to reload the weapon.
	i (Individual)	Weapons with non-detachable magazines, particularly under barrel tubular magazines, often have to be reloaded one shell at a time. Up to three bullets may be loaded into an individual-class feed device per reload action.
	B (Belt)	The weapon, either a machinegun or automatic rifle, is fed by a belt usually containing from 50 to 100 bullets. Two reload actions are necessary to replace a belt. However, if the machinegun has a two-person crew—gunner and loader—this requirement can be met by both expending one reloading action in the same phase. Two or three belts may be linked together if the weapon is not moved, i.e., if vehicle-mounted or firing from a dug-in position. Linking belts counts as an action, but can be done by the weapon's loader while the weapon is firing.
	C (Cassette)	A cassette is a large self-contained ammunition feed system that takes one full turn to replace.
	P (Power Pack)	A battery pack assembly, belt pack or backpack attached to the weapon used to provide it with power. These power packs must be recharged, and are not typically reloaded. Interchangeable power packs can be replaced in one combat phase.
	S (Stripper Clip)	The most common form of feed device for period bolt-action battle rifles, such as the Mauser KAR-98K, the Mosin-Nagant M1891/30, etc., and other breech loaded rifles with a non-detachable internal or box magazine. Each stripper clip contains the number of rounds shown in the magazine stat. One reloading action is sufficient to reload from a single stripper clip. To reload the stripper clip itself, it takes one action to reload three rounds. Characters can reload some box magazines using pre-loaded stripper clips.
	T (Tank)	A tank is a fuel or propellant assembly attached to the weapon and is used to provide it with fuel. Tanks require a refilling facility (extra equipment, main supply tanks, etc.) and are not refillable during combat using the reload action. Refilling such tanks can be done during combat using a special action where such facilities exist, but the time it takes to actually refill the tank may be prohibitive.
Recoil	When a character fires a weapon, the recoil of the weapon can affect the shooter's accuracy.	
SS	Single shot recoil is used to calculate total recoil effects when firing the weapon in non-automatic mode.	
Brst	The burst (Brst) recoil is used to calculate total recoil effects when firing the weapon in any of the automatic fire modes.	
Rng (Range)	This number is the weapon's short range in meters. Medium range is twice short range; long range is twice medium; and extreme range is twice long.	
IFR (indirect Fire Range)	Only weapons with an indirect fire range listed may use indirect fire. These are rifle grenades, grenade launchers, and mortars. The range listed is the weapon's maximum range in meters.	
Rnd (Round)	This indicates the type of projectile fired by mortars, grenades, and the like.	

Single-Shot Pistols

Single-shot pistols have no feed mechanism and thus require reloading after every shot. They are fired using the Small Arms [Pistol] skill.

Zip Gun

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
.380 ACP	SS / 1	-1	Nil	0	1i	4	—	6



This is a primitive single-shot firearm jury-rigged from pipe, wood and other non-standard materials. It is designed to fire small-caliber pistol ammunition, but the end result is much the same regardless of the ammunition used.

Weight: 0.5 kg.
Price: $75. (V/V)

Black Powder Pistol

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF /Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
BP	SS / 2	1	Nil	2	1i	3	—	8



This may be either a genuine museum piece or a modern reproduction. It uses loose powder and a separate ball rather than standard ammunition.

Weight: 0.5 kg.
Price: $175 (S/S)

Revolvers

Revolvers carry their rounds (usually six of them) in a revolving cylinder. Recocking the pistol after firing advances the cylinder and brings a fresh cartridge in line with the firing pin. They are fired using the Small Arms Pistol skill.

Colt Detectives Special

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
.38 Spec	DAR	1	Nil	1	6R	4	—	4



Originally developed during the 1930s, this is the latest version of the snub-nosed pocket revolver as seen in countless movies and TV shows. Recoil is quite high owing to the short barrel length.

Weight: 0.7 kg.
Price: $375 (R/C)

Smith and Wesson Model 627

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
.357 Mag	DAR	2	1-Nil	1	8R	3	—	14



A 1990s reworking of Smith and Wesson's original Model 27, which was the first weapon ever to use the .357 Magnum round. Modern manufacturing techniques and materials are used, and the cylinder has been redesigned for an 8-round capacity.

Weight: 1.3 kg.
Price: $800 (R/S)

Smith and Wesson Model 29

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
.44 Mag	DAR	3	2-Nil	2	6R	4	—	16



A weapon that owes much of its reputation to Clint Eastwood's portrayal of Detective Inspector 'Dirty' Harry Callahan. The Model 29 is built on S&W's large frame and looks like it could bring down a stampeding buffalo.

Weight: 1.5 kg.
Price: $1,000 (R/S)

Taurus Raging Bull

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.454 Cas	DAR	4	2-2-Nil	2	5R	5	—	18



A true monster among mass-produced handguns, the Brazilian-made Raging Bull uses the extra-beefy .454 Casull round. This provides the weapon with even more stopping power than the .44 Magnum round, though the cylinder only holds 5 rounds due to the size of this ammunition.

Weight: 1.7 kg.
Price: $1,200 (R/S)

Automatic Pistols

Automatic (or to be more precise, semi-automatic) pistols are fed from a magazine held in the pistol grip. Each time the pistol fires, the recoil energy is used to eject the spent cartridge, recock the pistol, and move a new cartridge into the chamber. They are fired using the Small Arms (Pistol) skill.

Ruger LCR

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.380 ACP	SA	–1	Nil	0	6	2	—	10



The LCR is a small caliber concealed carry automatic pistol. It easily slips into a pocket and is often fixed with an add-on laser sight.

Weight: 1 kg.
Price: $350 (C/V)

Beretta M92S (M9)

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
9mm P	SA	1	Nil	1	15	3	—	12



The Beretta M9 replaced the venerable Colt M1911A1 as the standard US military sidearm during the 1980s. The civilian version is essentially identical and is designated the M92S.

Weight: 1 kg.
Price: $350 (C/V)

Colt Krait

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
10mm ACP	SA	2	1-Nil	1	14	3	—	15



The Colt Krait is a large-capacity pistol chambered for a variety of calibers, of which the most popular is the 10mm ACP. A wide variety of accessories are available.

Weight: 1.4 kg.
Price: $500 (S/C)

Colt M1911A1

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.45 ACP	SA	2	Nil	1	7	3	—	12



The M1911A1 served as the standard issue US sidearm for over 60 years, including both World Wars, and literally millions were built. They may still be encountered among serving National Guard units in some areas. A large number of civilian versions are also available, but all are based on the original.

Weight: 1.4 kg.
Price: $275 (C/V)

Desert Eagle

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.357 Mag	SA	2	1-Nil	1	9	3	—	18
.44 Mag	SA	3	2-Nil	1	8	4		14



An automatic chambered to fire the rimmed .357 Magnum or .44 Magnum cartridges, the Desert Eagle is popular with some for its stopping power and its improved capacity compared to revolvers.

Weight: 1.3 kg.
Price: $750 (R/S)

FiveseveN

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
5.7mm	SA	2	1-Nil	1	20	3	—	16
5.7mm HV	SA	2	1-1-Nil	1	20	3	—	20



A semi-auto pistol from the famed Belgian makers Fabrique Nationale, first produced in the late 1990s using the latest materials. It is lighter than many 9mm pistols, yet has a 20 round capacity. The FiveseveN can fire both standard 5.7mm FN ammunition and the High Velocity (HV) round, which gives good penetration against body armor. The ammunition was originally developed for the FN P-90 PDW.

Weight: 0.9 kg.
Price: $600 (-/S)

Glock 17/Glock 20

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
9mm P	SA	1	Nil	1	17	3	—	12
10mm ACP	SA	2	1-Nil	1	15	3	—	12



The world-famous black polymer-framed Glock series of pistols comes in various sizes and shapes, although most of them differ from each other only in caliber. The original Model 17 is chambered for 9mm P and the Model 20 is the 10mm ACP version. Several other calibers are available as well as compact and sub-compact versions, but we have included just these two for space reasons.

Weight: 0.9 kg.
Price: $600 (-/S)

Makarov PMM-12

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
9mm MHI	SA	2	1-Nil	1	12	3	—	14



The PMM-12 is a modernized version of the old Eastern Bloc standard sidearm, reconfigured for the more powerful High Impulse round used in the Bizon submachine gun. The weapon has a higher capacity magazine than the original.

Weight: 0.75 kg.
Price: $300 (R/S)

Wildey Wolf

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
475 WM	SA	4	2-Nil	2	7	4	—	25



The Wildey Wolf is a custom-made large caliber pistol. The .475 Wildey Magnum cartridge is one of the larger loads the weapon can be built for.

Weight: 1.5 kg.
Price: $1,900 (-/-)

Submachineguns

Submachine guns are lightweight automatic weapons. Almost all such weapons fire pistol ammunition to reduce recoil, although a few submachine guns are simply cut-down assault rifles. They are fired using the Small Arms (Rifle) skill.

AKR

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.45 B	5	3	1-Nil	2/3	30	3	8	30



The standard Russian submachine gun during the 1980s and 1990s, the AKR is merely a cut-down version of the AK-74 assault rifle. Although a little heavy for an SMG it has good accuracy and stopping power.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $500 (-/C)

Bizon-2

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
9mm MHI	5	2	1-Nil	2/3	64	1	3	30



A more recent Russian submachine gun, the Bizon (Russian for buffalo) was designed for use by special forces and police anti-terrorist squads. It uses the Makarov High Impulse ammunition, and the large-capacity cylindrical magazine sits under the barrel.

Weight: 2.2 kg.
Price: $600 (-/R)

Heckler and Koch MP-5/10

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
10mm ACP	5	2	1-Nil	4	30	2	6	30



A product-improved version of the MP-5 series that is chambered for the 10mm ACP round.

Weight: 3 kg.
Price: $750 (-/)

SITES Spectre M-4

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
9mm P	10	2	Nil	2/3	50	2	6	30



This Italian submachine gun is designed for ease of use, and features large capacity, four-column magazines. This makes the 50 round magazines the same length as a 30-round magazine for any other weapon of this type. The Spectre is fitted with a folding stock and a fore grip to aid in controlling automatic fire.

Weight: 3.8 kg.
Price: $750 (-/S)

Uzi

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
9mm P	5	2	Nil	3	32	2	5	30



The Israeli-designed Uzi is one of the most common SMGs. It is used by military and police agencies worldwide, including the US Secret Service and US Federal Marshals.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $500 (-/V)

Sporting Rifles

These include a variety of civilian rifles used for hunting or target practice. They are fired using Small Arms (Rifle).

Marlin .30-06

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
.30-06	BA	4	2-3-Nil	5	5i	3	—	75



A popular civilian hunting rifle chambered for the .30-06 round, which is commonly referred to as the "ought-six".

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $450 (C/C)

Remington M-700

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62mm N	BA	4	2-3-Nil	5	5i	4	—	75



Another hunting weapon, the M-700 uses the 7.62mm NATO standard round (also known as .308 Winchester). A slightly modified version designated M-24 was used by the US military as a sniper rifle.

Weight: 3.2 kg.
Price: $500 (R/C)

Ruger .22 Semi-Auto

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
.22 LR	SA	-1	Nil	4	10	2	—	50



A widely available light hunting weapon with a reasonable magazine capacity.

Weight: 2 kg.
Price: $300 (C/C)

SKS Carbine

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62mm S	SA	4	2-Nil	5	10	3	—	55



The SKS (also known as the Simonov) is a Soviet-era semiautomatic rifle still in use in some Third World nations. It has also become somewhat popular in the US with survivalist communities and other backwoods dwellers. It is possible to modify the magazine well so that the 30-round clips from the AK-47 or the AKM can be used.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $400 (S/C)

Winchester Model 1894

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
.30-30	LA	3	2-Nil	5	7i	4	—	55
.44 Mag	LA	3	2-Nil	5	12i	3	—	45



This rifle is a modernized version of the 'Wild West' Winchester 1873. Several different caliber versions are still used for hunting in the USA, and two are given here for comparison.

Weight: 3.1 kg.
Price: $300 (C/C)

Sniper Rifles

Sniper rifles are standard semiautomatic or bolt-action target rifles fitted with telescopic sights. They are fired using Small Arms (Rifle).

M-21

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62mm N	SA	4	2-3-Nil	6	20	4	—	55
Bipod	SA	4	2-3-Nil	6	20	2	—	65



The former standard US Army sniper rifle, the M-21 is essentially a well-made M-14 fitted with a telescopic sight and a bipod.

Weight: 5 kg.
Price: $800 (S/S)

SVD (Dragunov)

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62mm S	SA	4	2-2-Nil	6	10	4	—	75



For many years the Soviet bloc's standard sniper rifle, the SVD is a clip-fed semiautomatic weapon with a telescopic sight.

Weight: 4.6 kg.
Price: $600 (R/S)

Accuracy International PM

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62 N	BA	4	2-3-nil	6	10	3	—	75
Bipod	BA	4	2-3-nil	6	10	2	—	90



The PM is the civilian version of the British Army's standard sniper rifle, which replaced the Enfield-based L42A1. In service the weapon is designated the L96A1. It has a separate chassis, meaning that accuracy is not affected by extremes of weather or temperature, and has proven to be a most reliable weapon.

Weight: 6.5 kg.
Price: $900 (-/R)

Assault Rifles

Assault rifles are capable of firing either single shots or bursts of automatic fire. To make controlled firing easier, they generally fire less powerful cartridges than those fired by traditional rifles. This may be achieved either by firing a standard rifle bullet but with a weaker powder charge (as with the 7.62mm Short fired by the AKM) or a smaller rifle bullet fired with a full powder charge (as with the 5.56mm NATO fired by the M16). They are fired using Small Arms (Rifle).

AKM

						Recoil		
Ammo	**ROF**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Bulk**	**Mag**	**SS**	**Brst**	**Rng**
7.62mm S	5	3	2-Nil	5	30	3	8	50



The modern version of the ubiquitous AK-47, it is perhaps the most widely used military weapon in the world. It remains popular despite its (by modern standards) underpowered and sometimes unstable cartridge. It was replaced in service by the AK-74.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $500 (-/V)

AK-74

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.45mm B	5	3	1-Nil	5	30	3	7	50



The AK-74 is the standard rifle of what were formerly known as the Eastern Bloc armies. It uses smaller but more efficient ammunition than its predecessors in the AK series. Reliability of the AK-74 is equally as good as its forebears.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $500 (-/C)

FN P-90 PDW

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.7mm FN	10	2	1-Nil	3	50	2	7	30
5.7mm HV	10	2	1-1-Nil	3	50	2	7	40



An advanced weapon, the P90 Personal Defense Weapon is unusual to look at. It is a bullpup design encased in a plastic cover, with an optical sight fitted. The P90 is fed from a top-mounted 50 round magazine, and uses the 5.7mm FN ammunition that was designed originally for this weapon. The 5.7mm HV round has good penetration capability for its size. Strictly speaking the P90 is not an assault rifle, but it is included here for comparison to more traditional weapons.

Weight: 2.8 kg
Price: $850 (-/R)

Heckler and Koch G-36

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.56mm N	5	3	1-Nil	4/5	30	2	6	50



The German army (Bundeswehr) adopted the G-36 as their rifle in 1998 and it has served them well in various actions around the world. It is also used by the specialist firearms units of the British and several other police forces. It is equipped with a folding stock and a simple optical sight as standard, and several magazines may be clipped together side-to-side for convenience.

Weight: 3.6 kg.
Price: $950 (-/S)

M-4 Carbine

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.56mm N	3	3	1-Nil	3/4	30	2	4	30



Used by the US military since the mid-1990s, the M-4 was designed to replace a variety of carbines and SMGs in service, as well as to repeat the accuracy and reliability of the M16A2. An M-203 grenade launcher can be mounted on the weapon as well as a variety of sighting devices.

Weight: 2.6 kg.
Price: $1,100 (-/R)

M-16A2

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
5.56mm N	3	3	1-Nil	5	30	3	5	55



After the AK series of weapons, the M-16 has to be the most widely used assault rifle on the face of the globe. The A2 version has been used by the USA for many years, and is still issued to National Guard and other units.

Weight: 3.8 kg
Price: $700 (-/C)

Shotguns

Shotguns evolved as civilian hunting weapons. Their standard ammunition in a combat setting is 00 Buckshot, which at longer ranges produces a fair approximation of the area fire effects of a burst of submachine gun fire. At closer ranges it produces devastating wounds. Shotguns are fired using the Small Arms [Rifle] skill.

Armalite Stormcloud

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
12 gauge slug	5	4	3-4-Nil	4	12	3	8	45
Buckshot	5	9	Nil	4	12	3	8	Close
Buckshot	5	*	Nil	4	12	3	8	Medium



The Stormcloud is a magazine-fed shotgun capable of automatic fire, and as such is more closely related to assault rifles rather than other shotguns. See "Shotguns" on page 115.

* 1D10–3 for number of hit factors per burst round. Each hit factor does 1D6 damage.

Weight: 4 kg.
Price: $1200 (-/S)

Benelli M4 Super 90 (M1014)

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
12 gauge slug	SA	4	3-4-Nil	3/4	8i	4	—	40
Buckshot	SA	9	Nil	3/4	8i	4	—	Close
Buckshot	SA	*	Nil	3/4	8i	4	—	Medium



This is a semi-automatic shotgun that has been adopted by the US armed forces as a replacement for the Mossberg M-590 pump-action. It has a retractable stock and can be fitted with various types of sights. In the USA it is produced under license by Benelli and is known as the Super 90. See "Shotguns" on page 115.

* 1D10–3 for number of hit factors. Each hit factor does 1D6 damage.

Weight: 3.7 kg.
Price: $650 (-/S)

Mossberg M-590

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
12 gauge slug	SA	4	3-4-Nil	4	8i	4	—	40
Buckshot	SA	9	Nil	4	8i	4	—	Close
Buckshot	SA	*	Nil	4	8i	4	—	Medium



A development of the company's popular M-500 series of weapons, the Mossberg 590 is primarily aimed at the law enforcement market. It uses the company's well-proven and reliable pump-action system. See "Shotguns" on page 115.

* 1D10–3 for number of hit factors. Each hit factor does 1D6 damage.

Weight: 3.2 kg.
Price: $400 (-/C)

Sawn-off Shotgun

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
12 gauge slug	SA	4	3-4-Nil	2	2i	6	—	10
Buckshot	SA	9	Nil	2	2i	6	—	Close
Buckshot	SA	1D10[1]	Nil	2	2i	6	—	Medium



Sawn-off shotguns are highly illegal under most jurisdictions, but can be easily made just by buying a normal double-barrel gun and hacksawing the stock and barrel down. Their advantage is their concealability and devastating power at close quarters, but their disadvantages are very short range and their extremely high recoil.

The Price and Availability given here are for a ready-shortened weapon purchased in the black market. Characters can create their own with an Average [Small Arms] task success enabled by Mechanics or Machinist at the referee's discretion. See "Shotguns" on page 115.

* 1D10–3 for number of hit factors. Each hit factor does 1D6 damage.

Weight: 2 kg.
Price: $400 (-/S)

Machineguns

Machineguns are belt-fed automatic weapons firing rifle cartridges. They are generally fired from bipods, tripods, or vehicle mounts. Very strong (or very foolish) characters can fire them from the hip without benefit of a mount. They are fired using Small Arms (Rifle).

M-249 SAW

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
5.56 NATO	10	2	1-Nil	5	30/200B	1	3	60
(Bipod)	10	2	1-Nil	5	30/200B	1	2	75



The M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon is the standard light machinegun of the US and several other armies. It can accept either the standard M-16 series magazine or a 200-round belt. It is equipped with a bipod.

Weight: 7 kg.
Price: $750 (-/C)

M-60

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
7.62 NATO	5	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	4	65
(Bipod)	5	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	2	90
(Tripod)	5	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	1	125



The standard US general-purpose machinegun since the 1960s, the M-60 is a development of the German MG-42 of WW2. It is equipped with a bipod and can also be mounted on a NATO Light Tripod. It is fed by 100-round belts.

Weight: 10 kg.
Price: $1,500 (-/V)

MAG-58

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
7.62 NATO	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	7	65
(Bipod)	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	4	90
(Tripod)	10	4	2-3-Nil	6	100B	1	2	125



The MAG-58 is the general-purpose machinegun of several European armies, including Britain where it is designated the L7A2 GPMG. It is also used as a coaxial weapon in many US military vehicles. It has a bipod and can be fired from a NATO Medium Tripod. It accepts 100-round belts.

Weight: 12 kg.
Price: $1,500 (-/S)

RPK

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
7.62mm S	10	3	2-Nil	5	30/75	1	6	60
(Bipod)	10	3	2-Nil	5	30/75	1	3	75



This is an automatic rifle that uses the same ammunition as the AKM. In addition to standard AKM magazines, it also uses a very long 75-round magazine. After its replacement by the RPK-74 this older version found its way onto the black markets in several metroplexes.

Weight: 5 kg.
Price: $700 (S/C)

Heavy Machineguns

These function in exactly the same way as other machineguns except that they fire much more powerful ammunition. They are fired using Heavy Weapons skill.

Browning M2HB

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.50 BMG	5	8	2-2-3	8	105B	2	7	150
.50 SLAP	2	8	1-1-2	8	105B	2	7	150



The M2 Heavy Barrel is the standard heavy machinegun of almost every Western army. It accepts 105-round ammunition belts and can only be fired from a NATO Heavy Tripod or a vehicle mount. Special SLAP ammunition (Saboted Light Armor Piercing) is also available.

Weight: 51 kg.
Price: $3,500 (-/C)

Grenade Launchers

Grenade launchers use a low or high-low pressure system to propel grenades to ranges in excess of 100 meters. Most break open like a shotgun, but the American M203 has a unique slide-open system. They are fired using Small Arms or Heavy Weapons skill, whichever is greater.

M-203 Grenade Launcher

Mag	ROF	Rng	IFR	Rnd	Dam	Pen
1i	SS	100	400	HE	C:3, B:12	Nil
				HEDP	C:3, B:12	4C
				CHEM	C:1, B:4	Nil
				ILLUM	B:100	Nil
				STUN	B4[1]	Nil



The M203 is a single-shot launcher that can be attached to the underside of the M-16 and M-4 assault rifles. It fires 40mm low-velocity rounds.
[1] Concussion (Stun) Grenades: Targets in the blast radius are knocked down and lose any remaining actions for the turn. Each target must also pass an Average [CON] test each turn to recover. Stun grenades do not cause shrapnel damage.

Weight: 1.4 kg.
Price: $550 (-/C)

XM-25 Weapon System

Mag	ROF	Rng	IFR	Rnd	Dam	Pen
8	SA	150	800	HE	C:2, B:10	Nil
				AP	C:1, B:2	12C
				CHEM	C:1, B:4	Nil



Derived from the experimental OICW project which sought to combine an assault rifle with a grenade launcher, the XM-25 fires ammunition which can have its fusing altered by the firer. This allows the rounds to airburst above a target that may be hidden from line-of-sight for example. The 25mm ammunition is specially made for this weapon. The sight unit has magnification, low-light and laser-ranging capabilities.

Weight: 7 kg.
Price: $10,000 (R/S)

Mk-19 Automatic Grenade Launcher

Mag	ROF	Rng	IFR	Rnd	Dam	Pen
50B or 1i	(1)	150	800	HE	C:3, B:12	Nil
				HEDP	C:3, B:12	4C
				CHEM	C:1, B:4	Nil
				ILLUM	B:100	Nil



The standard infantry-support grenade launcher in the United States Army, the Mk-19 is a tripod mounted (NHT), belt-fed Automatic weapon. It may also fire unbelted individual grenades (SS). It may be fired only from a tripod or vehicle mount.

(1) The Mk-19 is capable of firing in automatic mode. When used in Burst Mode, three rounds are fired per phase. When used in Spray Mode, the limit is still three rounds, but the firing can be a continuous action if so declared. The rounds are checked for deviation from the same aim point and the to-hit check is rolled once. In Non-Automatic Mode, the three round maximum still applies, but a separate aim point is used to determine deviation, and each shot is roll to-hit separately.

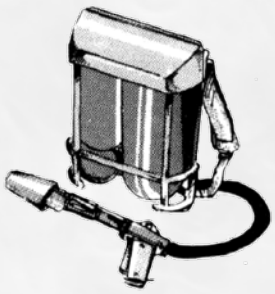
Weight: 40 kg.
Price: $5,000 (R/S)

Flamethrowers

Flamethrowers squirt a stream of gasoline at their targets, using compressed gas as a propellant. The stream is cold (unignited) or hot (ignited) at the firer's option (ignition is provided by a "glow plug" attachment at the nozzle).

M9A1 Flamethrower

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Napalm	SA	(1)	Nil	8	5	4	—	3



The flamethrower was originally designed for clearing underground bunkers and thick undergrowth that could offer cover to enemy forces. Each shot from this weapon covers a four-meter-square area with burning gasoline, which will burn for one minute unless extinguished. Flammable items in the area will be ignited and may burn for longer. The normal fuel is napalm, but ordinary gasoline can be used at half the listed ranges. The fuel canisters have an Armor Value of 1 (AV1), and a hit is treated as a fuel tank hit on a vehicle (this should cause some unease amongst users).

(1) 1D6 per hit location per phase.

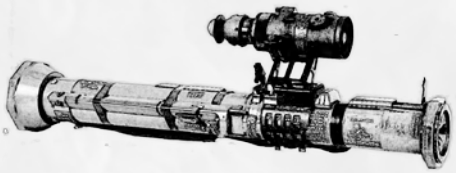
Weight: 23 kg.
Price: $1,200 (-/S)

Tactical Rocket Launchers

The rocket launcher is one of the most important developments of the modern battlefield, giving a readily portable and quite lethal antitank punch to infantry. These weapons, in company with the antitank guided missile, set the tone of modern ground combat. They are fired using the Tac Missile skill.

M136 (AT-4)

Ammo	ROF	Reload	Rng	Round	Dam	Pen
AT-4 HEAT	SS	—	100	HEAT	C:8, B:20	70C
AT-4 HP	SS	—	100	HP	C8, B5	90C



The AT-4 is a single-shot disposable rocket launcher manufactured in Sweden and used by several armies, including the US military where it replaced the M-72 LAW. In addition to the standard High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) round, the AT-4 can fire the High Penetration (HP) round for heavily armored targets.

Weight: 7 kg.
Price: $600 (-/C)

RPG-16

Ammo	ROF	Reload	Rng	Round	Dam	Pen
RPG-16 HEAT	SS	2	100	HEAT	C:6, B:6	65C



A Russian manufactured rocket-propelled grenade launcher, the RPG-16 is a reloadable shoulder-fired weapon. While replaced for regular forces use, a very large number of these weapons are still around.

Weight: 10 kg.
Price: $1,000 (S/S)

Antitank Missile Launchers

The development of a weapon that could punch through a tank's armor without requiring a giant gun to shoot it is probably the salient feature of modern ground combat. Relatively small vehicles and even individual troops can now overpower tanks that would have required gigantic antitank guns not too long ago. They are fired using Heavy Weapons skill.

FGM-148 Javelin

Ammo	ROF	Reload	Rng	Round	Dam	Pen
Javelin Tandem HEAT	SS	2	2500	HEAT	C:16, B:40	90C



A man-portable launcher fired from an integral rest, the Javelin uses a fire-and-forget active guiding missile which can be set to either hit the target directly or drop down from above where the armor is usually thinner. The Javelin has completely replaced the Dragon in US service.

Weight: launcher 7 kg, missile 15 kg.
Price: launcher $7,500, missile $8,000 (-/R)

Mortars

An early type of infantry support weapon, mortars generally use indirect fire. Ammunition types include explosives, anti-personnel, smoke, and chemical irritants. Mortars are fired using Heavy Weapons skill.

M224 60mm Mortar

	IFR	Round	Dam	Pen
60mm Mortar	4000	HE	C:5, B:20	Nil
		WP	C:2, B:12	Nil
		ILLUM	B:400	Nil



The standard light mortar in US service. It can be disassembled into three loads for easier transportation (baseplate, bipod, tube). It requires two combat rounds to set up.

Weight: 21 kg (baseplate 5 kg; bipod 8 kg; tube 8 kg)
Price: $5,000 (-/C)

Surface-to-Air Missiles

Surface-to-air missiles range from lightweight one-man affairs to pintle-mounted multiple shot arrays. SAMs are fired using the Tac Missile or RCV Operations skills depending on the range and guidance type. Other shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles have similar performance to the Stinger.

FIM-92F Stinger

Skill: Tac Missile

Range: 6 kilometers

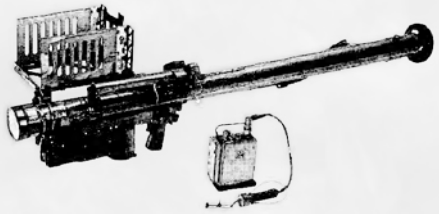
Accuracy Level: Average

Guidance: IR Homing

Weight: 20 kg.

Price: $2500 (-/R)

The FIM-92F Stinger is an American-made surface-to-air missile with advanced infrared homing capability.



Archery Weapons

Once used only for hunting and target practice, bows are now used in combat where ammunition is scarce. While the longbow requires special Archery skill, a crossbow uses Small Arms (Rifle). Included here is the speargun as it is a better fit here than anywhere else. The speargun also uses Small Arms skill.

Longbow

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Arrow	SS / 1	1	Nil	5	1i	6	—	15

Includes fiberglass composite bows and wooden self-bows, of 30 to 50 pounds pull.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $300 (C/C)



Crossbow

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Bolt	SS / 2	2	Nil	6	1i	3	—	20

Includes professionally manufactured weapons as well as those produced in the Outlands and uncontrolled areas from old rifle stocks and truck springs. Pulls vary from 100 to 200 pounds.

Weight: 4 kg
Price: $350 (C/C)



Speargun

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Light Spear	SS / 2	-1[1]	Nil	4	1i	2	—	6[2]

This weapon is used for spear fishing and occasionally self-defense. The cartridge is good for three shots.
[1] Damage is 1 if used out of water.
[2] Range is 8 if used out of water.

Ammo: Light underwater spear
Weight: 1.75 kg (0.4 kg per spear)
Price: $275 ($25 per spear) (C/V)



Non-Lethal Weapons

Non-lethal weapons here are those that stun a target rather than damaging them. Players should note that when hit by these weapons and the character fails to remain conscious, the character may still take fall or collision damage as applicable to the situation.

Martin-Dynatech M29 Advanced TASER

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Contact Darts	SS	(1)	Nil	1	1i	1	—	2



A pistol-sized weapon used to stun rather than kill, the stun gun fires two small darts and two lengths of light wire into the target, then administers a mild electric shock. It doesn't always succeed in stunning the victim (see below). Reloading the stun gun consists of removing the expended dart package and loading a new one. The dart package contains a charged battery, darts, three meters of fine wire and a compressed gas cylinder to propel the darts.

(1) With a successful hit anywhere on the target, the character immediately loses two initiative levels for six phases and must make an Average [CON] task roll to remain conscious. Failure means the target loses consciousness for six phases.

The M26 has an integral laser sight as part of the taser round that allows the shot to be considered Aimed when firing.

Weight: 0.5 kg.
Price: $600 (R/S)

Tranquilizer Pistol/Rifle

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
15mm hypodermic dart (rifle)	SS / 1	(1)	Nil	4	1i	3	—	8
15mm hypodermic dart (pistol)	SS / 1	(1)	Nil	1	1i	4	—	5





A specially made weapon designed to fire hypodermic darts containing a tranquilizer or other drug by means of compressed CO_2 cartridges. These were designed originally for administering drugs to dangerous animals, but the mercenary industry soon adopted them for its own purposes.

(1) Damage is special:

A hit in any part of the body will be effective eventually, but some areas give faster results than others. Head hits result in instant unconsciousness. Chest and abdomen hits result in unconsciousness after 1D6/2 phases (5 to 15 seconds). An arm hit requires the target to roll Average [CON] to stay awake each phase. The drug will take effect even if the dart is removed immediately. Animals such as guard dogs will be rendered instantly unconscious from any hit, since their smaller body weight allows the drug to take effect faster. Larger animals will take longer unless a special dose has been prepared. Tranquilizer guns count as medical equipment for contact assistance. Details are given here for both rifle and pistol versions, with the rifle being more common.

Weight: Rifle 3 kg, pistol 1 kg.
Price: Rifle $1,200 (—/S), pistol $600 (-/R)

HiTek Weapons

As the title of this section indicates, these are the more exotic and unusual offensive items that are sometimes found in the Conspiracy Rules world.

Projectile Weapons

XM-22 AIW

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
18mm CL	3	6	2-3-Nil	4	50	4	6	55

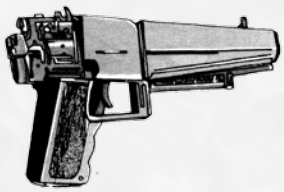


The XM-22 Advanced Infantry Weapon is an experimental military rifle. It is a bullpup configuration weapon with the action behind the firing hand. This gives a shorter overall length without having to shorten the barrel and lose accuracy. The caseless ammunition is very compact, allowing a high magazine capacity, and with there being no spent casing to eject the weapon's action is completely enclosed and thus very reliable in a dirty environment. A special recoil compensation system makes the XM-22 fairly controllable in semi-automatic fire and not unreasonable for larger individuals in full-auto fire. The weapon is only available through contacts in the AWRL.

Weight: 3.5 kg.
Price: $1500 (-/-)

XM-26 APW

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
12.5 CL	SA	3	1-Nil	3	20	4	—	25



The XM-26 Advanced Personal Weapon is a pistol based on the XM-22 AIW, and fires a smaller cartridge. It is likewise only available through contacts within the AWRL.

Weight: 1.4 kg.
Price: $900 (-/-)

XM-210 CQB

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
.50 SLAP	BA	8	1-1-2	5	5	6	—	50
With bipod	BA	8	1-1-2	5	5	2	—	75



The XM-210 CQB (Close Quarter Battle) was designed as a heavy rifle for use in urban combat, rather than as a sniper weapon. The basis for this design was the Barrett M-107 rifle, with everything else altered to make the weapon handier in close quarters. It is very powerful as it utilizes the 12.7 x 99mm SLAP (Sabo-ted Light Armor Piercing) ammunition, and due to the shortened barrel the XM-210 has a large muzzle brake as well as a built-in recoil absorption system. It is designed to allow infantry a penetration capability against light armored vehicles and is also popular in law enforcement circles when raiding crack houses.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $8,000 (-/S)

Armscor Needle Gun

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
Needle	SA	(1)	Nil	0	36	1	-	4



A high-velocity pneumatic weapon. The ammunition consists of hollow needles about 0.3mm in diameter and 15mm in length. The needles are usually filled with sedative drugs, but some security organizations are believed to use deadly toxins. The effects of individual drugs are left to the Referee's discretion. The weapon can be recharged with compressed gas or pumped up by hand. Hand charging takes one combat round for each six shots, whilst one charge from a gas canister gives the full 36 rounds worth. Gas canis-ters give 10 refills.
(1) As toxin

Weight: 0.4 kg.
Price: $1,200 (-/-)

YASHA Model 1

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
FN 5.7	10	2	1-Nil	3	40	2	5	20



This Japanese-manufactured machine pistol was specially designed to be as undetectable by electronic sensors as possible. Although a normal automatic weapon in operation, it is entirely constructed from heavy-duty plastics. It uses the same 5.7mm ammunition as the FN P-90 PDW, but the magazines are sealed and cannot be reloaded.

Weight: 2.2 kg
Price $800 (R/S)

DARPA XM-20 Coilgun

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil SS	Recoil Brst	Rng
5mm Dart	5	5	1-2-nil	4	35	2	4	75



The XM-20 is commonly known as a 'coilgun', as it uses the electro-magnetic acceleration principle first defined by Carl Gauss. It is a bullpup configuration rifle that shoots 5mm darts at a muzzle velocity of 3500m per second. This weapon became practical after some back-engineering ET technology enabled massive advances in battery storage. The battery is built into the foregrip and can be recharged using any electrical source. A normal household socket will recharge the weapon fully in two hours, though the spe-cialised charger developed for the weapon takes only 30 minutes. The battery pack holds enough charge for 350 shots (10 magazines).

Weapon:

Weight 4 kg
Price $10,000 (-/-)

Charger:

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $10,000 (-/-)

Energy Weapons

The laser weapons detailed here (except the Armington Heavy Laser) are powered from battery packs worn either on the belt or as backpacks. The Mag ratings given are the number of shots that can be fired before the pack needs recharging. No shots are actually carried 'inside' the weapon. Lasers also have no listed Ammo type or Recoil rating, as they fire a beam of coherent light rather than conventional ammunition.

Armington Laboratories

The technicians at Armington Laboratories have been working on the development of viable man-portable laser weapons for some time. While the bulk of these weapons were targeted at military customers, a fair number of laser systems found their way into corporate and private hands. The following list is representative of the various prototypes Armington have produced.

Armington Laser Pistol (ALP)

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Laser	SS / (1)	4	2	3	18	—	—	30



(1) One shot per 15 seconds.

The Armington Laser Pistol is a personal defense weapon and consists of a pistol and a belt-mounted powerpack, linked together by a cable. Unlike the larger Armington lasers the ALP does not require liquid nitrogen cooling, but its rate of fire is limited to one shot per 15 seconds to prevent excess heating damaging its internal components. A fully discharged powerpack requires three hours to recharge. A number of ALPs were UV lasers.

Ultraviolet lasers are not in regular production, and the ones that do exist are either specially built for government agencies or corporations, or are one-off modifications by underground weaponsmiths who claim that UV enhances the weapon's effect against certain Darklings.

Weight: 4 kg (Pistol: 1 kg, Battery/Capacitor Belt Pack: 3 kg)
Price: $3,200 (-/-), UV version $6400 (-/-)

Armington Laser Carbine Model 2 (ALC2)

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Laser	SS / (1)	12	2	5	12	—	—	60



(1) One shot per 30 seconds.

The Armington Laser Carbine Model 2 is a rare weapon indeed. An unknown number were built as testbeds for a rifle-type weapon but it never entered production. Each is essentially hand-made. The ALC-2 incorporates a liquid nitrogen cooling system that vents itself after each shot, producing a tendril of 'steam' that can be quite disconcerting to the unwary. A power cable connects the weapon to a backpack, which contains batteries and a capacitor that takes almost 30 seconds to recharge after each shot. This delay in the firing rate led to the ALC-2 being nicknamed 'Blue Moon'. A pair of indicator LEDs on the side of the weapon shows its status (red if charging, green when ready to fire). A discharged backpack takes 6 hours to recharge.

Weight: 26 kg (Carbine: 5 kg, Backpack: 21 kg)
Price: $12,000 (-/-)

Armington Heavy Laser (AHL)

						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Laser	SS / (1)	14	5	5	—	—	—	80



(1) One shot per 15 seconds.

The Armington Heavy Laser is the largest prototype built by the lab, and is extremely rare due to its size. The AHL requires a tripod or vehicular mounting, as it is too heavy to be aimed correctly when held by hand. It is powered by a 600-kilowatt portable generator and a capacitor linked to the weapon by a heavy cable, and can be fired continually as long as the generator is running (hence there being no Mag rating listed). The AHL has a built-in cooling system which is also powered by the generator and linked to the weapon via an insulated tube. The system circulates liquid coolant though a jacket surrounding the laser and through a refrigerator coil system to prevent overheating. The generator consumes 10 liters of fuel per hour when operating. A few of these prototypes were UV lasers.

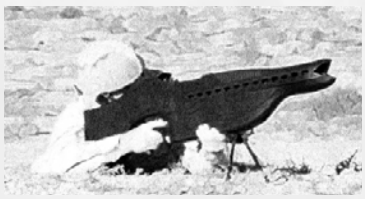
Weapon: 54 kg (Laser: 32 kg, Tripod: 22 kg)
Cooling System: 95 kg (Cooling System: 35 kg; Generator Wt: 60 kg)
Price: $75,000 (-/-)

DARPA

The Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency is a US government agency charged with ensuring that Uncle Sam keeps ahead of the game when it comes to weapons and defensive technologies. Reverse engineering of Extra-Terrestrial materials and techniques is high on their agenda, as is the advancement of normal Earth technology. These weapons are usually prototypes—small in number—used in development programs and are only available through contacts that work with them.

DARPA High-Cycle Laser

						Recoil		
Ammo	***ROF/Rld***	***Dam***	***Pen***	***Bulk***	***Mag***	***SS***	***Brst***	***Rng***
Laser	SS	4	2	3	30	—	—	30

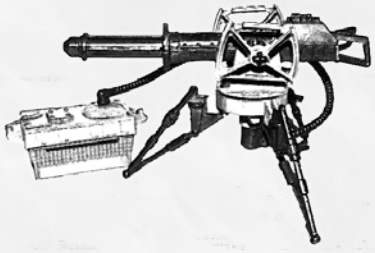


Utilizing advanced materials technology and hydrogen fuel cells of alien design, the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency have been able to produce a limited number of improved laser weapons. The battery pack is capable of powering 30 shots between recharges, and more importantly the weapon has vastly improved internal components that allow one shot per phase without suffering heat damage. This weapon does not require a cooling system.

Weight: 14 kg
Price: $350,000 (-/-)

DARPA Ultra-Cycle Laser

						Recoil		
Ammo	***ROF***	***Dam***	***Pen***	***Bulk***	***Mag***	***SS***	***Brst***	***Rng***
Laser	DAR [1]	5	1-Nil	4	70	—	—	50



[1] Rate of Fire is 3 shots per phase, the same as DAR weapons.

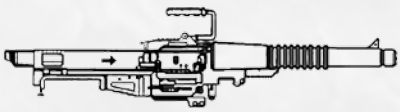
The Ultra-Cycle laser is a new development from DARPA and thus far there are rumored to be only a handful of prototypes. Although it is still a backpack-powered weapon, it uses advanced homopolar generators which, coupled with a liquid nitrogen coolant system, makes this the fastest-firing laser yet made. Reliability is still somewhat suspect however, and the weapon has yet to be debugged and properly tested.

Weight: 14 kg
Price: $750,000 (-/-)

Heavy Weapons

DARPA Anti-Armor CP Launcher

							Recoil		
Ammo	***ROF/Rld***	***Dam***	***Pen***	***Veh. Pen***	***Bulk***	***Mag***	***SS***	***Brst***	***Rng***
90mm CPC	SS / 2	16	1-2-10	16-16-8-2	4	70	—	—	60



Chasing another avenue of research, DARPA began experimenting with plasma weapons. This is the first successful weapon of that type, which fires a bolt of superheated plasma. The letters CP in the name stand for chemical-plasma, but due to the weapon's characteristics and its intended usage it is commonly called the plasma bazooka. It fires an individually loaded chemical-plasma cartridge (CPC) which contains the ignition chamber for the plasma stream and a one-use chemical laser ignition system. The CPC vents a significant amount of energy from the rear of the weapon, effectively negating all recoil. However, this creates considerable back blast, so the weapon may not be fired inside an enclosed space (e.g. a building or bunker). The plasma bazooka takes two turns to reload; one turn is spent on a cooling cycle, and a fresh CPC is loaded on the second turn.

Weapon:

Weight: 27 kg
Price: $75,000 (-/-)

Cartridge:

Weight: 16 kg, each
Price: $8,000 (-/-)

MELEE WEAPONS

Definitions

Melee weapons are obviously treated differently to firearms. Here is an explanation of the terms and abbreviations used.

Range: There are two general categories of melee weapons: short and long range. Characters must be within two meters of each other (adjacent two-meter grid squares) for short-range attacks, or within three meters (one two-meter grid square away) for long-range attacks. If a character with a short-range weapon—including unarmed combatants—encounters a character with a long-range weapon, the short-range weapon may not attack in the first phase of contact (although the target can block or dodge, if able).

Hit Mod. (Modifiers): Some melee weapons add a modifier to the character's Melee Combat skill, as shown on the Melee Weapon charts. This modifier is added to or subtracted from the character's skill; however, it may never reduce the character's skill below level 1.

Abbreviations: STR – the character's Strength; UCDR – The character's Unarmed Combat Damage Rating.

Weapons

Axe: A long, shafted, heavy chopping instrument.

Bayonet: A military knife that can be held in the hand or attached to the end of an assault or battle rifle. Values given here are for its use mounted to a rifle.

Brass Knuckles: For those times when you don't want to hurt your hand if you have to punch somebody (or something) out.

Chain: Simply a length of heavy chain, usually large-pitch motorcycle chain.

Club: Blunt, a half-meter long, used as a bashing instrument.

Garrote: A length of rope or piano wire used to strangle a victim.

Hatchet: Short-handled chopping tool used to trim firewood.

Knife: Knives range from 5-cm folding blades to 0.5-meter "Bowie" knives. These stats are for a knife about the size of a kitchen butcher knife. While knives are typically of limited use because of their short reach, they are deadly in the right hands.

Machete: A long-bladed slashing tool to clear away underbrush.

Minisaw: The Minisaw has an internal battery giving it one minute (12 phases) of use, or it can be powered from a belt pack that has a life of 15 minutes. The only drawback is that any attack blocked by the Minisaw is likely to damage its blade or motor. The Minisaw can sustain only 4 points of damage before it ceases to operate. At 10 points, the damage becomes irreparable. Determine the points of damage as per normal attack procedures.

PowerStaf KA-1: A melee weapon using modern technology, the PowerStaf consists of a tube containing four components. These are a compressed air cylinder, a high-pressure valve system and a piston approximately 40 centimeters in length with a tip of hard but slightly flexible plastic. When the activator switch is pressed the piston shoots out and returns within 82 milliseconds, inflicting 1D6 + STR damage to the target. The cylinder contains enough gas for 32 blows. The weapon can be thought of as a sort of automatic mace.

Quarterstaff: The quarterstaff is possibly the second oldest weapon in history after the club. This 2-meter length of sturdy wood can be used for striking and blocking.

Spear: A short, broad blade mounted on a long, wooden shaft. It is a thrusting weapon—awkward, but useful because of its reach. Civilians use spears as defense against animals.

Stun Stick: The stun stick is an increasingly common sight in the hands of law enforcement officials throughout the US. Its weapon characteristics are equivalent to a normal club, but with the addition of a stunning charge of electricity, one that represents a major advancement over previous hand-held electric stunners. The stun stick resembles a police nightstick that is covered by a grid of small metal studs along its striking surface. These studs serve as both contact sensors and conduction points. When the stick is activated and strikes an object, a microprocessor registers pressure on the studs and sends a jolt of electricity through those making the best contact.

The resulting shock can be set from mild discomfort to incapacitation (which can also cause cardiac arrest in susceptible individuals). The club has an internal battery sufficient for two heavy charges (called "zaps") or as many as 20 light taps ("zips"). But most frequently, the weapon is powered by a belt pack and cable unit (providing 10 times the capacity of the internal battery).

An individual hit by a full-power zap (zips merely cause pain) must succeed at a Difficult [CON] test to remain conscious. Individuals who fail the roll can make another Difficult [CON] test at the beginning of each new combat turn to regain consciousness. Characters who remain conscious or regain consciousness suffer a 2 penalty to Reaction and Agility for one combat turn—an Outstanding Success result reduces the penalty to 1.

While stun sticks were originally restricted for police use, some locales are now allowing civilian ownership.

Sword: A slashing and/or thrusting weapon, usually a meter in length.

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod.	Damage	Weight (kg)	Price	Avail.	Notes
Axe	L	-2	1D6 + STR	2.0	$50	V/V	A long, shafted, heavy chopping instrument.
Bayonet	L	+1	1D6 + ½ STR	0.25	$20	C/C	A military knife that can be held in the hand or attached to the end of an assault or battle rifle. Values given here are for its use mounted to a rifle.
Brass Knuckles	S	—	1D3 + UCD	0.2	$10	C/C	For those times when you don't want to hurt your hand if you have to punch somebody (or something) out.
Chain	L	—	1D6 + ½ STR	0.5	$5	V/V	Simply a length of heavy chain, usually large-pitch motorcycle chain.
Club	S	-1	1D6 + ½ STR	2.0	—	V/V	Blunt, a halfmeter long, used as a bashing instrument.
Garrote	S	+1	UCDR x 2	0.1	—	V/V	A length of rope or piano wire used to strangle a victim.
Hatchet	S	—	1D6 + ½ STR	1.0	$20	V/V	Short-handled chopping tool used to trim firewood.
Knife	S	+2	1D6	0.25	$5	V/V	About the size of a kitchen butcher knife. Of limited use because of its short reach, but deadly in the right hands.
Machete	S	-1	1D6 + STR	1.5	$50	C/C	A long-bladed slashing tool to clear away underbrush.
Minisaw	S	-1	4D6	0.9	$650	R/S	The Minisaw has an internal battery giving it one minute (12 phases) of use, or it can be powered from a belt pack that has a life of 15 minutes. The only drawback is that any attack blocked by the Minisaw is likely to damage its blade or motor. The Minisaw can sustain only 4 points of damage before it ceases to operate. At 10 points, the damage becomes irreparable. Determine the points of damage as per normal attack procedures.
PowerStaf KA-1	L	+2	2D6	3.5	$600	-/S	A melee weapon using modern technology, the PowerStaf consists of a tube containing four components. These are a compressed air cylinder, a high-pressure valve system and a piston approximately 40 centimeters in length with a tip of hard but slightly flexible plastic. When the activator switch is pressed the piston shoots out and returns within 82 milliseconds, inflicting Blunt Trauma damage to the target. The cylinder contains enough gas for 32 blows. The weapon can be thought of as a sort of automatic mace.
Quarterstaff	L	0	1D6 + UCDR	2.0	$10	V/V	Possibly the second oldest weapon in history after the club. A 2-meter length of sturdy wood that can be used for striking and blocking.
Spear	L	—	1D6 + ½ STR	0.25	$10	V/V	A short, broad blade mounted on a long, wooden shaft. It is a thrusting weapon—awkward, but useful because of its reach. Civilians use spears as defense against animals.
Stun stick	S	0	[1] See Below	1.2	$250	-/R	While stun sticks were originally restricted for police use, some locales are now allowing civilian ownership.
Sword	L	—	1D6 + STR	1.0	$350	S/S	A slashing and/or thrusting weapon, usually a meter in length.

[1] See text for stun effects. If used as a club, see club stats.

GEAR

Of course your character cannot go into the world armed only with weapons. Some gear is simply indispensable.

Documents

Genuine documents can be obtained through the normal channels for such things, and usually involve only nominal fees. Weight is negligible in all cases.

Forged Passport, Ordinary Identity Papers, etc.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $1500 (—/S).

Forged Security Pass

Unavailable except through criminal, police, or government connections. Price depends on sensitivity of installation the pass gives access to (referee's discretion).

Weight: Negligible
Price: $10,000-100,000 (—/S).

Other Forged Document

The referee may change the price or availability for extremely rare or hard to duplicate documents.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $1000 (—/S).

Security Pass

This is a piece of plastic approximately eight centimeters by five centimeters. It carries a photo of the bearer, fingerprints, and a bar code that can be read by security robots and electronic locks. The bar code is generated by machine that encodes a retina scan of the bearer, meaning that the challenging machine must also take a retina scan and compare it with the card for complete identification. Scanning machines can do this from a distance of up to one meter. The machine works fast enough that several scans can be made in a few hundredths of a second, minimizing potential for error. Unavailable except through proper channels.

Weight: Negligible
Price: None

Electronics

Alarm, Beam

The beam alarm is a two-piece system incorporating a beam generator and receiver. Interruption of the beam (e.g., a person walking through it) triggers the alarm.

Weight: 7 kg (Generator: 5 kg, Receiver: 2 kg)
Price: $700 (C/V)

Audio Recorder, Xomax (Simple)

This is an inexpensive cassette recorder/player (Indonesia makes the best ones), available at any shopping mail electronics store. It uses standard audio recording cartridges.

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $75 (V/V)

Broadcast Monitoring Equipment

This kit, combined with an electronics repair tool kit, permits characters with Electronics skill to listen in on cellular phones, radio, etc., provided the operating frequency of the device is known.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $400 (R/C)

Bug Detecting Tools

This kit (about the size of a briefcase) contains several sophisticated electronic devices designed to detect the most common bugging devices and partially or completely neutralize them. All bugs (whether broadcasting or not) emit certain distinctive forms of radiation, which can be detected if the operator knows what to look for. Once located, bugs can be physically dug out and destroyed, neutralized with jamming signals (a signal generator is included), or masked with a white noise generator (also included).

Locating an Eavesdropper I bug without these tools is a Formidable: Observation. No other bug may be located without these tools.

Locating an Eavesdropper I bug with bug detecting tools is Average: Electronics. Locating an Eavesdropper II bug with bug detecting tools is Difficult: Electronics. Locating an Eavesdropper III bug with bug detecting tools is Formidable: Electronics.

Weight: 6 kg
Price: $2400 (R/C)

Camera, Kodak-Disney EZ Snap Still

This is a fixed focal length, plastic, disposable instant camera (made in Singapore). No film to buy (it's inside); you take the whole shebang to a fast photo developing booth at the mall, drop the camera in the slot and out come the 24 pictures five minutes later (development and printing fees are included in the price of the camera).

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $10 (C/C)

Camera Set, Nikon DLR-35 Advanced Still

This is a sophisticated 35mm digital SLR camera, and a set of professional accessories (telephoto lenses, filters, and so on). It uses film, unlike the disposable camera. The kit also includes a compact darkroom set-up to enable the user to develop and print photographs. Everything comes packaged in a padded shoulder bag.

Weight: 3 kg
Price: $850 (C/C)

Eavesdropper I, Radio Shack

This is the cheapest, least sophisticated bugging device (it is about 2x3x1 centimeters, with a three-centimeter whisker antenna), consisting of a cheap solid-state transmitter, a sound pickup, and a small power supply. It has a range of 500 meters; duration of 24 hours between recharges unless it is hooked into a building's electrical system (an Average: Electronics task), and is not voice activated (it broadcasts continuously, which makes it easy to find). Any civilian FM radio can receive the signal if tuned to the right frequency.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $120 (C/V)

Eavesdropper II, Radio Shack

This is a smaller, more sophisticated bugging device than an Eavesdropper I (it is a cube, one centimeter on a side, with a three-centimeter whisker antenna). It has a range of one kilometer, and duration of 36 hours of continuous broadcasting (longer if voice activated).

Weight: Negligible
Price: $450 (S/C)

Eavesdropper III, Radio Shack

This is a very small bug, about the size of a grain of rice, with a three-centimeter whisker antenna. It has a range of 200 meters, and duration of 12 hours of continuous broadcast

Weight: Negligible
Price: $1100 (R/S)

Eavesdropper Monitor, Radio Shack

This is a special radio with an integral audio recorder. Can be tuned to any bug frequency. It uses standard phones, radios, etc., audio-recording cartridges.

Weight: 0.6 kg
Price: $550 (S/C)

Facsimile Machine, Sony Global FAXMan Portable

Connected to a radio or cellular phone, this enables documents to be sent and received in remote locations.

Weight: 6 kg
Price: $1800 (C/C)

Maglock

Maglocks (magnetic locks) are in some ways superior to mechanical locks in that there is no weak point to cut through and no keyhole to pick. The two plates of the lock are bonded by magnetism. The only weakness of the Maglock is its dependence upon electric current to maintain its magnetism. Therefore, the lock usually has a physical interlock component as well, which remains shut if power is lost to the magnet. This physical lock can typically only be unlocked if current is restored.

Another advantage of the Maglock is its portability: It can be attached to any door or gate. If metal surfaces are available, the lock can be self-attaching via a magnetizable back-plate. Maglocks come in small and large varieties (for personal-sized and vehicle-sized portals, respectively). If the large variety is emplaced upon a personal-sized portal, such a lock may well be impossible to breakthrough, short of demolition work.

Weight: Small: 1.8 kg, Large: 7 kg
Price: Small Version: $2300 (R/S), Large Version: $550 (S/C)

MaxiGard Multilock

The MaxiGard Multilock is a security system designed to accept a variety of modular upgrades. The system integrates an adjustable, physical-locking device (usually mounted at ground level on the opposite side of the portal in question) and a bypass system that can be adjusted to handle a variety of clearance criteria. The MaxiGard has a numeric keypad, keycard port, and hand/finger-print analyzer built in. However, modular interfaces allow the addition of tissue (genetic) sampling and retinal scan regimens as well. (Although voice analysis is still used in some places, this is considered a "backward" security measure since voice duplication techniques have advanced to the point where they can fool such machines at least 50 percent of the time.)

Weight: 7.6 kg (Lock: 4.2 kg, Monitor: 3.4 kg before add-ons)
Price: $2675 (S/C)

Microcam

This portable video camera is about the size of a paperback novel, and is designed to be rugged and user-friendly. The videotape cartridge is about the size of an audiocassette tape and can record up to four hours of footage.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $450 ($25 per tape cartridge) (C/V)

Microphone, Shure SM80D Directional

Also called a "shotgun mike," this is a device that permits the user to electronically eavesdrop on normal conversations at ranges of up to 500 meters. It functions off an internal battery, and requires 30 seconds to set up and tune.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $3000 (C/C)

Micro Transponder, Tojicorp Discreet

A smaller, more expensive version of the transponder described later on, with a one-kilometer range (it can't be hooked up to an antenna, however). This device is about the size of an aspirin tablet, and one side is self-adhesive (peel off the backing paper and stick it in place) for attachment to a car bumper or whatever. Removing the device from its plastic carrying case activates it, and the internal battery will last for six hours. It is rechargeable by anyone with Electronics skill and an electronics tool kit.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $1800 (—/S)

Motion Detector, Radio Shack MST 3000

An electronic monitor that uses Doppler shifts in reflected ultrasonic or infrared waves to detect moving objects. When set up, the device must be run for at least five minutes to allow the machine to "learn" what its surroundings look like, and adjust itself accordingly. After that time, any moving object larger than a centimeter in any one dimension will trip the device (speed can be adjusted as needed). Motion detectors can be programmed to sound an alarm, send a signal to a switchboard, or activate another device (like a video camera or a mine). IR motion detectors can be spotted by anyone wearing IR goggles or similar devices, since they emit beams of IR radiation. Motion detectors are not very useful in areas where there is constant random motion, such as near trees or bushes, due to the unpredictable nature of such movement. Any constant, regular motion (such as the pendulum of a clock) will be discounted by the detector during setup, however. The detector can cover an area up to five meters in radius, but they can be programmed to operate in chains or lines. Motion detectors on security robots are more sophisticated than stand-alone models, due to the greater analytical power available in the robot's "brain."

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $3600 (R/S)

Portaphone

A lightweight, compact version of the cellular phone, the portaphone's about the size of a pack of cigarettes and folds out into a slimline phone. Within civilized areas it is never out of communication range since Portaphone transceivers have been mounted on phone lines throughout most cities. Note that in more rural or abandoned areas, the Portaphone may be outside the range of any transceiver (about 100 kilometers). However, public jack connections have been mounted in some rural areas, alongside (and in some cases instead of) phone booths. Note, though, that when out of the cities or the 'burbs, users of Portaphones should stick close to telephone lines if they want to remain in contact.

The Portaphone has a jack interface, which also allows it to be integrated with a laptop modem for "wireless-datanetting" purposes.

Weight: 0.35 kg
Price: $425 (C/V)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. 2km Hand

Also known as a walkie-talkie, this is a small, readily portable radio similar to the US AN/PRC-68 or Soviet R-126. Powered from internal batteries.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $250 (C/C)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. 5/25 km Manpack/Vehicular

Small, portable radio similar to the US AN/PRC-77 or Soviet R-107. Powered from internal batteries (for five-kilometer range) or a vehicle (25-kilometer range).

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $800 (C/C)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. 5/25 km Secure Manpack/Vehicular

A small, portable radio similar to the AN/PRC70 (US). Powered from internal batteries (for five-kilometer range) or vehicle (25-kilometer range). Includes an integral scrambler/descrambler (conversations can only be understood by another unit with a scrambler/descrambler).

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $1100 (S/C)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. 50 km Vehicular

Vehicular radio similar to US AN/VRC-12. Powered by a vehicle.

Weight: 15 kg
Price: $1200 (C/V)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. 50 km Secure Vehicular

A vehicular radio capable of scrambled broadcasts. Powered by a vehicle, with integral scrambler/descrambler.

Weight: 15 kg
Price: $1450 (S/C)

Radio, Miltech Ltd. ITR-VII Individual Tactical

A small radio of limited range (one kilometer) designed to be used by small groups who require precise coordination and hands-free operation. The radio consists of a voice-activated throat mike (strapped over the larynx), a headset with bone-conduction earphones, and a battery case (usually carried in a shirt pocket). This radio is hands-free, and allows the wearer to hear more-or-less

normally when in use. The set also incorporates a manual "beeper" button, enabling Morse signals to be sent if the sender does not want to speak. These are relatively sophisticated radios, and are more expensive than the normal walkie-talkie.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $550 (S/R)

Radio, Tandy Jackrabbit Frequency-Hopping

This radio resists jamming and interception by shifting among several preset frequencies at preset intervals. Unless a listener knows the frequencies and intervals, they cannot remain locked onto the signal. All sets in a system must be synchronized in order to communicate.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $800 (R/S)

Radio Direction Finder, Teledyne S1965B

A specialized radio receiver designed to determine the specific direction a particular radio broadcast is coming from. These are useful for a variety of tasks. Getting a directional fix using one of these is a task (Average: Electronics) and requires 30 seconds (provided that the signal stays on the air that long). The result is a compass bearing, not a distance. Two or three such RDF units, spaced far apart, can get two or more bearings for triangulation of a broadcast source.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $1500 (C/C)

Recording Camera, Tojicorp Kapture II Video

This is a digital video camera/recorder capable of recording both audio and video.

Weight: 4 kg
Price: $500 (C/C)

Recorder, dbx 162X Audio (Advanced)

This is a sophisticated digital recording machine (Thailand makes the best ones), capable of picking up a greater variety of sounds (including ultrasonic and subsonic), playback at a variety of speeds, and so on. It uses standard audio recording cartridges.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $750 (S/S)

Recording Cartridge, Verdadero Audio

A cassette like device capable of recording up to six hours of sounds when placed in an appropriate machine.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $5 (V/V)

ROM Burner, Tojicorp

A device used to record a specific programming sequence onto a computer chip. The chips themselves are quite inexpensive ($25 each for a ROM chip, $35 for a PROM) compared to the machine required to use them. A PROM (Programmable Read-Only Memory) or ROM chip may be programmed for use in the maintenance and repair with a ROM burner. PROMs can be changed (often their programming can be erased by exposing them for a certain length of time to certain frequencies of light), but ROMs can be programmed only once, and cannot be changed thereafter. Using a ROM burner is a Difficult: Computer test. Installing the chip in an electronic device is a Difficult: Electronics test. ROMs and PROMs are often programmed with code words and phrases that trigger electronic devices (like radio detonators).

Weight: 20 kg
Price: $275,000 (—/R)

Satellite Downlink Subsystem,

Zeiss-Krupp ZK-1956 PSD Portable
A one-meter dish antenna system permitting radio communication via a geosynchronous satellite with practically any location in the world when linked into a proper radio in place of the normal antenna. It requires five minutes to erect and align, two minutes to dismantle.

Weight: 4 kg
Price: $12,000 (R/S)

EADS-Garmin Global Positioning System (GPS)

Providing a display for a map and text readouts of position, the personal GPS can also hold waypoints to allow repeating or planning a route. The location of the waypoints does not depend on terrain and can be used at sea. Use of a personal GPS makes Navigation and Map skill checks one level of difficulty easier (+1).

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $350 (S/C)

Scrambler/Decoder, Communication Detachable

This device can be placed at any point in an electronic data flow and will scramble the communications in such a fashion that they are only decipherable by another individual with a properly programmed decoder.

Weight: 0.4 kg
Price: $500 (S/C)

Scrambler/ Descrambler, Miltech Ltd. Model IX

Used with telephone or voice radio unit, this scrambles conversation to seemingly random noise at the transmitter and back to conversation at the receiver. Both transmitter and receiver must be programmed to the same preset scrambler code, otherwise they do not work.

A sophisticated computer analysis can descramble a particular conversation within hours, and once the scramble pattern is known, it can be used to program another scrambler with the same code.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $2000 (R/S)

Transponder, Tojicorp Tagalong

Special radio transmitter designed to broadcast a specific signal at a specific frequency to provide a homing beacon for pickup aircraft, radiation homing missile, etc. The device has a one-kilometer range without antenna, 10 kilometers with antenna. Its internal battery will power the broadcast for 18 hours, and can be started with an internal timing circuit up to 72 hours after emplacement.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $1800 (S/C)

Video Cartridge, Verdadero

This is a cassette for use in the video camera, and can record both audio and video signals.

Weight: 0.2 kg
Price: $12 (C/C)

Vision Adapter, Nikon Special

This is a device to allow an advanced still camera or video camera to be attached to an IR scope, starlight scope, or image intensifier.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $15 (S/C)

Wire-Tapping Tools

This kit, combined with an electronics repair tool kit, permits characters with Electronics skill to tap into and monitor electronic telecommunications lines (telephone, fax, teletype, etc.).

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $300 (R/C)

Fuel

Commonly available fuels include:

Alcohol

Weight: 1 kg per liter
Price: $35 per liter (C/C)

Avgas (aviation gasoline)

Weight: 1 kg per liter
Price: $50 per liter (C/C)

Diesel

Weight: 1 kg per liter
Price: $0.4 per liter (C/C)

Gasoline

Weight: 1 kg per liter
Price: $0.5 per liter (V/V)

Medical Supplies

Anesthetic, Total (100 Units)

Available in two forms: liquid (for injection) and gas.

Weight: 0.1 kg
Price: $1000 (R/C)

Anesthetic, Local (100 Units)

Available only in liquid form (for injection)

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $1000 (R/C)

Antivenin Autoinjector

A specially built, one-use autoinjector designed to administer the correct dose of a specially designed generic antivenin in case of snakebite, manticore sting, etc. An autoinjector is essential to enable treatment of poison to proceed (a doctor's medical kit is amply supplied with these).

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $45 (R/S)

Blood, Whole (1 Unit)

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $25 (—/C)

Empathy Booster Drug

Empathy boosting drugs add a temporary +1 to all Empathy skills for 2D÷3 hours (rolled for each injection). Referees should keep the length of the drug's effective period a secret, but can allow the character to feel the power weakening for 10 minutes or so before it cuts off completely. Doubling the dose gives a temporary +3 to all Empathy skills for the same random period, but also reduces Initiative and Willpower by 1 point each for the same duration. Injection of more than six doses in a 24-hour Period, or more than a double dose, causes unconsciousness lasting 1D6 hours. Empathy booster cannot be bought, but can only be obtained in 10-dose units by characters who have served at least one term as paraphysicists, or as a refill for a paraphysicist's field kit (described below).

Weight: Nil
Price: Special (—/—)

Medical Kit, Steri-Med Personal

An individual's first aid kit. Includes bandages, one unit of antibiotic, and other first aid materials. This kit is used up in one first aid operation.

Weight: 0.2 kg
Price: $100 (V/V)

Medical Kit, BroMenn Corporation Doctor's

This is a kit containing medical equipment and drugs. Includes 10 units of each drug type, plus bandages and tools for minor surgery.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $1000 (—/C)

Pain Reliever, Mild (100 Units)

Oral (pill) form only.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $500 (C/V)

Paraphysicist's Field Kit, Alba Industries

This is a black bag containing simple equipment for a number of empathic detection tests (cards, crystals, etc) and a small quantity of drugs (10 doses each of mild pain reliever, mild sedative, strong sedative and Empathy booster) and hypodermic syringes. The kit cannot be bought; it is obtained free of charge by serving one term as a paraphysicist. Refills are obtained free of charge after each adventure (or at the referee's discretion) through the paraphysicists normal contacts (players may not accumulate more than one kit's worth). The empathic test equipment enables the trained user to detect empathic talent in other characters or creatures. The pain relievers and sedatives enable the user to relax test subjects.

The following tasks require the kit: Detecting empathic talents in a cooperative subject is Easy: Empathy. Detecting empathic talents in an uncooperative subject is Average: Empathy. Making the attempt at a range of greater than five meters makes the task one level more difficult (10 meters is the maximum range for the attempt). Detecting empathic talents in a nonhuman subject is one level more difficult.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: Special (—/—)

Steri-Med One Count Tranquilizer Autoinjectors

Similar to the atropine autoinjectors used as anti-nerve agent injectors by the US Army, but loaded with a fast-acting tranquilizer drug, these devices were originally made for use by mental hospitals and police. Applied to an unresisting target (one surprised or subdued by unarmed combat), it hits the body part of the user's choice. Resisting targets must be subdued using unarmed combat before the injector can be applied.

As with tranquilizer darts, a hit in any part of the body will be effective eventually, but some areas give faster results than others. Head hits result in instant unconsciousness. Chest and abdomen hits result in unconsciousness after 1D6/2 phases (5-15 seconds). A limb hit requires the target to make an Average: Constitution roll, succeeding to stay awake each phase. The drug will take effect even if the injector is removed immediately. Tranquilizer autoinjectors also affect dogs in the same way as tranquilizer darts.

Weight: 0.1 kg per set of three
Price. $75 per set of three (—/S)

Plasma (1 Unit)

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $10 (—/C)

Sedative, Mild (100 Units)

Oral (pill) form only.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $500 (C/V)

Sedative, Strong (100 Units)

Liquid (for injection) form only.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $500 (S/C)

Surgical Instruments

Scalpels, forceps, hemostats, clamps, and other tools for major surgery.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $2500 (R/C)

NBC Equipment

This equipment is for nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons countermeasures.

Gas Mask, Miltech PSDM17

A standard gas mask used around the world. Similar to US military models.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $150 (S/C)

Geiger Counter, Gruman D3

Detects nuclear radiation. Powered by internal batteries.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $500 (C/C)

NBC Fatigue Coveralls

Often found in army surplus stores, these are waterproof coveralls lined with activated charcoal to offer extra protection in hazardous environments. Cuffs and collar can be sealed, and the hood will seal tight to a gas mask.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $100 (C/C)

Tools

Aircraft Tools

Same as wheeled vehicle tools, but for aircraft.

Weight: 22 kg
Price: $ 1100 (S/S)

Arc Welder

Operates off of an integral generator, which cannot be modified for other use.

Weight: 75 kg
Price: $850 (C/C)

Basic Tool Kit

Small hand tools which are suitable for a variety of purposes. These may include wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers, and so on.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $250 (V/V)

Construction Tools

Hammers, saws, squares, hatchets, chisels, and other woodworking tools.

Weight: 30 kg
Price: $400 (V/V)

Electrical Repair

Specialized tools for work on electrical appliances, wiring, and non solid-state equipment.

Weight: 3 kg
Price: $275 (V/V)

Electronic Repair

Same as electrical repair tools, but for work on solid-state electrical devices such as radios, computers, etc. It is also used for field expedient modification of solid-state equipment.

Weight: 3 kg
Price: $350 (V/V)

Excavating Tools

Picks, shovels, mattocks, and so on.

Weight: 20
Price: $250 (V/V)

Heavy Ordnance Tools

Specialized tools for use in the maintenance repair of heavy ordnance.

Weight: 25 kg
Price: $2400 (—/S)

Lockpicking Tools

Picks, torsion wrenches, shims, a stethoscope, and other equipment to open all types of locks.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $50 (—/C)

Portable Machine Shop

A trailer containing powered machine tools, including a bench grinder, horizontal and vertical boring machines, a milling machine, metalworking and woodworking lathes, and numerous other machine tools. Exact components and uses are left to the discretion of the referee. It can be towed by any truck except a ¼-ton.

Weight: 1.75 tons
Price: $12,000 (S/S)

Power Hand Tools

A selection of power tools including a chainsaw, nine-inch rotary saw, drill, and other electrical tools.

Weight: 35 kg
Price: $1200 (V/V)

Small Arms Tools (Gunsmith Tools)

Specialized tools for use in the maintenance and repair of small arms. These tools are not suitable for the purpose of the construction of weapons from scratch, however.

Weight: 5 kg.
Price: $750 (S/C)

Heavy and Tracked Vehicle Tools

Same as wheeled vehicle tools, but for heavy and tracked vehicles.

Weight: 15 kg
Price: $2200 (—/S)

Wheeled Vehicle Tools

Specialized tools for repair and maintenance of wheeled vehicles. These vehicle tools include spark plug wrenches, torque wrenches, a grease gun, and so on.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $800 (V/V)

Vision Devices

Binoculars, Zeiss-Krupp 4x

Allows the user to see longer distances than normal.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $75 (V/V)

Image Intensifier, GE 25x

Allows the user to see in very little light. Powered from internal batteries. These act as binoculars, also.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $2500 (R/S)

Goggles, IR

Powered from internal batteries. IR goggles allow the user to see at night by means of infrared (IR) light. The UV goggles work essentially the same, and allow the user to see at night by means of ultraviolet light.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $850 (R/C)

Goggles, UV

UV goggles allow a wearer to see light in the ultraviolet spectrum (including, for example, UV targeting beams).

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $450 (S/C)

Spotlight, Miltech Ltd IRS-T4 IR

Powered by a vehicle. IR goggles must be used to see by this light.

Weight: 3 kg
Price: $5000 (R/C)

Spotlight, Martin Dynatech Deer Stalker

Powered by a vehicle.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $100 (V/V)

Exploring Equipment

20-Liter Jerrycan

For fuel and other liquids.

Weight: 1 kg (empty)
Price: $25 (V/V)

Air Compressor

For filling aqualung tanks, tires, rafts, and other items needing compressed air.

Weight: 45 kg
Price: $200 (C/C)

Air Tank, Aqualung

For use with aqualung. Can be refilled in five minutes with a compressor.

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $100 (C/C)

PepsiCo Merlite Aqualung

Two compressed air tanks, fins, mask, and regulator. One tank contains enough air for 30 minutes underwater. Up to two may be connected to a single regulator for use.

Weight: 12 kg
Price: $300 (C/C)

Bezubovo Ventures Desert Wind Four-Man Tent

Weight: 12 kg
Price: $100 (C/C)

10-Man Tent

Weight: 35 kg
Price: $250 (S/S)

Chemical Analysis Kit

This kit has a spectroanalyzer that enables chemical analysis of substances. It includes a small laser for vaporizing samples in order to study the reflective properties of the gases, as well as a collection of reagents for more mundane analyses of their overt chemical composition.

Weight: 3.5 kg
Price: $2100 (S/C)

FaxMaster

A refinement of the Hydra technology pioneered in the early 1990s, the Hydra II FaxMaster is a portable unit that combines the functions of a fax machine, laser printer, and desktop copier all in one unit. It is the size of a briefcase and can be interfaced with any contemporary computer data systems.

Weight: 4.6 kg
Price: $2650 (R/S)

Flare Gun

Mag	ROF	Range	IFR	Recoil	Rnd	Dam	Pen
1i	SS	20	150	1	Illum	B:60[1]	Nil
					Signal	1	Nil

Grapnel Gun

Mag	ROF	Range	IFR	Recoil	Rnd	Dam	Pen
1i	SS	20	—	4	Hook	1	Nil
					Magnet	1	1
					Penetrator	2	2

[1] Burn damage instead of shrapnel

Flare Gun

This pistol-like device is capable of launching both signal and illumination flares. In an emergency, it can also be pressed into service as a weapon, if necessary. Note that flares can be launched as either direct or indirect fire.

Ammo: Flare
Magazine: 1 integral
Weight: 1.2 kg (Pistol: 1.0 kg, Flare: 0.2 kg)
Price: $165 (Illum Flare: $2, Signal Flare: $1) (C/C)

Grapnel Gun

Although usually used with hook grapnels as a means of scaling buildings, ship-sides, etc., a grapnel gun may also fire magnetic or penetrator grapnels (the latter having heads which function as self-driving pitons). Magnetic and penetrator grapnels are both likely to come loose under tension than are hook grapnels, however. During each phase in which a magnetic or penetrator grapnel is supporting more than 100 kilograms, there is a five percent chance that it will come loose from the surface it is affixed to.

Each grapnel trails 25 meters of climbing line behind itself when it is launched.

Ammo: Grapnel hook
Magazine: 1 integral
Weight: 2.5 kg (Gun: 2 kg, Grapnel: 0.5 kg)
Price: $175 (Hook: $7, Magnetic: $25, Penetrator: $105) (S/C)

Grapple

This is a multiple-pronged hook designed for use tethered to a length of rope and used in climbing walls or other vertical obstacles. It can be thrown as any other object, but counts as two kilograms instead of only one (because of the attached rope). Some models are designed to fold, collapse, or otherwise dismantle for ease of transport.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $60 (C/C)

Horse Tack

Saddle, bridle, straps, stirrups, saddle blanket, and so on.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $50 (C/C)

Lantern, Solar-Powered

This fluorescent lantern can be charged to full battery capacity over the course of eight hours of direct sunlight. Twice that time is required in overcast conditions. A full charge provides five hours of light.

Weight: 2.1 kg
Price: $180 (S/C)

Liquid Nitrogen Cylinder

For cooling various lasers.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $45 (—/R)

Pack Saddle

A saddle especially designed for cargo.

Weight: 5 kg (empty)
Price: $40 (C/C)

Paraglider

This steerable parachute permits a passenger to direct his or her descent more than is possible with a normal parachute. If recovered, the paraglider can be repacked and reused.

Weight: 16 kg
Price: $650 (S/C)

PepsiCo Eelcraft Raft, Inflatable

Inflates using an air compressor in two minutes, or using hand-pump in 10 minutes. Capacity is 1000 kilograms.

Weight: 30 kg
Price: $500 (C/C)

Ford-Revlon Moray Rebreather

A device that absorbs carbon dioxide from exhaled air and bleeds pure oxygen into it. One oxygen tank is used at a time with it, and it contains enough for 30 minutes underwater. Fins and a mask are included.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $400 (C/C)

Rebreather Recharge Kit

For use with the rebreather. This kit includes a can of carbon dioxide absorbent and a small tank of pure oxygen (enough to recharge a rebreather for 30 minutes underwater).

Weight: 5 kg
Price: $100 (C/C)

Road Flare

This is a simple pyrotechnic device intended for emergency signaling and illumination purposes. When ignited, it generates an extremely bright light (radiating slightly into the UV spectrum), and enough heat to be a source of ignition.

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $10 (V/V)

Rope

This is high-quality, 11-mm diameter climbing and rappelling line.

Weight: 5 kg per coil
Price: $100 per 50-m coil (V/V)

Epoke-Rosignoll Cross-Country Skis

Includes poles, skis, boots, and binders.

Weight: 8 kg
Price. $250 (C/C)

Solar Still

The Bezubovo Ventures Solex solar still is a device used to gather drinkable water from the atmosphere by condensation. It is powered by small solar panels, which collect enough excess energy to run the unit throughout the night, allowing around-the-clock operation. The solar still can collect 1.6 liters of water per full 24 hours (of which 1.2 liters are gathered during the night). The still takes approximately 30 minutes to set up and break down.

A solar still (which is actually a misnomer, since no real distillation takes place) is a specialty item, generally used only by explorers of the high desert, or as a shipboard emergency device. Only if a user is anticipating the possibility of being isolated from standing water and plentiful combustibles is the solar still a preferable option to a normal still. However, the solar still is increasing in popularity, particularly amongst environmental subculture groups.

Weight: 7.1 kg
Price: $2800 (—/S)

Survival Kit

This Bezubovo Ventures Desert Fox survival kit includes lightweight versions of a number of helpful implements: a reflective shelter half, collapsible one-liter canteen, two packages of combat rations, salt tablets, folding shovel, survival knife (with matches and sewing kit in a hollow handle, compass in the pommel cap), mirror/flasher for day or night signaling, and personal medical kit.

Weight: 2.5 kg
Price: $470 (C/V)

Thermal Suit

A thermal suit is used for sub-zero conditions and has been popularized by Antarctic explorers of the late 1990s. The Miltech Ltd. thermal suit is a prime example, combining heat-retaining fabrics with an internal matrix of Mylar lining and thermal filaments. When powered by its integral battery (or other power source), these filaments produce heat. (The battery is good for 12 hours of operation down to -45 C.) A system of small heat-bleed flaps are available for the user as a means of cooling off should things get too warm. The suit includes a face shield and integral utility harness.

Weight: 3.8 kg
Price: $970 (—/S)

Fatigues, Big Ben Thermal

Includes boots, socks, etc.

Weight: 6 kg
Price: $100 (C/C)

Field Pack, Grizzly

A pack is capable of carrying up to 30 kilograms of equipment. Weight given is empty.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $20 (V/V)

Flashlight

Powered by internal batteries.

Weight: 0.2 kg
Price: $20 (V/V)

Handcuffs

Used for the physical restraint of undesirables, these come in two types: the metal, reusable kind (unlocked with a key) and the plastic, disposable kind (these must be cut off). Applying handcuffs counts as an action, and takes five seconds.

Weight: 0.2 kg (metal); 0.00 1 kg (plastic)
Price: $20 (metal) (S/C); $2 (plastic) (S/V)

Parka, Grizzly

Includes overboots, socks, etc.

Weight: 3 kg
Price: $150 (C/C)

Sleeping Bag, Mountainaire

Weight: 4 kg
Price: $50 (V/V)

Sunglasses, Serengeti

Available in a variety of lens colors, frame colors, and styles, Serengeti Vermillions (a style with reddish tinted lenses) have become an unofficial badge of opposition to the Dark Lords in some places. The price below is for a stylish pair with boosted UV blocking capacity and a logo stenciled on one lens.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $300 (S/C)

Weapon Accessories

Bianchi Shoulder Holster

This type of holster is specially designed to be worn under a jacket or loose shirt/blouse, holding the weapon close against the body for maximum concealment. It works only with pistols and SMGs having a bulk of 2 or less (weapons of bulk 3 can be concealed under a long raincoat or similar garment, but shoulder holsters are not made for them... weapons of greater bulk than 4 cannot be concealed). The harness provides a holster for the weapon and space for two extra magazines (or two to three quick-loaders, if a revolver). Spotting a shoulder holster is an Average: Observation task. A thorough frisk will always reveal its presence, however.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $50 (C/C)

Bianchi Small Concealed Holster

A holster designed to hold a pistol of bulk 0 in a position where it can be concealed. Such holsters can be fastened around an ankle, clipped to a waist belt or brassiere, or concealed in some other spot upon the person. Such holsters do not hold extra ammunition or magazines. Spotting such a holster is a Formidable: Observation task. A thorough frisk will boost this to Average: Observation.

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $15 (C/C)

Silencer/Suppressor

A kit of parts which, when fitted to a firearm, reduce the sound of the discharge. Nothing can completely eliminate the sound of a weapon firing. There is always some sound, even from the best of silenced/suppressed weapons, even if its only the clack of the action and the click of the hammer failing. Weight and price below do not include the weapon. Price includes the cost of a gunsmith's modification (revolvers cannot be silenced).

Weight: 0.5 kg (pistol), 1 kg (SMG/rifle)
Price: $1000 (S/C)

Weaver M-22 Telescopic Rifle Sight

May be attached to any rifle (Formidable: Small Arms—Rifle). If a scope is mounted, add 15 to the printed range for the rifle when conducting aimed shots. In addition, aimed shots at extreme range are conducted as if at long range for hit determination. Scopes have not effect on quick shots.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $750 (C/C)

Teledyne Catseye Starlight Scope

Powered from internal batteries. May be attached to a rifle (Difficult: Small Arms—Rifle), making direct fire possible at night, but it is not telescopic and does not improve the chance to hit.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $1250 (R/S)

Laser Sight

A laser sight is mounted atop a weapon in the same way as a telescopic sight, and must be carefully fitted and sighted in (Average: Small Arms—Rifle or Pistol), a task requiring 30 minutes and 10 rounds. The laser is adjusted to put a red dot on the target at the point of impact for that particular weapon, and hitting the target becomes easier (although it still requires some skill). Ultraviolet and infrared laser versions exist.

Laser sights may be fitted to any small arm, and can only be used in semiautomatic fire. Laser sights may only be used at 40 meters or less, and enable up to three shots fired during a phase to count as aimed shots instead of only the first one (all other shots fired in the phase count as quick shots). All other modifiers (movement by target, movement by firer, etc.) still apply.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $800 (S/C)

Laser Sight

The AN/PAQ-4A is an infrared laser version of the laser sight, meaning that only those wearing IR goggles can see the dot (the firer, of course, requires such goggles—not included in the price or weight given below).

The Allard Espion is a UV version, and requires a UV version of the goggles or a similar vision device ("sunglass"/visor versions could conceivably be built).

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $1800 (—/S)

Heavy Weapons Tripods

Tripod	Fits	Weight	Price	Availability
NLT (NATO light Tripod)	M60, M249	7 kg	$500	—/C
NMT (NATO Medium Tripod)	MAG	10 kg	$650	—/C
NHT (NATO Heavy Tripod)	M2HB, Mk-19 AGL	22 kg	$800	—/C

Tripods

A tripod for a weapon must be purchased separately. See the Heavy Weapons Tripod table.

Explosives

RamTech Radio Detonation Receiver Unit

An electrical device that enables a charge to be detonated from a remote location via radio signal. The receiver and its associated broadcast unit are specially adapted to send and receive coded signal to prevent accidental detonation by harmonics or by induction. Addition of a voice recognition chip to the circuit (Average: Electronics) makes possible detonation by a single specific word or sound sent by the transmitter. The unit is about the size of a pack of chewing gum, and contains a ROM or PROM chip and a battery. It is attached to a normal electrical blasting cap.

The unit may send and receive signals from up to one kilometer. Longer distances may be possible with units improvised from longer-ranged radios.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $250 (—/R)

RamTech Radio Detonation Broadcast Unit

An electrical device that enables a charge to be detonated from a remote location via radio signal. The broadcast unit is specially adapted to send a coded signal to prevent accidental detonation of the charge by harmonics or by induction. The unit may broadcast signals up to one kilometer. Longer distances may be possible with units improvised from longer-ranged radios.

Weight: 0.3 kg
Price: $350 (—/R)

Hercules Powder Co. Dynamite Stick

The most common explosive used by civil engineers for demolitions, it is relatively easy to manufacture and is coming into more common military use. A quarter kilogram stick has a DP value of 1.

Weight: 30 kg per case
Price: $8 per 0.25-kg stick, $600 per case of 100 sticks (S/V)

Hercules Powder Co. Plastic Explosive

Plastic explosive can be molded into desired shapes and will adhere to desired surfaces. It will not explode if burned, and can only be detonated by another explosion, usually provided by a blasting cap. A one-kilogram block has a DP value of 6.

Weight: 30 kg per case
Price: $35 per 1-kg block, $600 per case of 20 blocks (—/C)

Czech State Factories Semitek

A slightly more potent and form of plastic explosive manufactured in Czechoslovakia. Its properties are similar to plastic explosive. It has a DP value of 8 per kilogram.

Weight: 30 kg per case
Price: $40 per 1-kg block, $750 per case of 20 blocks (—/R)

McFadden Industries Engineer Demolitions Kit

This kit contains an assortment of items to enable a character to rig explosive charges and fuse them for detonation. Weight and price are given for individual items, as well as for the kit as a whole. Items without weight, etc., are not available separately. The explosives must be purchased separately.

A single charge uses up one blasting cap, and whatever fuse, detonators, and so on that the character chooses to use. Wire, tools, and the blasting machine can be recovered after a blast, but all other items are used up. Quantities in a kit are noted in parentheses.

Tools (1 Set): Pliers, knife, tape, cap crimper, and other items needed to prepare explosive charges. Weight: 4 kg. Price: $35 (C/V).

Cap, Blasting, Electric (50): At least one blasting cap is required to set off a charge. Weight: Negligible. Price: $2 (R/C).

Cap, Blasting, Nonelectric: (50): At least one blasting cap is required to set off a charge. Weight: Negligible. Price: $1 (R/C).

Wire, Electrical (2x100m Spools): For use with electrical blasting caps. Any length can be fastened to up to 10 caps. Not normally reused. Weight: 5 kg/spool. Price: $20 (V/V).

Wire, Trip (1x500m Spool): A thin wire used in booby traps and the like. Trip wires can be of any reasonable length, but it makes no sense to have them longer than the blast radius of the explosive. Weight: 2 kg/spool. Price: $30/spool (V/V).

Blasting Machine (1): A hand-cranked electrical igniter that can fire up to 10 caps electrically. The machine generates current by muscular motion and never needs recharging or battery changes. Weight: 0.5 kg. Price: $95 (S/C).

Fuse, Instant (2x100m coils): Burns 5900 meters per second; for use with nonelectric blasting caps. May be ignited by any igniter or by flame, and it can be combined with itself (to set off more than one cap) or with time fuse. Weight: 3 kg/coil. Price: $15/coil (S/C).

Fuse, Time (2x100m Coils): Burns 100 seconds per meter, for use with nonelectric blasting caps. May be ignited by any igniter or by flame, and it can be combined with itself (to set off more than one cap) or with instant fuse. Weight: 3 kg/coil. Price: $25/coil (S/C).

Igniter, Fuse (50): A weatherproof pull igniter, which can be used to light either instant or time fuses. This igniter can be used in simple (pull-only trip wire) booby traps. Only one trip wire per igniter. It can be fixed directly to a nonelectric blasting cap. Weight: Negligible. Price: $3 (S/C).

Timer (5): This detonator has a digital timer which can be set to any time from 30 seconds to 48 hours, in 30-second increments. It will fire up to 10 electrical caps. Once set and sealed, it is waterproof, but it cannot be set underwater. Weight: 0.25 kg. Price: $20 (S/C).

Igniter (5): A pull/release detonator, used for sophisticated booby traps. It will detonate either when pressure is placed on a trip wire or released from the trip wire (if a wire is cut, for example). Up to three trip wires may be attached. Weight: Negligible. Price: $75 (R/C).

Full Kit: All of the above, packed in a wooden chest for transport. Weight: 30 kg. Price: $500 (R/C).

Hercules Powder Co. Frame Charge

A prepared explosive charge used to blow in locked windows or doors, even those equipped with bars or metal plate up to two centimeters thick. It requires two phases (10 seconds) to emplace (using prefitted, double-sided tape or an integral wooden brace), and can be either command or remotely detonated, or rigged with a timer. The charge can also be used to blow holes in walls, provided they are not too thick. The frame charge has a penetration value of 2, but automatically counts as tamped and has only a concussion value of 1 due to the shape and composition of the charge.

Weight: 2 kg
Price: $100 (—/R)

Hercules Powder Co. Primer Cord

A rope-like plastic explosive used in various demolition jobs. Primer cord can be wrapped around conduits or small girders to sever them, or taped to a wall (in a circle) to blow an entry hole. It can also be used to link other explosive charges together for almost instantaneous detonation (it will detonate other explosives by itself, without need for a blasting cap). Primer cord itself requires a blasting cap. Primer cord has a DP value of 3 per meter.

Weight: 0.5 kg per meter.
Price: $15 per meter (—/C).

Body Armor

CES IIb

The CES (combat environment suit) IIb is essentially a head-to-toe, multipiece Kevlar garment with joint and seam seals, and micropore filter masks for use in contaminated environments. Only a relatively few such suits exist, and the majority of them belong to special operations units of national governments.

The suit is fairly heavy, although it represents a vast increase in agility and dexterity over its predecessors, CES I, Ib, and IIa. These prototypes never caught on due to their being impossibly cumbersome. The CES IIb causes a -1 modifier to its wearer's Initiative (to a minimum of 1) and prevents the user from moving faster than at a trot. Its armor value is 1 (over the entire body), and it has an attachment for an ice box.

Weight: 10 kg
Price: $2700 (—/S)

Ice Box

The Ice Box is a small waste-heat processing unit that is an add-on for various kinds of pressurized/sealed armors. Depending upon the quality of the suit's environmental seal, the Ice Box can increase the difficulty of IR-spotting tasks against the user by up to two levels. The Ice Box needs a new coolant packet after four hours of constant use. It must vent its waste heat as steam at least once every 20 minutes. Careful users are always trying to find a place to vent the accumulated heat, even if only after a minute or two of usage.

Weight: 2.3 kg
Price: $1550, Coolant Packet: $120 (—/—)

RamTech Bodyguard Kevlar (Ballistic Nylon) Vest

This type of body armor is intended to provide protection from fragments, not to protect against direct hits from small arms.

Weight: 4 kg
Price: $800 (S/C)

Security Industries Flak Jacket

This type of body armor is intended to provide protection from fragments, not direct hits from small arms.

Weight: 8 kg
Price: $400 (R/C)

Miltech Ltd. KV1 Kevlar (Ballistic Nylon) Helmet

This is intended to provide protection from fragments, not direct hits from small arms.

Weight: 0.5 kg
Price: $100 (S/C)

Garcia-Seguro Steel Helmet

This is intended to provide protection from fragments, not direct hits from small arms.

Weight: 1 kg
Price: $50 (C/V)

RamTech Close Assault Armor

Improved, but bulky body armor incorporating additional layers of Kevlar and metal/ceramic plate inserts. It protects chest and abdomen with an armor value of 2, arms and legs with a value of 1. Because of the armor's bulk, wearers may not move faster than a trot. All tasks become one level more difficult for wearers of this armor.

Weight: 16 kg
Price: $1200 (—/S)

Toys For Nomes

These are items available to wealthy consumers in ***Conspiracy Rules***. While most are unworthy of the truly rich, they are quite popular among the merely rich and people who like to put on airs.

Holographic Art

In some circles, holographic wall still lifes and family portraits are the latest rage. As well, many people have taken to having holographs made of deceased loved ones before interment in order to maintain a feeling of "remaining close" to them.

Weight: 0.1-20 kg
Price: $250-70,000 (S/C)

Holostars

Holostars are artificially star-shaped gems that hold holographic scenes at their centers. Typically, the image is of a loved one—making the object something of a combination between a piece of jewelry and a locket. Some are tastefully done, but great many are rather tacky.

Weight: 0.05 kg or less
Price: $20-5000 (C/V)

Interactive TV

Interactive TV is a service option available to cable users. It costs about $100 extra per month but allows a subscriber to conduct almost all forms of business by television, much the way computer users do with the business internet service. Interactive TV also allows users to participate in real-time, at-home, audience-involvement programming, which ranges from game shows to call-in video conferences (for those users with teleplexes).

Weight: 0.1 kg (connection box with keypad)
Price: $350 start-up fee, plus $100 per month (C/V)

Opticards

Opticards are the newest financial "convenience" in North America, currently being offered by the new conglomerate Visamericard Credit Corporation. Each Opticard contains a data chip with the individual's complete transaction record. This record includes not only the amount of money of every transaction, but the time, place, and vendor with whom the business was conducted. For individuals who subscribe to interactive TV or who use the business internet computer services, the card activity is integrated with those services.

The Opticard credit line is always set at one-half the user's net worth (all assets integrated). This credit can be drawn as cash or applied to purchases. The cards are color-coded to indicate credit levels, which means they also serve as indicators of income and general status.

Currently, most individuals with Opticards receive them through a sponsoring megacorporation. Many consider the cards to be the ultimate financial convenience. Others see them as an insidious mega-corporate strategy to ensure control of their employees.

See the Opticard Types table that ranks the cards in descending order of importance/credit.

Weight: 0.01 kg
Price: None (S/V)

Opticard Types

Color	*Credit Line*	*Falsification*[1]
Black	$5M+	Not possible
Platinum	$500K-5M	One-eighth skill test
Gold	$10K-500K	Impossible
Blue	$1K-10K	Formidable
Yellow	$500-1K	Difficult
Gray	$0-500	Average

Abbreviations: K=thousand, M=million
[1] Test versus lower of Forgery and Electronics. Assumes the availability of an electronics kit.

Teleplex

The Teleplex is a multi-purpose communications/data station common to the houses of the wealthy and the intelligentsia. It is a combination TV, VCR, modem, video telephone, and answering machine. Computers can be added to the system by modern or data port connection. Individuals with teleplexes do not need newspapers; they download them onto digital video disks or straight onto a data disk.

Weight: 26.5 kg
Price: $17,300 (R/S)

Variable Glasses

Variable glasses have dynamic oil lenses whose curvature can be adjusted by the user, allowing for prescription changes as needed, as well as for temporary magnification. The oil is contained between two thin, semi rigid membranes; adjusting the tension on these membranes is what changes the lens' curvature.

While the spectacles are currently experiencing great popularity, there are several consumer reports connecting the lenses to accelerated eye degradation, apparently as a result of eye strain due to improper settings.

Weight: Negligible
Price: $550 (C/C)

Wall Screens

Wall screens are color, LCD screens that can be used as computer displays or television screens. A popular basic setting for wall screens are landscapes—most of which are live scenes, transmitted via cable or direct broadcast (satellite) channels. Some are unchanging views of a certain part of the world (coastlines, coral reefs, city centers, and views from orbit are all popular). Others offer a changing number of such scenes, usually nature-oriented "beauty shots" from around the globe. Also offered are animation, fractals, and computer-generated interplanetary or interstellar voyages.

Among Nomes, the screens are plasma rather than LCD, and instead of computer-generated space voyages, the biggest recent fad is live views of Jupiter and its moons in motion. A broadcast satellite was recently inserted into Jupiter orbit specifically for this purpose.

The weight and prices below are per square meter of visual surface.

Weight: 13 kg
Price: LCD: $5500 (S/C), Plasma: $26,000 (—/R)

VEHICLES

These definitions will help to understand the vehicle listings that follow.

Vehicle Chart Definitions

Term	*Definition*
Price	Includes all weapons listed under Armament, all ammunition listed under Ammo, and one full load of fuel.
Targeting	Targeting bonus includes the effects of a range finder, thermal imagers, ballistic computers, etc. A targeting bonus is given as a DM to the to-hit roll.
Stabilization	Any special weapon stabilization machinery that allows the weapon to be fired accurately while the vehicle is moving.
Armament	Weapons with which the vehicle is normally equipped and which are included in its price (MG: Machinegun, GL: Grenade launcher, WC: Water cannon).
Ammo	The amount of ammunition carried in ammunition stores by weapon or ammo type. Additional ammunition may be carried, but counts as cargo.
Cruise Speed	Used in travel movement, cruise speed is the effective number of kilometers the vehicle can travel in one hour (kilometers per hour or kph). Rates are given for on-road (left of slash) and off-road (right of the slash) rates.
Combat Movement	Max number of meters the vehicle can move in one combat phase. On-road movement is to the left of the slash, off-road movement is to the right. Movement rates for water vessels and aircraft are given in eight-meter increments moved per combat phase.
Crew	Number of crew + number of passengers.
Feed	Type of feed used for mounts and beasts of burden. Type and amount of feed per day are given.
Fuel Capacity	Maximum fuel capacity, in liters.
Fuel Consumption	Fuel consumption rate, in liters of gasoline per hour.
Fuel Type	Types of fuel the vehicle can use: AvG: Aviation gasoline D: Diesel A: Alcohol—methanol and ethanol C: Coal W: Wood B: Battery
Load	Interior cargo capacity, given in kilograms unless otherwise noted.
Weapons Mounts	Most weapons are fired by the gunner. Weapons fired by other crewmembers are mounted in weapons mounts. Weapons mounts will accept any MG or the Mk-19 grenade launcher; most mounts have a weapon in them, but it may be removed. The vehicle entry will explain the location of weapons mounts (if any) and who fires weapons in them (C: Commander, P: Passenger, G: Gunner, L: Loader, etc.).
Weight	Gross weight, including ammo and fuel but not cargo and passengers. Given in kilograms.
Combat Statistics	Characteristics used in vehicle combat.
Configuration	Ground vehicle configuration used in the hit location and damage charts: Standard Turreted Crew in hull
Suspension	Ground vehicle suspension used in the vehicle damage charts: Wheeled Tracked
Armor	Ground vehicle armor by vehicle locations. The format is Location: AV#: HR: Front hull armor value HS: Side hull armor value HR: Rear hull armor value TF: Turret front armor value TS: Turret side AV TR: Turret rear AV

Ground Vehicles

The following vehicles use the rules for ground movement.

Mounts

Use the riding skill to "drive" mounts.

Horse (Broken)		
Price:	$2,000 (S/S)	Used as a mount for sport riding by Nomes and as transport in certain wilder areas of the country. Some people (Native Americans, for example) have a particular affinity for horses. Rider is fired at as a mounted target.
Hits:	60	
Feed:	12 kg + graze	
Load:	120 kg	
Weight:	350 kg	
Cruise Speed:	10 / 10	
Combat Move:	10 / 30 / 60	
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*	

Two-Wheeled Vehicles

The following vehicles are treated as mounts in combat. Characters will need skill in the Ground Vehicle (Wheeled) skill to perform difficult maneuvers and to handle malfunctions—like collisions.

Apollo Conquistador Bicycle (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)		
Price:	$200 (V/V)	A ruggedly built cross-country or mountain model. Bicycles are the cheapest private vehicle to operate, and one of the most common in cities these days. Rider is fired at as a mounted target.
Fuel Type:	Muscle	
Load:	10 kg	
Weight:	15 kg	
Crew:	1	
Night Vision:	None	
Cruise Speed:	30 / 10	
Combat Move:	15 / 4	
Fuel Capacity:	N/A	
Fuel Consumption:	N/A	
Configuration:	Standard	
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)	
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*	

Suzuki Sparrow Motor Scooter (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)		
Price:	$950 (C/C)	A small, lightweight, and inexpensive motorbike, very popular with those who need more speed than a bicycle can give (and who can afford the fuel). Rider is fired at as a mounted target.
Fuel Type:	G, A	
Load:	50 kg	
Weight:	95 kg	
Crew:	1	
Night Vision:	Headlight	
Cruise Speed:	100 / 40	
Combat Move:	50 / 25	
Fuel Capacity:	12	
Fuel Consumption:	0.75	
Configuration:	Standard	
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)	
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*	

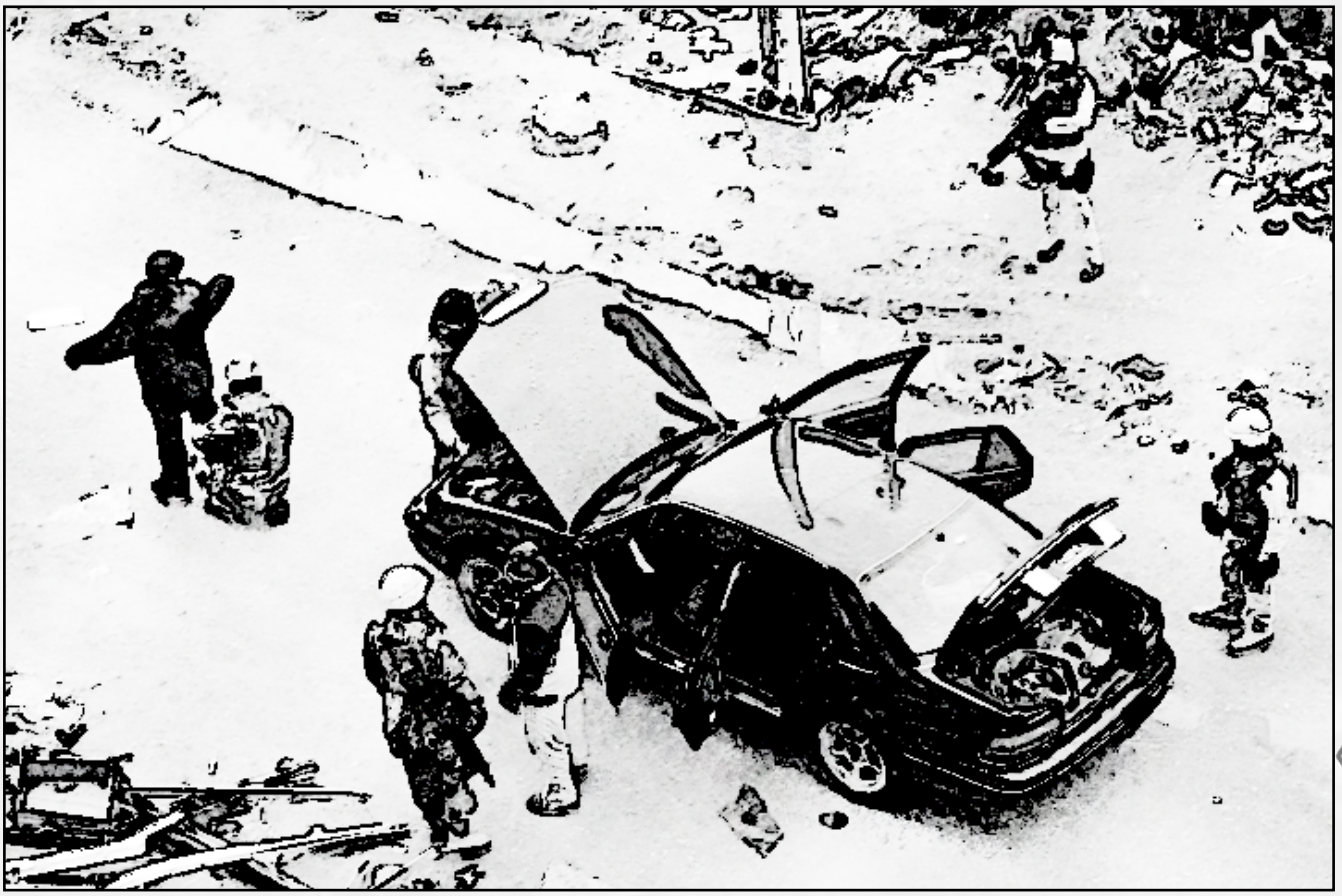
Yamaha Apache Motorcycle (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)		
Price:	$5,000 (V/V)	One of a variety of small dirt and cross-country models, used primarily by the military for scouting and by certain rural criminal gangs for transportation. Rider is fired at as a mounted target.
Fuel Type:	G, A, AvG	
Load:	300 kg	
Weight:	156 kg	
Crew:	1 + 1	
Night Vision:	Headlight	
Cruise Speed:	95 / 37	
Combat Move:	45 / 20	
Fuel Capacity:	16	
Fuel Consumption:	2	
Configuration:	Standard	
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)	
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*	

Harley-Davidson Motorcycle (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)		
Price:	$8,500 (C/C)	This is one of a variety of street-legal machines, some used primarily by young, up-and-coming executives trying to cultivate a daredevil image, others used by gangs who don't need to cultivate an image; they live it. Rider is fired at as a mounted target.
Fuel Type:	G, A	
Load:	100 kg	
Weight:	240 kg	
Crew:	1 + 1	
Night Vision:	Headlight	
Cruise Speed:	95 / 40	
Combat Move:	50 / 20	
Fuel Capacity:	16	
Fuel Consumption:	2	
Configuration:	Standard	
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)	
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*	

Multi-Wheeled Vehicles

Use the Ground Vehicle (Wheeled) skill to perform difficult maneuvers and to handle malfunctions.

GDM Citizen 3 (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)		
Price:	$7,000 (C/C)	Built in South Korea on behalf of the parent company, the Citizen 3 is used for rental cars, cabs, and by middle-class types who have saved enough to get off a bicycle. Lower-echelon executives also use them if they are on their way down and can't afford extravagances.
Fuel Type:	G, A	
Load:	300 kg	
Weight:	1 ton	
Crew:	1 + 3	
Night Vision:	Headlights	
Cruise Speed:	90 / 15	
Combat Move:	50 / 10	
Fuel Capacity:	80	
Fuel Consumption:	5	
Configuration:	Standard	
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)	
Armor:	*HF: 1* *HS: 1* *HR: 1*	



GAZ 1200 Tovarisch (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$6,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	G, A, Methane
Load:	400 kg
Weight:	1 ton
Crew:	1 + 3
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 15
Combat Move:	48 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	80
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

The GAZ is a Russian-designed competitor to the Citizen 3. It is cheaper, but has a reputation for being less well made and a little agricultural in its performance. However, the GAZ has a growing fan base due to its being the only production car that can run on methane with no modification to the engine. All that is needed is to fit a pressurized fuel tank, costing around $400.

GDM Lancer (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$695,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.6 tons
Weight:	1.2 tons
Crew:	1 + 4
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	110 / 17
Combat Move:	60 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	100
Fuel Consumption:	6
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (3)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

The General Dynamics Motors (GDM) Lancer is a good, solid car—almost a throwback to another era. But it is also one of the most luxurious animals on the road, with a plush interior, a high-response, high-powered engine, top-of-the-line stereo, soundproofing, extra safety features and near racecar quality braking and fuel injection systems. With its distinctive lines it has often been described as "the shark of the road."

Ford-Revlon Elite (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$55,000 (S/C)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.5 tons
Weight:	1 ton
Crew:	1 + 2
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	110 / 17
Combat Move:	60 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	80
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

The Elite is one of the most popular modern sports cars. Its "super-glide" engine provides smooth acceleration. The Elite is known to have the most well-equipped glove compartment on any current model (due to the influence of the Revlon arm of the conglomerate) with an automatic, lighted, pop-down makeup mirror and completely stocked makeup kit, including all relevant applicators. The Canadian humorist Anton Wilson Peale says of this car: "My ex-wife had an Elite, but she had to trade it in. It ran out of lip gloss."

GDM Ariel (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$85,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.4 tons
Weight:	1 ton
Crew:	1 + 3
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	100 / 15
Combat Move:	60 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	100
Fuel Consumption:	6
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

GDM has discovered that the Ariel's design and appearance appeals mostly to young professional women, and advertises it accordingly.

NAC Bobcat Coupe (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$20,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.2 tons
Weight:	1 ton
Crew:	1 + 3
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	100 / 15
Combat Move:	60 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	120
Fuel Consumption:	6
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

Built in China, the Nanjing Automotive Combine's Bobcat is a version of a design originally produced in the United Kingdom. NAC acquired the manufacturing rights after a controversial takeover battle, closed the UK factory and transferred production back home. After a makeover NAC released the Bobcat worldwide, playing on its ability as a practical everyday car as well as its sporting heritage. Performance and handling are reasonable for a front-wheel drive car.

Chrysler 350C (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$35,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.7 tons
Weight:	1.6 tons
Crew:	1 + 4
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 15
Combat Move:	50 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	120
Fuel Consumption:	6
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (3)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

Sometimes nicknamed the "Bulgemobile," the 350C is a large and tough sedan that bears a resemblance to the boxy American cars of the 1960s and 1970s. Used by many US police departments, it is also favored by certain criminal elements for the self-same reasons, namely its large trunk and rugged, though sporty, nature.

Mitsubishi-Ferrari MF-770 (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$980,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.2 tons
Weight:	1 ton
Crew:	1 + 1
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	130 / 17
Combat Move:	80 / 10
Fuel Capacity:	60
Fuel Consumption:	7
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

Labeled the "testosterossa" by the Canadian humorist Anton Wilson Peale ("My nine-year-old son got in one at the dealership, and it jump-started him into puberty"), the MF-770 is one of the hottest, most expensive sports cars on the road. It also merits the highest insurance premiums of any vehicle on the American road. Due to its maker's designation, the MF also has other, less wholesome nicknames.

Mazda MX Firefly (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$300,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.4 tons
Weight:	1.1 tons
Crew:	1 + 3
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	110 / 20
Combat Move:	70 / 15
Fuel Capacity:	100
Fuel Consumption:	6
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

Although it is not the only "ragtop" left, the Firefly is by far the most popular convertible available today. The vehicle is in such demand that the manufacturers have established a waiting list for purchasers, and used Fireflies can be sold almost instantly.

Martin Auto Union (MAU) Vexis (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	2,000,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, AvG
Load:	100 kg
Weight:	1.2 tons
Crew:	1 + 1
Night Vision:	Headlights, FLIR
Cruise Speed:	270 / 25
Combat Move:	70 / 11
Fuel Capacity:	150
Fuel Consumption:	8
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (1)
Armor:	*HF: 0*
	HS: 0
	HR: 0

The Roadster was a limited edition vehicle for the rich who wanted something both stylish and fast. Only 50 were made per year, and every year's model was slightly different in order to avoid confusion. The German-built engine and drivetrain were tuned versions of one originally designed for a large executive limousine, and offer truly mind-boggling performance in a car this size. The body was styled along the lines of the classic British and European sports cars of the mid-20th century and is mostly carbon-fibre in construction. In every way the Roadster is a true Nome's plaything, but what a car!

Mercedes-Maybach 750 (Armored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$1,910,000 (S/R)
Fuel Type:	G
Load:	600 kg
Weight:	2 tons
Crew:	1 + 4 (or 2 + 4)
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 17
Combat Move:	45 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	180
Fuel Consumption:	11
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (4)
Armor:	*HF: 4*
	HS: 4
	HR: 4

An armored luxury automobile, with an extra-large, customized interior. Vehicles such as these are used by extremely wealthy individuals, high government officials, or by high-level corporate executives. They are often equipped with entertainment centers, cellular telecommunications devices, computers, and mobile fax machines. Most also have a two-way radio (secure channel) to enable security personnel in other vehicles to communicate with the driver and vice versa. Many have a sealed passenger/driver compartment with a 1-2 hour internal air supply (to foil chemical or flamethrower attacks).

NAC ElectroStar (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$4,600 (S/C)
Fuel Type:	B
Load:	200 kg
Weight:	0.8 tons
Crew:	1 + 1 (or 1+3 if no load)
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	160 / 20
Combat Move:	40 / 5
Fuel Capacity:	5-hr charge
Fuel Consumption:	Special: 100 km range per charge
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

With the prices of gasoline-powered automobiles always rising and the requirement for long-distance commuting vehicles continually dropping, a number of low-end automobile manufacturers have begun to aggressively market electric vehicles. Usually small and without many luxuries, these vehicles nonetheless attract buyers who could not otherwise afford personal transportation. One such vehicle is the Nanjing Automotive Combine ElectroStar. Lacking the gas costs (an overnight charge with a standard extension cord is all that's needed) and other expenses of a vehicle with a combustion engine, the NAC ElectroStar is a good example of an average electric "econocar." The greatest drawback is the time it takes to charge the batteries.

Mercedes Sprinter/Volkswagen LT (Unarmored Cargo Veh.)

Price:	$83,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	1 ton (business), 600 kg (private), 300 kg (surv.)
Weight:	2 tons
Crew:	1 + 5
Night Vision:	Headlights (private), image intensification videoccam (surv.)
Cruise Speed:	90 / 17
Combat Move:	45 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	120
Fuel Consumption:	8
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

Designed for business or private use, this van usually has a completely enclosed cargo bed accessible from the passenger compartment. Private models can be fitted with extra seats. There is also an open flatbed version available, with an enclosed cab. Vans with fake business markings are used by the police and others for covert surveillance. Weapons are seldom fitted, but a radio can be. Price does not include any additional equipment fitted. Passenger limitations are primarily comfort related.

Toyota Land Ranger (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$50,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	0.5 tons
Weight:	1.5 tons
Crew:	1 + 4
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 30
Combat Move:	50 / 20
Fuel Capacity:	150
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

The Landcruiser series of vehicles has been popular worldwide for years, and the Land Ranger is the company's latest offering in this market sector. It combines a good level of interior comfort with extra capacity fuel tanks and good cross-country capability. This makes the Land Ranger popular with those whose travels take them off of the asphalt occasionally.

Chrysler Chieftain Pickup Truck (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$35,000 (C/S)
Fuel Type:	G, A
Load:	1.25 tons
Weight:	2 tons
Crew:	1 + 6
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 20
Combat Move:	60 / 20
Fuel Capacity:	105
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (3)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

These medium-sized civilian utility trucks are in common use, and are particularly popular in the south-western United States. Somewhat reminiscent of the so-called "full size Jeep" trucks, the Chieftain can carry up to 1.25 tons of cargo or an equivalent load of passengers (although no provision is made for them) in the open back end.

HMMWV (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$18,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	D, G, A
Load:	1.25 tons
Weight:	2 tons
Crew:	1 + 5
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	100 / 30
Combat Move:	50 / 15
Fuel Capacity:	90
Fuel Consumption:	7
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

The above letters stand for high-mobility, multipurpose wheeled vehicle. The HMMWV is a four-wheel-drive off-road vehicle designed as a light scout, utility, and cargo vehicle. Just as the original Jeep entered civilian use after WWII, so are surplus "Hummers" coming into vogue. Many small businesses use them as delivery vehicles, and customized versions are becoming popular status symbols in some sections of the populace.

Winnebago Nomad Camper (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$580,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	G, A, D
Load:	800 kg
Weight:	2 tons
Crew:	1 + 4
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 17
Combat Move:	45 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	120
Fuel Consumption:	8
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

This is a specially modified version of the panel van incorporating a small kitchen, toilet, shower, and folding beds for long-distance cross-country travel or for use as mobile living quarters. Although still used for their original purpose (recreational camping), they are standard housing for an increasing proportion of the population.

Orca 2 ½-Ton Truck (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$50,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	D, A
Load:	2.5 tons
Weight:	4 tons
Crew:	2 + 10
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 17
Combat Move:	45 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	195
Fuel Consumption:	16
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

A standard 6x6 cargo truck with moderate cross-country performance, capable of carrying 2 1/2 tons of cargo or an equivalent load of passengers.

Kenilworth Piledriver Semi (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$50,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	D, A
Load:	2.5 tons
Weight:	4 tons
Crew:	2 + 10
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	90 / 17
Combat Move:	45 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	195
Fuel Consumption:	16
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

A 4x6 truck engine-and-cab combination used to pull a variety of trailers. This truck is commonly known as a 'semi," a shortened version of semi-tractor-trailer. The vehicle does well on the highway, but has very poor cross-country mobility. It is usually equipped with multichannel CB radios and other electronic equipment (radar detectors, etc.).

Enclosed Trailer (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$24,000 (C/C)
Fuel Type:	N/A
Load:	12 tons
Weight:	16 tons
Crew:	N/A
Night Vision:	None
Cruise Speed:	Per towing veh.
Combat Move:	Per towing veh.
Fuel Capacity:	N/A
Fuel Consumption:	N/A
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

This is a fully enclosed open-cargo trailer designed to be towed by the semi trailer tractor described above. It is used for cargoes that can readily be loaded through the two rear doors (on some versions, a smaller, side door is fitted). Some versions have integral temperature control equipment for special cargoes. No provision is made for armament. Movement is per towing vehicle.

Roadrunner Passenger Bus (Unarmored Cargo Vehicle)

Price:	$100,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	D, A
Load:	7 tons
Weight:	11 tons
Crew:	1 + 60
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	80 / 17
Combat Move:	40 / 8
Fuel Capacity:	280
Fuel Consumption:	17
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (2)
Armor:	*HF: 1*
	HS: 1
	HR: 1

This is a typical cross-country passenger bus, now mostly used for travel along major interstates between the metroplexes. Smaller models are occasionally used by city mass-transit companies, or by private companies.

Cadillac-Gage Commando V300P (Armored Personnel Carrier)

Price:	$230,000 (–/S)
Fuel Type:	D, A
Load:	600 kg
Weight:	12 tons
Crew:	3 + 6
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	100 / 30
Combat Move:	50 / 25
Fuel Capacity:	284
Fuel Consumption:	18
Armament:	Water cannon, Mk-19 40mm AGL coaxial (optional coaxial MAG MG in addition)
Ammo:	Water, 100x40mm grenade (1200x7.62mmN optional)
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (3)
Armor:	*HF: 6*
	HS: 4
	HR: 3

The V300P APC is intended for riot control and civil affairs duties by police departments. It is armed with a water cannon and a Mk-19 AGL, an optional coaxial MAG MG, three firing ports on each side., and a storage tank for the water cannon. A hose can be connected to a fire hydrant for unlimited "ammunition" at a sacrifice of mobility. The hose can be connected/disconnected by one person in 15 seconds.

RamTech P-320 (Armored Personnel Carrier)

Price:	$690,000 (–/S)
Fuel Type:	D, A
Load:	600 kg
Weight:	12 tons
Crew:	2 + 10
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	100 / 30
Combat Move:	50 / 15
Fuel Capacity:	284
Fuel Consumption:	18
Armament:	40mm AGL, tranquilizer dart gun, foam nozzle
Ammo:	100x40mm, 100 x tranquilizer dart, 20 x foam pulses
Configuration:	Turreted
Suspension:	Wheeled (3)
Armor:	*HF: 2* *TF: 1*
	HS: 2 *TS: 1*
	HR: 2 *TR: 1*

This vehicle represents one of the most advanced police anti-riot APCs available. The 6x6 armored vehicle is designed to carry up to 10 fully equipped riot police and provide them with support as well as transportation. The vehicle is equipped with a "cherry picker" platform, capable of elevation up to 18 meters above street level. This platform carries a remotely operated tranquilizer dart gun, 40mm AGL, video camera, and foam nozzle, all controlled by the vehicle commander from inside the hull. The 40mm AGL has two 50-round bins for ammo storage, selected at will by the commander. It has six firing ports, three on the right side and three on the left side.

Water Cannon

						Recoil		
Ammo	***ROF***	***Dam***	***Pen***	***Bulk***	***Mag***	***SS***	***Brst***	***Rng***
Water pulse	5	(1)	Nil	N/A	10	—	—	8
Foam pulse	SA (2)	(3)	Nil	N/A	10	—	—	5

[1]All characters within an eight-meter square are knocked down, take 1D6-1 damage to a random location, and lose all further actions for the turn.

[2] The foam cannon is fired using non-automatic fire, but can only fire three shots in a combat phase.

[3]All characters within an eight-meter square are hit by a glob of adhesive foam. The character can take one action to dodge the spray, but loses their next action for the turn or the next. Characters failing the dodge action are stuck in the foam in their current location. The foam nozzle sprays short bursts, each covering a single eight-meter square. The foam is very dense, highly sound-absorbent, and transmits light well, but diffuses it greatly. Victims trapped in it can breathe normally, but are unable to see beyond a few centimeters and cannot hear sounds more than a couple of meters distant. If desired, a knockout gas can also be injected into the mixture (characters must roll Difficult: Constitution to remain conscious each five-second phase exposed to the foam). A harmless dye can also be mixed into the foam, to mark suspects for later retrieval.This weapon is integral to the vehicle and is included in the price, weight, and availability of that vehicle.

Watercraft

The following vehicles require the use of the Small Watercraft cascade skill.

Small Open Boat

Price:	*
Length:	1
Draft:	0.5 m
Speed:	1
Turn:	4
Acceleration:	1
Pumps:	None
Nightvision:	None
Load:	100 kg
Crew:	2 / 4 (min./opt.)
Cruise Speed:	2 / 2
Propulsion:	Muscle
Fuel Type:	N/A
Fuel Capacity:	N/A
Fuel Consumption:	N/A
Configuration:	Flush deck
Tonnage:	1
Size:	1
Armament:	None
Ammo:	N/A
Hull Armor:	0
Waterline Armor:	0
SS Armor:	N/A

Rowboats, canoes, assault boats, and other open craft four meters long or less. These can often be carried by one or two people, and can usually be stored on top of a vehicle as cargo. Inflatable versions are even more portable than wooden ones.

* Price is based on construction:

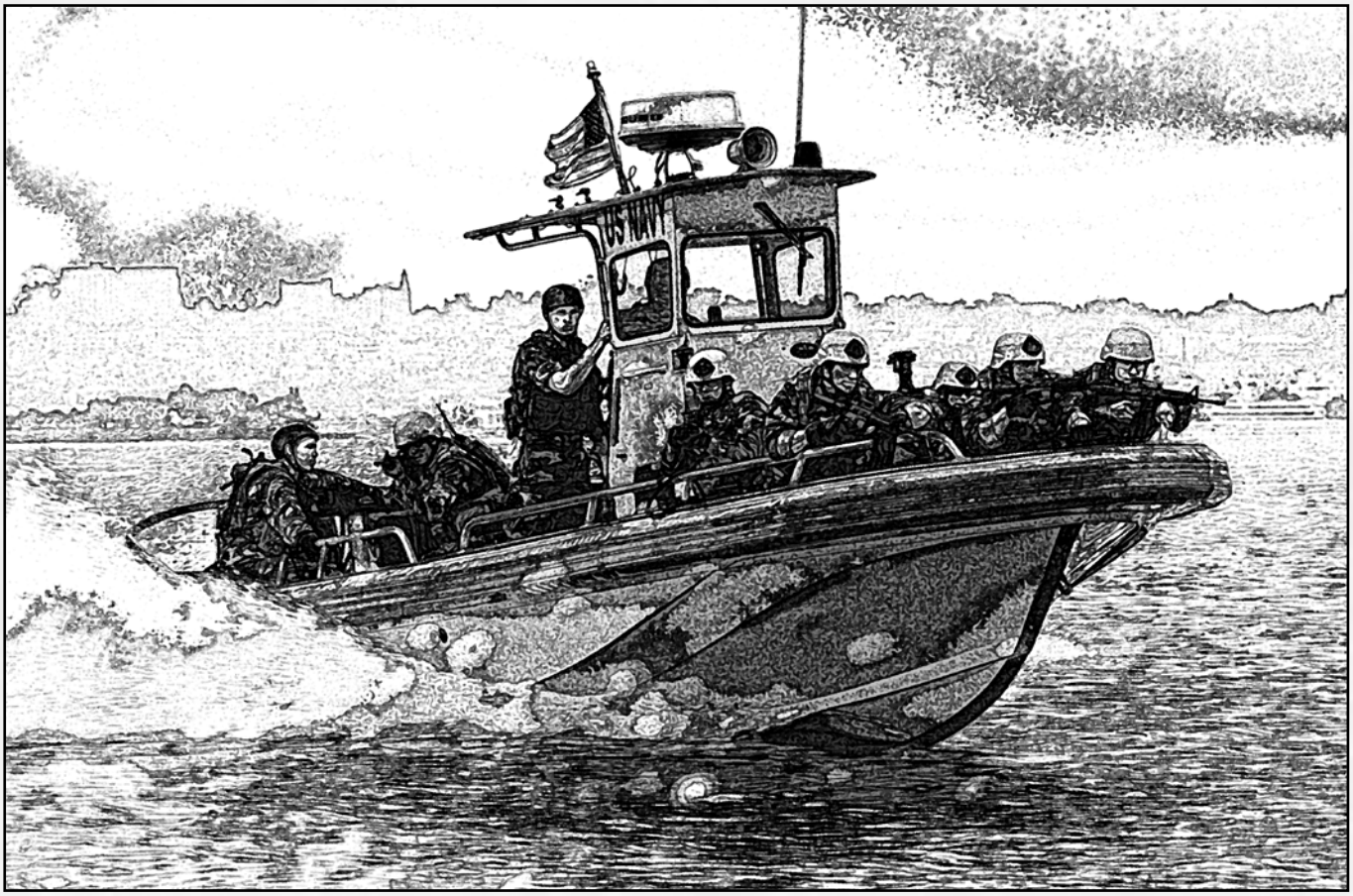
$300 (metal, C/C),
$900 (inflatable, C/C),
$2,300 (wood, R/C)

Cris Craft Runabout (Motorboat, Small)

Price:	$30,000 (C/C)
Length:	1
Draft:	1 m
Speed:	4
Turn:	4
Acceleration:	4
Pumps:	1
Nightvision:	None
Load:	1 ton
Crew:	1 / 2 (min./opt.)
Cruise Speed:	8 / 8
Propulsion:	Motor
Fuel Type:	D, A
Fuel Capacity:	220
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Flush deck
Tonnage:	10
Size:	1
Armament:	None
Ammo:	N/A
Hull Armor:	0
Waterline Armor:	0
SS Armor:	0

A wooden-hulled, open, "run-about" pleasure boat or small private fishing boat. It is very handy for those who can afford the gas.

Can be fitted with one optional machinegun or grenade launcher.



PepsiCo Sunray Small (Sail Boat)		
Price:	$15,000 (C/C)	A sail powered, wooden hulled pleasure craft with a small cabin below deck. These boats require little maintenance and no fuel, although they can be hard to maneuver in cramped estuaries and the like. DW: down wind. UW: up wind. Can be fitted with an optional machinegun.
Length:	1	
Draft:	2 m	
Speed:	1D6/2 DW, 1D6/4 UW	
Turn:	2	
Acceleration:	0.5	
Pumps:	None	
Nightvision:	None	
Load:	1 ton	
Crew:	2 / 4 (min./opt.)	
Cruise Speed:	4 / 4	
Propulsion:	Sails	
Fuel Type:	N/A	
Fuel Capacity:	N/A	
Fuel Consumption:	N/A	
Configuration:	Flush deck	
Tonnage:	10	
Size:	1	
Armament:	None	
Ammo:	N/A	
Hull Armor:	0	
Waterline Armor:	0	
SS Armor:	0	

Cris Craft Foamdancer (Motorboat, Medium)		
Price:	$300,000 (C/C)	A medium-sized, wooden-hulled pleasure boat with a small cabin (a cabin cruiser) or small commercial fishing vessel. This is the most popular type of craft with small merchants, but fishing boats of this size are usually operated by several families in a communal consortium. Can be fitted with one or more optional machineguns or grenade launchers. Ammunition counts against Load capacity.
Length:	2	
Draft:	1 m	
Speed:	3	
Turn:	2	
Acceleration:	1	
Pumps:	1	
Nightvision:	White light spotlight	
Load:	2 ton	
Crew:	2 / 8 (min./opt.)	
Cruise Speed:	6 / 6	
Propulsion:	Motor	
Fuel Type:	D, A	
Fuel Capacity:	400	
Fuel Consumption:	10	
Configuration:	Flush deck	
Tonnage:	20	
Size:	2	
Armament:	None	
Ammo:	N/A	
Hull Armor:	0	
Waterline Armor:	0	
SS Armor:	0	

PBR (Patrol Boat, River)		
Price:	$490,000 (R/R)	A small, armed, wooden-hulled river patrol boat or its equivalent. Many of these are former government revenue boats or customs patrol boats that are now in private hands.
Length:	2	
Draft:	1 m	
Speed:	8	
Turn:	4	
Acceleration:	4	
Pumps:	1	
Nightvision:	White light spotlight	
Load:	1 ton	
Crew:	2 / 8 (min./opt.)	
Cruise Speed:	12 /12	
Propulsion:	Motor	
Fuel Type:	D, A	
Fuel Capacity:	500	
Fuel Consumption:	12	
Configuration:	Flush deck	
Tonnage:	20	
Size:	2	
Armament:	1 or 2 machineguns	
Ammo:	1,000 rds per gun	
Hull Armor:	0	
Waterline Armor:	0	
SS Armor:	0	



Aircraft

The following vehicles require the use of the *Pilot* cascade skill.

Teledyne Dornier CVA-27 Peregrine (Tilt-Rotor VSTOL)

Price:	$3,200,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	AvG
Load:	9 tons + 4.5 in a sling
Weight:	24 tons
Crew:	3 + 18 (executive)
Night Vision:	None
Cruise Speed:	10 / 10
Combat Move:	50 / 50
Fuel Capacity:	6215 (+13,200 in drop tanks)
Fuel Consumption:	512
Armament:	2 x M2HB minigun pods on two hard-points
Ammo:	1500 x .50 BMG
Min. Takeoff Dist.:	VTOL: 24 m STO: 550
Min. Landing Dist.:	VTOL: 24 m STO: 600 m
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*

The Peregrine is a tilt-rotor VSTOL (Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing) used by the military as a tactical transport, and by some civilian firms as a substitute for helicopters. The cabin has a door on the forward right side and a cargo ramp in the rear, and provision for a cargo hoist capable of carrying a slung load (vertical takeoff only) of up to 4.5 tons at half the aircraft's normal speed (at the expense of part of the internal cargo load). Vertical takeoff is only possible at two-thirds maximum load capacity. Statistics given below are for the executive transport/corporate security model (weapon pods for security model only). For extended range, two 6600 kg fuel pods can be installed on the external hardpoints.

Eurocopter-Bell-Textron Voyager (Rotary-Wing Aircraft)

Price:	$1,750,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	AvG
Load:	2,400 kg in four hardpoints
Weight:	2.5 tons
Crew:	2 + 6
Night Vision:	White spotlight
Cruise Speed:	376 / 376
Combat Move:	18 / 18
Fuel Capacity:	460
Fuel Consumption:	153
Armament:	2 x M2HB machineguns in door mounts
Ammo:	2,000 x .50 BMG
Min. Takeoff Dist.:	24 m
Min. Landing Dist.:	24 m
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*

The Voyager is an updated civilian version of the military OH62 Shawnee observation helicopter. Corporate security versions are sometimes fitted with a pair of M2HB door guns (one per side).

Boeing-Sikorsky S-153 Seminole (Rotary Wing Aircraft)

Price:	$16,500,000 (–/–)
Fuel Type:	AvG
Load:	4,100 kg, including passengers and hardpoints
Weight:	4 tons
Crew:	2 / 6 (min. / opt.)
Night Vision:	Thermal Imaging, Image Intensification
Fire Control Bonus:	+2
Cruise Speed:	540 / 540
Combat Move:	30 / 30
Fuel Capacity:	1,200
Fuel Consumption:	300
Armament:	25 mm autocannon 6 int. hardpoints 8 ext. hardpoints
Ammo:	500 x 20 mm
Min. Takeoff Dist.:	24 m
Min. Landing Dist.:	24 m
Armor:	*HF: 1* *HS: 1* *HR: 1*

The S-153 Seminole is a recon and attack helicopter developed by Boeing-Sikorsky in the early 2010s for the US Army and Marine Corps. The S-153 is a stealth version of the S-97 prototype compound helicopter (two counter-rotating propellers) with a pusher propeller aft providing rotational stability and additional thrust. The S-153 has two fold-out pylons providing two hardpoints each and an integral 25-mm autocannon in a steerable nose configuration. The autocannon retracts to increase stealth when not employed. An additional eight hardpoints (four on each side) can be added at the sacrifice of stealth. Various guided, unguided, and automatic weapons can be fitted on these hardpoints, including air-to-air missiles. The system can be operated by one or two pilots, or autonomously using the RPV Operator skill. The sensor package is steerable to provide a targeting advantage (-1 to fire rolls) and a designator for guided ordinance. The vehicle can also carry a squad of light infantry (10 troops) or a fully equipped heavy infantry fireteam (4 troops).

EADS-Sukhoi Nochvyéter (NightWind) (Fixed Wing)

Price:	$10,650,000 (S/S)
Fuel Type:	AvG
Load:	800 kg
Weight:	4.5 tons
Crew:	2 + 6
Night Vision:	None
Cruise Speed:	320 / 320
Combat Move:	16 / 16
Fuel Capacity:	750 (+600 if drop tanks mounted)
Fuel Consumption:	281
Armament:	800 kg in two hardpoints
Ammo:	By installed pod
Min. Takeoff Dist.:	750 m
Min. Landing Dist.:	800 m
Armor:	*HF: 0* *HS: 0* *HR: 0*

The Nochvyéter (NightWind) is a small private jet used by Nomes for sport flying and by corporations as an executive transport aircraft. It is not normally armed, but comes with two underwing attachment points for external fuel tanks (300 kilograms each), which are capable of accepting an M2HB gun pod or a small (250-pound) bomb.

M242A3 25-mm Autocannon

Ammo	*ROF*	*Mag*	*Range*	*Rnd*	*Damage*	*Pen*
25x137 mm	5	100B	250	APFSDSDU	14	13/9/3
				AP	14	4/0/-2
				HE	C1, B3	-6C

The M242A3 is an improved 25-mm automatic heavy weapon. The M242 is an externally powered, chain driven, single-barrel weapon capable of automatic and non-automatic fire modes. The M242 uses either the Heavy Weapons or the RCV Operations skill to fire.

Autonomous Vehicles (Robots)

Programming robots requires the Robotics skill.

Kraus-Maffei-Deere Auto-Farmer (Vehicular Robot)

Price:	$30,000,000 (—/R)
Weight:	65 tons
Fuel Type:	4.5 tons
Crew:	0 or 1 (RCV skill)
Initiative:	1
Skills:	Observation 3
Night Vision:	Headlights
Cruise Speed:	12 / 12
Combat Move:	12 / 12
Fuel Capacity:	2,000
Fuel Consumption:	50
Configuration:	Standard
Suspension:	Wheeled (4)
Armor:	*HF: 1* *HS: 1* *HR: 1*

The Kraus-Maffei-Deere Auto-Farmer is typical of a number of agricultural drudgebots made by several companies for use by the giant agricorps. The Auto-Farmer is a giant farming machine, combining the functions of tiller/cultivator, planter, and harvester. The machine is gigantic, and covers 64 to 128 rows of any given crop per pass. Older models of these machines had a human operator, and all models have a compartment for a human in case the robotic brain is damaged for some reason. Some models are rigged up for remote control from a central complex.

Kraus-Maffei-Deere CropScout (Nonvehicular Robot)

Price:	$12,565,000 (S/C)
Weight:	60 kg
Initiative:	2
Agility:	2
Strength:	2
Constitution:	2
Skills:	Observation 6, Unarmed Martial Arts 1
Nightvision:	White spotlight
Combat Move:	90 / 50
Fuel Type:	B (rechargeable)
Fuel Capacity:	8 hours (seeks charging station after 7 hours)
Configuration:	Biped
Armor:	Head: 1 Chest/Abdomen: 1 Arms/Legs: 0

The Kraus-Maffei-Deere CropScout is a specialized drudgebot used by agricultural corporations to monitor the condition of fields. CropScouts travel from field to field checking the level of insect, weed, and fungal infestation. The CropScout will send for the drone helicopters to spray the field with the appropriate insecticide/herbicide/fungicide combination. CropScouts resemble giant mechanical spiders, two meters wide and one high. The CropScout has an internal battery containing power sufficient for up to 18 hours average operation, and uses the Quadruped column on the Hit Location Table. Some models come with internal pesticide sprayers.

Kraus-Maffei-Deere GB 2000 (Nonvehicular Robot)

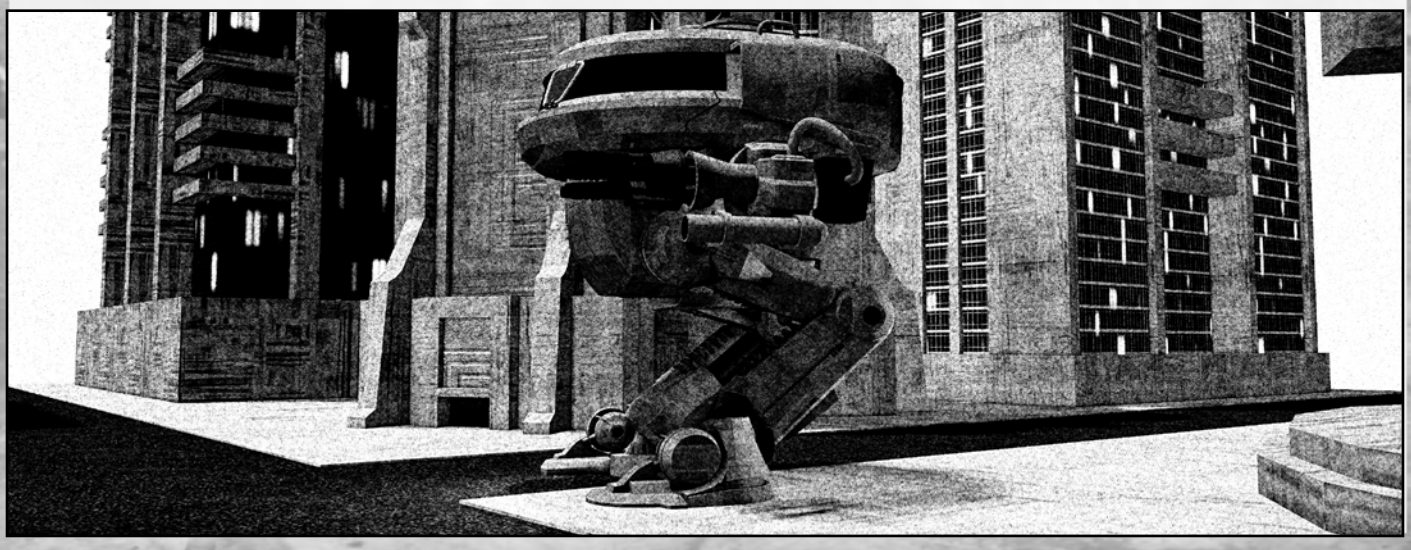
Price:	$4,875,000 (—/—)
Weight:	160 kg
Initiative:	3
Agility:	4
Strength:	6
Constitution:	6
Skills:	Observation 8, Slug Weapon (Rifle) 6, Unarmed Martial Arts 1
Sensors:	IR Motion detector, voice pattern recognition (audio/video)
Armament:	Chemical projector, paint pellet gun, tranquilizer dart rifle
Ammo:	Paint pellets x 100, Tranquilizer darts x 20
Combat Move:	32 / 12
Fuel Type:	G
Fuel Capacity:	18
Fuel Consumption:	1
Configuration:	Biped
Armor:	Head: 3 Chest/Abdomen: 2 Arms/Legs: 2

This robot resembles a one-meter-high garbage can mounted on two tank treads (the "legs"). The top is a small turret-like structure containing a smoke detector, electronic motion sensor, siren, flashers, a spotlight, chemical spray tubes (usually loaded with tear gas), a small loudspeaker, and a paint pellet marker gun (to mark suspects for later identification). Some models also contain provisions for remote operation from a central control room, and many have an internal video camera to record evidence.

The robot is programmed to patrol a fixed route on a fixed schedule, and to read in a number of preprogrammed ways to various situations. It is intended for internal patrols, or paved areas such as parking lots where it doesn't have to cross rough terrain. It also has a small loudspeaker for warnings, challenges, and announcements ("This area is restricted. Please vacate it at once.").

The robot's pattern recognition software is sophisticated enough to recognize the difference between animals such as dogs or cats and humans, reacting to them differently. The robot comes with a standard IR bar code scanner to recognize security passes.

GB-2000 guardbots are little more than moving burglar alarms, although they can videotape their actions, and they are capable of distinguishing between an alley cat and a cat burglar.



RamTech Roboguard-IV (Nonvehicular Robot)

Price:	$67,750,000 (—/—)
Weight:	240 kg
Initiative:	5
Agility:	4
Strength:	14
Constitution:	10
Skills:	Observation 10, Slug Weapon (Rifle) 8, Autogun 8, Unarmed Martial Arts 4, UCDR 2
Sensors:	IR Motion detector/tracker, voice pattern recognition (audio/video), sonic ranging and detection
Armament:	Chemical projector, paint pellet gun, tranquilizer dart rifle, integral 9mm SMG, M2HB MG, 25-mm Autocannon
Ammo:	100 x Paint pellets 20 x Tranquilizer darts, 50 x 9mmP, 100 x .50 BMG, 100 x 25x137 mm
Combat Move:	30 / 18
Fuel Type:	G
Fuel Capacity:	100
Fuel Consumption:	5
Configuration:	Biped
Armor:	Head: 4 Chest/Abdomen: 6 Arms/Legs: 4

The Roboguard-IV is intended for military and high-security applications. Resembling a three-meter-tall clam with arms and legs, it features a weapon mount attached to each side under the arm. The Roboguard-IV is extremely sophisticated and capable of considerable independent action within its preprogrammed parameters. The Roboguard-IV has two manipulative arms to restrain tranqed suspects.

The autocannon is integral to the unit. Use the M242A3 25-mm Autocannon stats.

RamTech Roboguard-III (Nonvehicular Robot)

Price:	$43,250,000 (—/—)
Weight:	220 kg
Initiative:	5
Agility:	4
Strength:	8
Constitution:	10
Skills:	Observation 8, Slug Weapon (Rifle) 8, Armed Martial Arts 3, Unarmed Martial Arts 2, UCDR 2
Sensors:	IR detector/tracker, voice pattern recognition (audio/video), sonic ranging and detection
Armament:	Chemical projector, paint pellet gun, tranquilizer dart rifle, integral 5.56-mm selective fire rifle (use M4 stats) integral 9mm SMG (use Uzi stats)
Ammo:	100 x Paint pellets 20 x Tranquilizer darts, 66 x 5.56mmN, 66 x 9mmP
Combat Move:	32 / 12
Fuel Type:	G
Fuel Capacity:	24
Fuel Consumption:	1
Configuration:	Quadruped
Armor:	Head: 1 Chest/Abdomen: 2 Arms/Legs: 2

The Roboguard-III resembles a 1.5-meter-tall armored golf cart with three arms, two of them capable of restraining suspects, opening doors, windows, cabinets, or conducting unarmed melee combat. One of the arms has a small rotary saw blade, which it uses to clear obstructions.

The robot's on-board computer includes a complex program detailing responses to various situations, and levels of permitted violence depending upon the stimuli. Roboguard-IIIs use the Quadruped column of the Hit Location Table (the robots have four small track units as their "legs").

TABLES AND HANDOUTS

SKILLS BY CLUSTER

Acrobat
- Acrobatics (AGL)
- Climbing (CON)
- Stealth (AGL)
- Thrown Weapon (STR)

Aircraft
- *Pilot (AGL)(cascade)*
  - Airship
  - Fixed Wing
  - Rotary Wing
  - Glider
  - Interface
- RCV Operations (EDU)

Animal Handling
- Farming (INT)
- Guard/Hunting Beasts (CON)
- Riding (CON)

Archaic Weapons
- Archery (STR)
- Thrown Weapon (STR)

Artillery
- Archaic Artillery (STR)
- Energy Artillery (AGL)
- Forward Observer (INT)
- Heavy Artillery (STR)
- RCV Operations (EDU)

Artisan
- Carpenter (CON)
- Jeweler (AGL)
- Mason (STR)
- Metallurgy (EDU)

Charm
- Act/Bluff (CHR)
- Carousing (CHR)
- Persuasion (CHR)
- Recruiting (CHR)
- Service (CHR)

Crime
- Forgery (AGL)
- Intrusion (AGL)
- Pickpocket (AGL)

Determination
- Leadership (CHR)
- Streetwise
- Willpower (INT)

Economics
- Admin/Legal (EDU)
- Business (EDU)
- Marketing (EDU)

Empathy
- Foreboding (EMP)
- Human Empathy (EMP)
- Animal Empathy (EMP)
- Computer Empathy (EMP)
- Empathic Healing (EMP)
- Project Emotion / Thought (EMP)
- Dimension Walk (EMP)

Engineer
- Combat Engineer (CON)
- Construction (EDU)
- Demolitions (AGL)
- Excavation (EDU)
- Starship Architecture (EDU)

Explore
- Climbing (CON)
- Liaison (CHR)
- Map (EDU)
- Navigation (INT)
- Scuba (CON)
- Survival (INT)
- Swimming (CON)
- High-G Environment (CON)

Fine Arts
- Act/Bluff (CHR)
- Dance (AGL)
- Disguise (CHR)
- *Music (cascade)*
  - Composition (EDU)
  - Strings (AGL)
  - Wind (AGL)
  - Percussion (AGL)
  - Keyboard (AGL)
  - Other (AGL)
- Painting (INT)
- Sculpture (INT)
- Song (CHR)

Gun Combat
- Early Firearms (STR)
- *Energy Weapon (AGL) (cascade)*
  - Energy Pistol
  - Energy Rifle
- *Slug Weapon (AGL) (cascade)*
  - Slug Pistol
  - Slug Rifle

Heavy Weapons
- Autogun (AGL)
- Energy Artillery (AGL)
- Grenade Launcher (STR)
- Heavy Guns (STR)
- Tac Missile (AGL)

Interaction
- Bargain (CHR)
- Instruction (CHR)
- Interrogation (CHR)
- *Language (CHR) (cascade)*
  - Language(s)
  - Linguistics
- Liaison (CHR)
- Persuasion (CHR)
- Recruiting (CHR)
- Hypnosis (INT)
- Luck (CHR)

Medical
- *Medical (EDU) (cascade)*
  - Diagnosis
  - Trauma Aid
  - Surgery

Melee
- *Unarmed Martial Arts (cascade)*
- *Armed Martial Arts (cascade)*
  - Large Blade (AGL)
  - Small Blade (AGL)
  - Polearm (STR)
  - Club (STR)

Perception
- Investigation (INT)
- Observation (INT)
- Psychology (INT)
- Research (INT)
- Scrounging (INT)
- Tracking (INT)

Personal Transport
- *Muscle Transport (cascade)*
  - Skates (AGL)
  - Skis (AGL)
  - Wheels (AGL)
- Parachute (CON)
- Running (CON)
- Small Watercraft (CON)

Physical Science
- Biology (EDU)
- Chemistry (EDU)
- Farming (INT)
- Genetics (EDU)
- Geology (EDU)
- Meteorology (EDU)
- Physics (EDU)
- Xeno-Biology (EDU)

Social Science
- Business (EDU)
- History (EDU)
- Instruction (CHR)
- Interview (INT)
- Psychology (INT)
- Research (INT)

Space Tech
- Astrogation (INT)
- Communications (EDU)
- Computer Operation (INT)
- Environment Suit (CON)
- *Pilot (AGL)(cascade)*
  - Interface
- RCV Operations (EDU)
- Sensors (INT)
- Survey (INT)
- Zero-G Environment (CON)

Squad Weapons
- Autogun (STR)
- Grenade Launcher (STR)
- Heavy Guns (STR)
- RCV Operations (EDU)
- Tac Missile (AGL)

Tactics
- Ground Tactics (INT)
- Fleet Tactics (INT)
- Ship Tactics (INT)

Technician
- Communications (EDU)
- Computer (EDU)
- Computer Operation (INT)
- Electronics (EDU)
- Machinist (AGL)
- Mechanic (STR)
- Robotics (EDU)

Vehicle
- *Ground Vehicle (AGL)(cascade)*
  - Wheeled Vehicle
  - Tracked Vehicle
- Hovercraft (AGL)
- Riding (CON)

Vessel
- Hovercraft (AGL)
- Large Watercraft (CON)
- Small Watercraft (CON)

Vice
- Bribery (CHR)
- Disguise (CHR)
- Gambling (INT)
- Streetwise (INT)

SKILLS BY ATTRIBUTE

Strength (STR)
- Archaic Artillery
- Archery
- Armed Martial Arts
- Autogun
- Early Firearms
- Energy Weapon
- Heavy Artillery
- Heavy Guns
- Mason
- Mechanic
- Thrown Weapon
- Unarmed Martial Arts

Constitution (CON)
- Carpenter
- Climbing
- Combat Engineer
- Environment Suit
- Guard/Hunting Beasts
- High-G Environment
- Large Watercraft
- Parachute
- Riding
- Running
- Scuba
- Small Watercraft
- Swimming
- Zero-G Environment

Agility (AGL)
- Acrobatics
- Armed Martial Arts
- Dance
- Demolitions
- Energy Weapon
- Forgery
- Grenade Launcher
- Ground Vehicle
- Hovercraft
- Intrusion
- Jeweler
- Machinist
- Muscle Transport
- Music
- Pickpocket
- Pilot
- Slug Weapon
- Stealth
- Tac Missile
- Unarmed Martial Arts

Intelligence (INT)
- Astrogation
- Computer Operation
- Farming
- Fleet Tactics
- Forward Observer
- Gambling
- Ground Tactics
- Interview
- Investigation
- Navigation
- Observation
- Painting
- Psychology
- Research
- Scrounging
- Sculpture
- Sensors
- Ship Tactics
- Streetwise
- Survey
- Survival
- Tracking
- Willpower

Education (EDU)
- Admin/Legal
- Biology
- Business
- Chemistry
- Communications
- Computer
- Construction
- Electronics
- Energy Artillery
- Excavation
- Genetics
- Geology
- History
- Map
- Medical
- Metallurgy
- Meteorology
- Music
- Physics
- RCV Ops
- Robotics
- Ship's Engineering
- Starship Architecture
- Xeno-Biology

Charisma (CHR)
- Act/Bluff
- Bargain
- Bribery
- Carousing
- Disguise
- Instruction
- Interrogation
- Language
- Leadership
- Liaison
- Luck
- Persuasion
- Recruiting
- Service
- Song

Empathy (EMP)
- Animal Empathy
- Computer Empathy
- Dimension Walk
- Empathic Healing
- Foreboding
- Human Empathy
- Hypnosis
- Project Emotion
- Project Thought
- Willpower Drain

ALPHABETIC SKILLS LIST

Skill	*Cluster—Attribute*
Acrobatics	Acrobat—AGL
Act/Bluff	Charm, Fine Art—CHR
Admin/Legal	Economics—EDU
Animal Empathy	Empathy—EMP
Archaic Artillery	Artillery—STR
Archery	Archaic Weapons—STR
Armed Martial Arts	Melee—AGL, STR
Astrogation	Space—INT
Autogun	Heavy Weapons—STR
Bargain	Interaction—CHR
Biology	Physical Science—EDU
Bribery	Vice—CHR
Business	Economics, Social Science—EDU
Carousing	Charm—CHR
Carpenter	Artisan—CON
Chemistry	Physical Science—EDU
Climbing	Acrobat, Explore—CON
Combat Engineer	Engineer—CON
Communications	Technician, Space—EDU
Computer	Technician—EDU
Computer Empathy	Empathy—EMP
Computer Operation	Space, Technician—INT
Construction	Engineer—EDU
Dance	Fine Arts—AGL
Demolitions	Engineer—AGL
Dimension Walk	Empathy—EMP
Disguise	Fine Arts, Vice—CHR
Early Firearms	Gun Combat—STR
Electronics	Technician—EDU
Empathic Healing	Empathy—EMP
Energy Artillery	Artillery, Heavy Weapons—EDU
Energy Weapon	Gun Combat—STR, AGL
Environment Suit	Space—CON
Excavation	Engineer—EDU
Farming	Animal Handling, Phys. Science—INT
Fleet Tactics	Tactics—INT
Foreboding	Empathy—EMP
Forgery	Crime—AGL
Forward Observer	Artillery—INT
Gambling	Vice—INT
Genetics	Physical Science—EDU
Geology	Physical Science—EDU
Grenade Launcher	Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—AGL
Ground Tactics	Tactics—INT
Ground Vehicle	Vehicle—AGL
Guard/Hunting Beasts	Animal Handling—CON
Heavy Artillery	Artillery—STR
Heavy Guns	Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—STR
High-G Environment	Explore—CON
History	Social Science—EDU
Hovercraft	Vehicle, Vessel—AGL
Human Empathy	Empathy—EMP
Hypnosis	Interaction—EMP
Instruction	Interaction, Social Science—CHR
Interrogation	Interaction—CHR
Interview	Social Science—INT
Intrusion	Crime—AGL

Skill	*Cluster—Attribute*
Investigation	Perception—INT
Jeweler	Artisan—AGL
Language	Interaction—CHR
Large Watercraft	Vessel—CON
Leadership	Determination—CHR
Liaison	Explore, Interaction—CHR
Luck	None—CHR
Machinist	Technician—AGL
Map	Explore—EDU
Mason	Artisan—STR
Mechanic	Technician—STR
Medical	Medical—EDU
Metallurgy	Artisan—EDU
Meteorology	Physical Science—EDU
Muscle Transport	Personal Transport—AGL
Music	Fine Art—AGL, EDU
Navigation	Explore—INT
Observation	Perception—INT
Painting	Fine Arts—INT
Parachute	Personal Transport—CON
Persuasion	Charm, Interaction—CHR
Physics	Physical Science—EDU
Pickpocket	Crime—AGL
Pilot`	Aircraft, Space—AGL
Project Emotion	Empathy—EMP
Project Thought	Empathy—EMP
Psychology	Perception, Social Science—INT
RCV Ops	Acft, Artl, Space, Squad Wpns—EDU
Recruiting	Charm, Interaction—CHR
Research	Perception, Social Science—INT
Riding	Animal Handling, Vehicle—CON
Robotics	Technician—EDU
Running	Personal Transport—CON
Scrounging	Perception—INT
Scuba	Explore—CON
Sculpture	Fine Arts—INT
Sensors	Space—INT
Service	Charm—CHR
Ship Tactics	Tactics—INT
Ship's Engineering	Space—EDU
Slug Weapon	Gun Combat—AGL
Small Watercraft	Pers Transport, Vessel—CON
Song	Fine Arts—CHR
Starship Architecture	Engineer—EDU
Stealth	Acrobat—AGL
Streetwise	Determination, Vice—INT
Survey	Space—INT
Survival	Explore—INT
Swimming	Explore—CON
Tac Missile	Hvy Wpns, Squad Wpns—AGL
Thrown Weapon	Acrobat, Archaic Wpns—STR
Tracking	Perception—INT
Unarmed Martial Arts	Melee—STR, AGL
Willpower	Determination—INT
Willpower Drain	Empathy—EMP
Xeno-Biology	Physical Science—EDU
Zero-G Environment	Space—CON

CHARACTER GENERATION WORKSHEET (1)

Name:
Gender:
Nationality:

Major Events:

Vignettes:

Interesting Items:

Character Talents:

Personality Traits:

Basic Attributes

Allocation Option (circle one)

	Values
Option 1	10, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3
Option 2	9, 6, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3
Option 3	8, 7, 6, 6, 4, 4, 4, 3
Option 4	7, 7, 7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4

Attribute	*Alloc.*	*Adj.*	*Final*
Strength (STR)			
Constitution (CON)			
Agility (AGL)			
Inelligence (INT)			
Education (EDU)			
Charisma (CHA)			
Psionics (PSI)			
Social Standing (SOC)			

Background Skills

Social Background:
Starting Influence:
Skills:

Social Backgrounds

Class	*Default Skills*	*Skill Pts*
Nome (SOC 6+)	Business 0 Computer Use 1 Persuasion 0 Ground Vehicle (Wheeled) 0	2
Mike (SOC 3 to 7)	Bargain 0 Carousing 1 Computer Use 0 Scrounging 0	4
Prole (SOC 4–)	Act/Bluff 0 Admin/Legal 0 Luck 1 Streetwise 1	6

Careers

Term: 1 Career:

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment		
Commission		
Promotion (Rank:)		
2nd Promotion (Rank:)		

Skills:

Special Assignment Notes:

Contacts:

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	
Promotion	
2nd Promotion	

Secondary Activities:

Cash for the Term:

Term: 2 Career:

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment		
Commission		
Promotion (Rank:)		
2nd Promotion (Rank:)		

Skills:

Special Assignment Notes:

Contacts:

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	
Promotion	
2nd Promotion	

Secondary Activities:

Cash for the Term:

CHARACTER GENERATION WORKSHEET (2)

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

CHARACTER GENERATION WORKSHEET (3)

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Term:____ Career:_____

	yes	*no*
Special Assignment	___	___
Commission	___	___
Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)	___	___

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	_____
Promotion	_____
2nd Promotion	_____

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

CHARACTER GENERATION WORKSHEET (4)

Term:_____ Career:_____

	yes	no
Special Assignment		
Commission		
Promotion (Rank:_____)		
2nd Promotion (Rank:_____)		

*Skills:*_____

*Special Assignment Notes:*_____

*Contacts:*_____

Term Influence:	*Points*
Years of Experience	4
Commission	
Promotion	
2nd Promotion	

*Secondary Activities:*_____

*Cash for the Term:*_____

Aging

Current Age:_____

Attribute	*gain*	*loss*
Strength (STR)		
Agility (AGL)		
Constitution (CON)		
Intelligence (INT)		
Charisma (CHR)		
Psionics (PSI)		

Languages

Language	*Level*

Load

(STR + CON) x 3 . . . . . .

Throwing Range

STR x 4 . . . . . .

Initiative

Civilian (2 or 1D3): . . . . . .

Civilian Career Bonus: . . . . . .

Military (3 or 1D6): . . . . . .

Military Career Bonus: . . . . . .

UCDR

Unarmed Combat Damae Rating

(Unarmed Martial Arts +STR) ÷ 5 . . . . . .

Base Hit Points

Body Location	*Scratch*	*Slight*	*Serious*	*Critical*
Head				
Right Arm				
Left Arm				
Chest				
Abdomen				
Right Leg				
Left Leg				

Influence

Total Accumulated . . . . . .

Number of Generic Contacts . . . +_____

Current Influence . . . . . =_____

Career Cash

Starting Cash (before purchases) . . . . .

Credit Rating . . . . . .

Base Hit Points

Location	*Original Method*	*Optional Method*
Head	2 × CON	CON + STR
Right Arm	2 × (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Left Arm	2 × (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Chest	3 × (CON + STR)	2 × (CON + STR)
Abdomen	2 × (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Right Leg	2 × (CON + STR)	CON + STR
Left Leg	2 × (CON + STR)	CON + STR

Known Languages

Intelligence (INT)	*# Languages*
1-2	1 x 5
3-4	1 x 10
5-6	1 x 10
	1 x 5
7-8	1 x 10
	2 x 7
	2 x 3
9-10	2 x 10
	2 x 7
	4 x 3
11-13	3 x 10
	4 x 7
	4 x 5
	4 x 3
14+	6 x 10
	4 x 7
	6 x 5
	9 x 3

Age-Based Learning

Age	*Subsequent Term*	*Special Assignment*
17	6[1]	6
21	5	5
25	5	5
29	4	4
33	4	4
37	3	3
41	3	3
45	2	2
49	2	2
53+	1	1

[1] Use the First Term skill package.

Effects of Age

Start Age	*End Age*	*Losses / (Gains)*					
		STR	*AGL*	*CON*	*INT*	*CHR*	*PSI*
17	21	—	—	—	—	—	—
21	25	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	29	—	—	—	—	—	—
29	33	—	Y	—	—	—	—
33	37	—	Y	—	—	—	—
37	41	Y	Y	—	—	—	—
41	45	Y	Y	—	—	—	—
45	49	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
49	53	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
53	57	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
57	61	Y	Y	Y	—	—	—
61	65	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—
65	69	Y	Y	Y	Y	—	—
69	73	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	—
73	77	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
77	81	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
81	85	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)
85	89+	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(Y)

Y indicates that rolling greater than the attribute results in a decrease in the attribute.

(Y) Indicates that rolling greater than the attribute results in an increase in the attribute.



CONSPIRACY RULES™

Character:_____
Player:_____
Gender:_____ Age:_____
Nationality:_____
Height:_____ Weight:____ Load:_____
Current Occupation:_____
Languages:_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____
Initiative: *(base)*_____ *(current)*_____

(Put your Dorian Grey here.)

Strength (STR) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Archaic Artillery		
Archery		
Armed Martial Arts		
Autogun		
Early Firearms		
Energy Weapon		
Heavy Artillery		
Heavy Guns		
Mason		
Mechanic		
Thrown Weapon		
Unarmed Martial Arts		

Constitution (CON) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Carpenter		
Climbing		
Combat Engineer		
Environment Suit		
Guard/Hunting Beasts		
High-G Environment		
Large Watercraft		
Parachute		
Riding		
Running		
Scuba		
Small Watercraft		
Swimming		
Zero-G Environment		

Agility (AGL) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Acrobatics		
Armed Martial Arts		
Dance		
Demolitions		
Energy Weapon		
Forgery		
Grenade Launcher		
Ground Vehicle		
Hovercraft		
Intrusion		
Jeweler		
Machinist		
Muscle Transport		
Music		
Pickpocket		
Pilot		
Slug Weapon		
Stealth		
Tac Missile		
Unarmed Martial Arts		
_____		
_____		

Intelligence (INT) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Astrogation		
Computer Operation		
Farming		
Fleet Tactics		
Forward Observer		
Gambling		
Ground Tactics		
Interview		
Investigation		
Navigation		
Observation		
Painting		
Psychology		
Research		
Scrounging		
Sculpture		
Sensors		
Ship Tactics		
Streetwise		
Survey		
Survival		
Tracking		
Willpower		

Education (EDU) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Admin/Legal		
Biology		
Business		
Chemistry		
Communications		
Computer		
Construction		
Electronics		
Energy Artillery		
Excavation		
Genetics		
Geology		
History		
Map		
Medical		
Metallurgy		
Meteorology		
Music		
Physics		
RCV Ops		
Robotics		
Ship's Engineering		
Starship Architecture		
Xeno-Biology		
_____		

Unarmed Combat Damage — UCDR: ____

Charisma (CHR) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Act/Bluff		
Bargain		
Bribery		
Carousing		
Disguise		
Instruction		
Interrogation		
Language		
Leadership		
Liaison		
Luck		
Persuasion		
Recruiting		
Service		
Song		

Empathy (EMP) ____

	Skill Level	Asset
Animal Empathy		
Computer Empathy		
Dimension Walk		
Empathic Healing		
Foreboding		
Human Empathy		
Hypnosis		
Project Emotion		
Project Thought		
Willpower Drain		

	Point Blank (×2)	Close (×2)	Medium (×1)	Long (×½)	Extreme (×¼)
Thrown Weapon (Throw Range:_____)					
Slug Thrower (Pistol)					
Slug Thrower (Rifle)					
Energy Weapon (Pistol)					
Energy Pistol (Rifle)					
Autogun					
Grenade Launcher					
Heavy Guns					
Heavy Artillery					
Energy Artillery					
Early Firearms					
Archaic Artillery					

CONSPIRACY RULES™

Background

Equipment

Contacts

Weapons	Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		Rng
							SS	Brst	

For use with:

DARK CONSPIRACY III



Conspiracy Rules Character Generation Worksheet

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