

Dime ADVENTURES

The background of the entire page is a textured, aged parchment or map. In the top right corner, there is a faint compass rose. The central illustration is a composite scene. In the foreground, a Native American man with a large blue and white feathered headdress is riding a white horse. He is holding a futuristic, black and silver rifle that is firing a bright red energy bolt. The horse is galloping towards the left. In the background, there is a landscape with green hills and dark evergreen trees under a blue sky with some clouds. In the upper right, a flying saucer or UFO is shown, tilted and emitting a large plume of red smoke or fire. In the lower left, another Native American figure is partially visible, also on horseback. The overall style is reminiscent of classic pulp magazine covers.

***A GAME OF WEIRD ALTERNATE
HISTORY AND PULP ACTION!***

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A GAME OF WEIRD ALTERNATE HISTORY AND PULP ACTION

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Tab Creations



This book is dedicated to all those throughout history, both renowned and unknown, who fought to make life better for their fellow human beings.

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INTRODUCTION

The year is 1904, but this is not the world you know. Sure, the continents are all there. The people are there, as are many recognizable places and events in history, but things are different: The Holy Roman Empire still reigns; the Chinese claimed California; the Mongolian Empire stretches across much of Asia. History has also gotten weird: Dark creatures stalk the night; there are rumors of alien influences at work; mystics wield mysterious powers; strange new sciences are seen every day; the dead rise from the grave. All the while exploration is at its height and the remaining blank areas of the map are being revealed. The world is ripe for adventure!

THE WORLD OF ARTH

Dime Adventures is an alternate history roleplaying game of weirdness and high

adventure. It is set on Arth, an alternate Earth at the dawn of the modern age. The setting aims to create a sense of wonder and adventure, and draws on many different historical and fictional sources for inspiration. The golden rule of *Dime Adventures* is: If it seems fun, do it! Arth is a world of cliffhangers and action, where the thrill is paramount and mysteries abound.

THE RULE OF COOL

Many alternate history games begin with a small change made to the course of history, following a very plausible series of cause and effect that ripple outward, exploring an academic view of how history might reasonably have happened. While this is a fine way to build an alternate history, *Dime Adventures* is not one of these games.

Rather, the world follows the Rule of Cool: Players will readily suspend their disbelief as long as the outcome is awesome! By all means, get academic for a moment. Do some research.

New to Roleplaying Games?

My friend, you are in for a treat! Tabletop roleplaying games (RPGs) are a wildly fun and collaborative hobby where you, and a handful of your friends, weave exciting tales of action and adventure. That said, there is more to the hobby than we could reasonably cram into this humble introduction. We recommend that you hop onto your handy dandy internet right now and do a quick search! This will tell you more than we ever could in these few pages. Then, once you've gotten an idea of how tabletop roleplaying games work, come right back and explore a world of high adventure. Happy gaming!

History is full of exciting characters, daring tales and strange facts that prove truth is stranger than fiction. All of these are ready-made for use in *Dime Adventures*. But don't overly worry about the plausibility. Just bring the awesome!

DAWN OF THE MODERN ERA

The world in 1904 stands at a precipice. It is a time when bold men and women of action can reach out and make a lasting change in the world. It is an era when history is made.

Throughout the past century science has steam-rolled on, making the world a new and better place. Explorers are venturing out to the edges of the map, social institutions are changing and a global system of trade and alliances is emerging. With the rise of airships humans have now mastered sky travel. With the spread of electricity and the telegraph the world has become just a bit smaller. It is a time of optimism and opportunity.

The world in 1904 is in the Edwardian Era, the Progressive Era, the Belle Époque! This

bridges the gap between the earlier Victorian Era, and the later World War I and Interwar Periods. Taking into account the Rule of Cool, this gives players the freedom to draw inspiration from a wide breadth of history and fiction, ranging from Victorian gothic literature to bold Pulp adventures.

THE PARANORMAL

There is more to Arth than meets the eye. Just below the surface of an otherwise normal world lurks all manner of paranormal activity. Aliens work subtle plots to control the masses. Vampires stalk the night. Sorcerers wield dark powers.

While the existence of the paranormal is largely acknowledged—this is, after all, an era of spiritualism, of parapsychology and of secret societies—the average person has little true knowledge these matters. Most simply go about their lives: maybe they occasionally make a sign to ward off the evil eye, or carry a good luck charm. Only a select few delve further than this into the arts both strange and arcane.

Alternate History, Alternate Moeres

Let's face it: The world in 1904 wasn't as progressive as is the modern day. Sexism, racism and other nefarious -isms were both widespread and commonly accepted throughout Western culture. This is an unfortunate fact of history, and one we don't need to relive in the form of fantasy entertainment.

Arth is an alternate world, and the baseline assumption of the setting is that anyone—regardless of race, gender, sexuality or any other such trait—can become doctors, pilots, politicians or anything else, provided the individual has the ambition and the aptitude. Bigotry is not a heroic trait.

Don't let the moeres of a past era ruin your fun!

THEMES

Dime Adventures draws from a wide variety of media, and this brings with it a long and disparate list of themes. Nevertheless, some themes reoccur and remain prominent enough to merit a particular emphasis.

Perhaps the most central theme in *Dime Adventures*, and in much of the adventure genre, is that individuals can make a difference. Actions matter, people matter, and the fate of the world may hinge on the shoulders of the player characters.

The next most important theme is that adventure is everywhere. No matter what direction the players may choose to take the narrative, action and adventure are only a breath away. Whether they are exploring forgotten tombs or romancing the colonial governor, the next plot twist may be lurking around any corner.

The final unifying theme of *Dime Adventures* is part of what gives the setting its unique flair: Truth is stranger than fiction. History is full of colorful characters and bizarre twists of fate, and in the world of Arth these should be played to the hilt.

RECOMMENDED MEDIA

A variety of action and adventure media exist which may serve to inspire potential players or game masters. Below are some of the movies, games and books that we particularly recommend for inspiration.

- **Castle Falkenstein:** One of the earliest steampunk roleplaying games, *Castle Falkenstein*, is set in an alternate 1870's

Europe. It mixes swashbuckling derring-do with Victorian adventure. It is also one of the earlier roleplaying games to use poker cards in its resolution mechanic.

- **The Extraordinary Adventures of Adèle Blanc-Sec:** This 2010 French film which was adapted from an earlier graphic novel. It is a somewhat surreal adventure set in 1909, featuring dinosaurs, mummies and bumbling policemen. An excellent movie and one of the most comparable to the Arth setting.
- **H. G. Wells:** The author H. G. Wells was an early science fiction novelist and contemporary who published many strange and fantastic novels. Many of his most well-known works were published within a decade of 1904, including *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man* and the *War of the Worlds*.
- **Indiana Jones:** Inspired by the pulps, Indiana Jones is perhaps the best known example of the genre today. Although the majority of the films take place some thirty years after *Dime Adventures*, many of the tropes will be the same. The TV spin-off, *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones*, keeps to the same tropes while presenting events closer in time to the present day in *Dime Adventures*.
- **League of Extraordinary Gentlemen:** This alternate history comic book series details the adventures of a variety of Victorian Era heroes and villains. Although the series takes place in 1898, this is only a few years removed from the events of *Dime Adventures*. It makes excellent inspiration for how fictional characters of the era might be used in a game.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR PLAY

To play *Dime Adventures* you will need this book, a group of friends, pencils, paper, a standard deck of poker cards for each player and ideally some tokens. Play is designed to take place in one or more game sessions—a few hours one evening for a session should suffice.



GLOSSARY

The following terms and acronyms are commonly used throughout *Dime Adventures*. They are defined more in depth later in the book.

- **Action:** This is any task performed by a character. In the combat system, the term specifically refers to tasks performed by a character on her turn.
- **Action Point (AP):** This is a unit of how much a character can perform on her turn in combat. Different actions will cost action points to perform.
- **Consequence:** This is a status effect or result of an action that may affect a character or part of the scene.
- **Damage Reduction (DR):** This is a measurement of the ability to resist damage. It is commonly granted by armor or inhuman capabilities.
- **Flip:** When an action risks failure, the game master may call for a flip. This involves flipping a card from the top of the deck or from a player's hand.

What is Saga Machine?

Saga Machine is the tabletop roleplaying system used by *Dime Adventures*, *Shadows Over Sol*, *Against the Dark Yogi* and many of our upcoming games. It combines an exciting action mechanic with meaningful consequences.

The rules of every *Saga Machine* game are tailored for that particular game's genre and themes, adapting a solid core and bringing in custom-made supporting subsystems. This strikes a balance between the ease of going from one *Saga Machine* game to another and the rules being tailored to the genre.

Various incarnations of *Saga Machine*, including this one, have been released under the Open Game License (OGL) and are available for use in third-party games.

Many Dangers in the Jungle

As the boat glided through the murky waters of the Amazon, Doctor William Blake stared off into the dense jungle growth. Somewhere out there was a bullet with his name on it, loaded into a Dutch-manufactured revolver, tucked into a pocket and wielded by the nefarious Lord Wilburbottom. Somewhere out there as well were the savage Tooth-Rock Tribe, still hunting him ever since he ran off with the chieftain's daughter. They had more than a bullet waiting for him; they had thousands of poisoned darts—the kind that would leave him twitching in unbearable pain for days before he expired.

Even worse, though, somewhere out there in the unexplored jungle and unforgiving land was the Forbidden King: an ancient sorcerer, an Incan mummy that had risen from the grave to hunt him after he violated its tomb. It would never sleep, nor rest, nor be distracted from its undying task until he had been brought into the grave to join it.

Doctor Blake took a deep breath and steadied his hands. He hadn't come this far for nothing. He would finish the task. He would find the Lost City of the Amazon, and then he would return safely back to Saint Louis to lay claim to the prize.

Seeing the twin gray monoliths the inscription had spoken of, Blake pulled his boat up along the shore. Here he would find the entrance to the city, and the dangers would follow.

- **Game Master (GM):** This is the player who runs the game, narrating events and deciding the actions of non-player characters.
- **Magnitude (Mag):** Sometimes a mechanic will call on the player to figure out the magnitude of success or failure. This is the difference between the total achieved by the flip and the target number (TN).
- **Moxie:** Each player has a hand of cards called her moxie. This represents her pep, conviction and luck.
- **Non-Player Character (NPC):** These are characters controlled by the game master, rather than other players. They include all the minor characters in the story, as well as prominent allies and villains.
- **Player Character (PC):** This is a character controlled by a player. These characters are typically the heroes of the story.
- **Round:** In the combat system, time is divided into rounds, each typically lasting about three seconds. In a round every character gets a turn.
- **Severity:** Consequences come in four levels, called severities, each more severe than the last. The four severities are light, moderate, severe and critical.
- **Target Number (TN):** Every time a player makes a flip, there is a target number, which determines how high of a total the player needs for the action to be a success.
- **Trump:** When a card is flipped whose suit matches the stat used in that action, the card is said to be trump.
- **Turn:** This is the opportunity for a character to act during a round of combat.



THE WORLD OF ARTH

There is a wide and varied world out there. From the frozen wastes of the Russian Republic to the steaming jungles of Portugal Novo, Arth is a world where danger and excitement can be found lurking in every ancient ruin, and on every street corner.

SEE THE WORLD...

Now listen to me, kid. From the look of you, you ain't seen naught of the world. And if you're going to be sailing on my ship, then you need to know what you're in for. And you need to be sure—you need to be damned sure—that you can handle it. I can't have you bailing in some backwater port because you've met a young lad or lass or because you're scared enough to run back home to mama.

Now you sit right down and listen. I am going to tell you of that wide and wondrous world out there, full of danger and splendor and adventure. I can't promise that it will be safe—in fact, it won't be; you'll be lucky if you live. But I can promise that it will be interesting.

DAWN OF A CENTURY

The world is changing all the time, kid. It's 1904: the twentieth century. The old empires that stood astride the world in the last are feeling their age, feeling their colonial ambitions begin to falter. They're grasping for straws and forming a patchwork of shifting alliances that may one day drag us all under.

But until that day, kid, we sail the seas, bringing trade and pushing back the edges of the map.

Technology and science, too, are marching ever onward. The last of the wooden ships are giving away to metal. Horseless carriages have become more common than horses in the large cities. Airships are becoming more robust and more widespread. Mankind is mastering heavier-than-air flight with the invention of the airplane. I'm told that physicists have discovered a thing called radiation. New technologies are everywhere and you'll see plenty of it, kid.

Human institutions are also changing. The cities are growing. Industrialization is changing the way that goods are made. Systems of social welfare are spreading, from the Holy Roman Empire to Australia. A revolution has swept the Tsar from power and similar revolutions brew elsewhere.

MAJOR POWERS

I'm not saying that the old powers are weak, just stumbling. They're as full of hubris and pride as they ever were; they're just too bull-headed to know that times have changed the ground underneath them. Let me tell you about those you'd be likely to meet on the high seas.

Britain is a power that has stumbled here and there throughout history. Nevertheless, it's had a rise in power in recent decades, as its historical rivals have largely fallen, leaving it with a system of colonies that are second to none.

The Confederacy is a hollow shell projecting outward. Its economy is in shambles, limping along like a wounded man. Nevertheless, it's thrown its hat into the colonial ring with its victory over Spain a few years ago.

The German-lead Holy Roman Empire is perhaps the largest power, and one on the rise. Its recent conquests in Europe have left it with the largest swath of the continent. But it's a power that is still in the process of digesting its conquests, and it is an empire riven with internal strife and cultural differences.

The Khmer Empire in Southeast Asia has taken advantage of China's slow decline to build a power block for itself. Quite frankly, I'm not sure how it holds itself together. With that many islands and that many different languages, it's quite a feat. But they've invested heavily in new technologies, and have by far the largest airship navy the world over.

The Ottoman Empire is the sick man of Europe. I couldn't suggest a better example of the crumbling old ways, as its internal strife tears it apart and breakaway provinces leave the empire. But the Empire still has some influence, and they are well-positioned as a gateway between the East and the West.

Qing China is another empire on the decline. They have widespread colonies and the weight of history behind them. But they're more divided by internal intrigue than any country I can name. The thing is, when you see one of their ships, don't think you know the crew's loyalty just by the flag it flies.

Russia is an interesting case. The Tsar was removed from power just a year ago and the new socialist government is in disarray. To make matters more complicated, it looks like Russia is about to get themselves in a conflict with the Japanese Shogunate. I tell you, if

the Russians can't pull themselves together, and fast, this may just be the beginning of the end for them.

The United States I mention mostly because it's an industrial powerhouse. It's mostly stayed away from the colonial game, aside from Liberia, but its ships can be found throughout the world, carrying trade to the far reaches of the globe. I hear that they're hosting the World's Fair this year, but St. Louis is a bit more inland than I usually travel.

RECENT EVENTS

I told you before, kid, that times are always changing. From the look of you, I suspect you don't hear much news from far away, so let me fill you in on what's been brewing around the globe.

In Britain they call this the Edwardian Era, with noble ladies walking around in picture hats, while the lower classes grow their political clout. In America this is said to be a Progressive Era, full of muckrakers exposing corruption, a brewing movement calling for a prohibition on alcohol and a push to modernize the democratic system. In the conquered French-speaking regions of Europe the Holy Roman Empire is trying somewhat unsuccessfully to convince the conquered French that they're living in a beautiful and golden age, a Belle Époque. In Qing China the Gongche Shangshu movement is looking to reform the failing institutions of a dynasty that is still reeling from its loss in the Sino-Japanese War.

Speaking of war, Britain's recently won the Second Boer War, fighting against rebellious settlers in South Africa. The Khmer have come out ahead in the Khmer-Confederate War, winning dominion over the Philippines, despite a local populace that seems to want nothing to do with either side. And I hear that

there's trouble brewing now between Russia and Japan, as they butt heads over the expansions of their territories in the Far East.

Social movements are sweeping the world, too. Socialist revolutions keep popping up around the globe, most recently in Russia with the victory of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party over the Tsar. In America the Socialist Party is climbing in the polls. And there's plenty across both South America and Europe. The anarchists are organizing, too, in the decades after the Haymarket Affair. Ironically enough, there may even be an Anarchist Congress organized in Europe one day soon.

Organized religion has its own movements going on. A new take on Christianity called Pentecostalism is on the rise, with revivals teaching the speaking of tongues and divine healing. The Oomoto sect is on the rise in Japan. Mazdaznan is a neo-Zoroastrian religion that is spreading throughout the West.

THE PARANORMAL

Now, current affairs are all well and good—and important to know if you're going to be sailing with me—but you need to know something of the weirder things in the world as well. And there's plenty of it, kid.

In my travels I've seen powers that most would claim impossible. I've met mediums who can speak with the spirits of the dead, psychics with the ability to read the minds of others and sorcerers who can call upon lightning between their fingertips. It's all out there kid, more power than you can possibly imagine, and enough to skin you six ways to Sunday, if you're not careful.

I've heard of ancient relics with arcane provenance dug up from the ruins of dead civilizations—objects touched by power. I've seen one or two in my time, as well. But you have to be careful with these artifacts, kid. Some are cursed, and all are sought after by more groups



than I care to name, groups who would kill to collect their prize.

And that's not the worst of it. I've met crazed cults—sinister madmen with nothing on their minds but the accumulation of arcane power. Enigmatic secret societies spread across the globe, kid, and I shudder to think of what all is within their control.

Even they are just the tip of the iceberg. There are things in the shadows and that stalk the night. Monsters are real, kid. Take it from me. I've seen sea serpents big enough to sink ships. I've encountered the spirits of the dead who have taken physical form in remote ports. I've fought the creatures of the night and stalked elusive cryptids in distant jungles, but rarely by my own choice.

One more note about the paranormal, kid. Don't think it's all ancient powers and dusty relics. The world keeps changing and the weird stuff out there does as well. Some of it is new. I've encountered technologies beyond my comprehension, and I hear rumors of an alien influence on our world. I don't know whether that's true. But I've seen enough not to discount it.



ADVENTURES ON THE HORIZON

You sail with me, kid, you're going to go places you've never dreamed of before. You're going to sail to distant ports and trek across uncharted wilderness—jungles, deserts, mountains, swamps and tundra. You're going to explore ancient ruins to seek their treasures and brave their dangers. You're going to fight hostile colonial powers, secret societies, monsters, pirates and madmen of all stripes. There will be mysteries to solve. You may learn esoteric techniques—wards, martial arts or the ability to create protective charms. If you're good, kid, you may live to tell the tale—maybe make the world a bit safer and make a living in the process; save a dandy or a damsel or two; be a hero. Whatever happens, though, it will be an adventure.

DECISION TIME...

Now that you've heard what I have to say, it's time to make a decision, kid. You ain't seen naught of the world now, and if you sail with me—with the ports we travel to—by the time we're done you'll have seen too much. And when you get to that point, kid, you can never go back.

So what do you say? Do you sign up to sail in my crew—travel and see more of the world than a hundred young people your age? Or do you take this little taste of adventure—satiated with its hint of danger—and run back home to live a safe and predictable life as a cashier or a grocer?

Best make your decision now, kid. I ain't got all day, and I'm all out of grog. Are you in or are you out? Tomorrow morning we leave with the tide.

LIFE ON ARTH

Life on Arth is incredibly varied around the world, especially comparing people from different cultures, climates, religions and ways of life. As such, this section focuses on broad generalizations and ways in which life on Arth are different from life on our own world in the same era.

RELATIONSHIPS

Most societies, from the industrialized to the tribal, are centered around the family. Regardless of society, a couple's families exert a significant influence on the formation of new romantic relationships. While this influence is vastly more egalitarian than in our own history, it is nevertheless very staunch and formal. If the families do not pick would-be suitors for their children outright, then they at the very least act as a bulwark keeping away those they find unsuitable.

In many cities well-to-do young people formally "call upon" those they fancy, with the permission of both sets of parents. If accepted, then both young people are allowed to spend time together at one of their homes, with the supervision of one or both families. The couple is rarely left alone during this period of courtship.

Lower class families, however, often do not have the resources to formally entertain potential suitors. These families may let the young couple leave the house together and enjoy each other's company in public. This has led to the concept of "going out on a date," a practice that has yet to make its way to the upper classes.

EDUCATION

In much of the world the state of education is as it has existed for centuries, with a young person's family doing the bulk of their teaching. In some areas, skilled young people might be apprenticed to a master craftsman, or a wealthy scion might be sent to a school or a have a private tutor hired.

In the large cities, however, industrialization is changing things. Parents are being kept busy working in the factories, and production lines are replacing craftsmen. In these cities public school systems are becoming increasingly common, as national governments are funding schools. Still, however, large differences remain between those taught a skilled trade and those who are forced to or choose to work as unskilled labor.

WEALTH

Economically, the world is at a turning point. For decades, in much of the world income inequality has been on the rise. In America the Gilded Age has just come to an end. Developed countries exploit less developed ones. Large corporations accumulate untold wealth.

Tips & Bribes

In many regions of the world palm greasing is a way of life. This can range from overt bribes to have a task accomplished, to a little bit of cash to expedite or impede an official process. In certain parts of Asia this sort of bribe is known as a baksheesh—a work that comes from middle Persian, meaning "to give."

But times, and politics, are changing. The Progressive Era is beginning to sweep the West. Labor unions are at a high point. Journalists are reporting on corruption in government and in society at large. A movement is afoot to reverse the trend of the last few decades.

Meanwhile, around the world, nomadic societies have retained a more egalitarian distribution of wealth. When one's a nomad, it's difficult to accumulate more than can be carried by horse or camel. Nevertheless, tribal chieftains often have more power, and thereby wealth, than most in their tribe. And as many nomadic societies transition to a sedentary way of life, the lifestyles of chieftains often begin to become more lavish.

TECHNOLOGY

This is an era of rapid technological change. Everywhere people and communications are going faster and farther than ever before.

Automobiles have become commonplace inside the large cities and are beginning to spread to the countryside. Airships are on the rise, with the rigid zeppelin design seeing its first flights. Heavier-than-air flight is taking off as well, with the first airplanes. Train tracks are rapidly connecting the frontiers of the world.

Electricity is booming. It powers the first air conditioners, the first vacuum cleaners and other new gadgets. Telegraphs carry messages over long distances and between continents. The first telephones are seeing use. Radio communication is being experimented with, as is radioactivity. The first nickel-zinc batteries have been patented, and promise to bring electricity wherever one travels. Electrical logic circuits and counting machines are paving the way toward computers.

On the ragged edge, mad scientists are making breakthroughs that others would believe impossible. Although unverified, there are claims of invented death beams, materials that resist the call of gravity, or rays that will shrink or enlarge objects and of machines that can raise the walking dead.

LANGUAGE

More than 6,500 languages are spoken across the face of Arth, many only by a single isolated tribe. A few languages, however, have spread across the globe, either by recent colonial practices or ancient conquests. A pragmatic linguist could speak to a shocking number of people by learning only English, Mandarin, Spanish and Arabic. A more ambitious linguist might want to add Hindi, Russian, Malay and French as well. Scholars of the sciences or occult, of course, can't go wrong adding Latin or Greek to that list as well.

Other efforts are also being made to establish a means of speaking between people of disparate cultures. Esperanto, for example, has been in use since the late 1880s, and has varied amounts of adoption across the world.

GOVERNMENT

In this era, the default setting for governments varies highly between the Western and Eastern Hemispheres. In the east, monarchies are still the norm, although many now have subservient parliaments. In Europe, most of these monarchies are tied together with family relations to other neighboring monarchs. In fact, roughly half the world's population lives in a monarchy.

In the Western hemisphere, on the other hand, most countries have a democratic constitution—and some of these countries even try

Travel Times

Unless you are one of the few lucky enough to have an airplane or airship at their disposal, most long distance travel will be by ship or train. Below are a few example travel times from major cities that can be used as a benchmark for estimating the time it takes to travel in game.

- **From Fusang Bay:** Buenos Aires (15 days), Hong Kong (10 days), Honolulu (4 days), London (19 days), Manila (10 days), Melbourne (12 days), Shanghai (10 days).
- **From New York:** Calcutta (16 days), the Congo (10 days), Hong Kong (19 days), London (5 days), Port Said (8 days), Rio de Janeiro (8 days), San Francisco (15 days)
- **From Paris:** Berlin (1 day), Cairo (4 days), Cape Town (10 days), Fusang Bay (15 days), London (2 days), Moscow (3 days), New York (7 days), Singapore (16 days)

to abide by this central law. In the rest, informal coalitions of landowners, religious figures or military strongmen effectively run the country. About twenty percent of the world's population lives in a self-declared democracy.

The remaining thirty percent of the world's population lives in one of the many tribal societies, most commonly found throughout central Africa, as well as the wilds of both North and South America.

Papers, Please!

Travel across most national borders requires a visa and a passport. Obtaining these papers can take time as the request processes. Furthermore, if these papers are lost, stolen or confiscated, this can cause a delay for days or weeks. False papers may be available for a price, but these are usually quite expensive, and owning them is a serious crime!

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Police forces, in the modern sense, are a relatively recent phenomenon, only coming about in the last few decades. Most large cities have such a force, and in Europe, China and a few other locales, national police forces have begun to appear as well. Other regions still rely upon local forces, a caste of individuals charged with carrying out punishments or upon a network of private investigators.

Crime often appears where there are those who are oppressed and impoverished. Over the past few decades imprisonment has become an increasingly popular punishment, as the sanitary conditions in prisons have improved. Elsewhere, various corporal punishments still reign. Fines remain common, as does punishment by means of hard labor. In much of the world, executions still occasionally happen—usually by means of hanging, firing squad or stoning, although the electric chair has recently been introduced as a means of capital punishment as well.

WARFARE

This is a time of rapid change in how wars are fought, with bloody new inventions seeing use every year. Railways are increasingly being used to transport troops quickly, while national systems of conscription have become common to bolster troop numbers. These reservists have been incorporated much more closely with the main armies than in the past. The Franco-Roman War saw the rise of artillery used to directly support ground troops. Recoil-operated machine guns are commonly deployed against both cavalry and infantry. Modern naval vessels ply the seas, steam-driven with powerful naval guns. The Second Boer War marked the rise of concentration camps to detain thousands of Boer civilians in an effort to give Boer guerrillas no respite or succor from their villages.

The presence of journalists in theaters of war, too, is on the rise. The Spanish-Confederate War was by far the most reported upon war to date.

In response to all this, the Hague Convention was called in 1899 in order to limit some of the deadliest new methods. This convention created the Permanent Court of Arbitration for settling conflicts between countries, banned the killing of surrendered combatants and provided for the protection of marked “hospital” ships. It also called for the banning of poison gas in warfare and deployment of explosive from airships, but the Confederacy refused to sign these two provisions.

THE PARANORMAL

Arth is a world bristling with paranormal activity, although with a few exceptions, it remains largely in the shadows. Certainly, respectable academics or businessmen would not condone the existence of the supernatural,

although a few might allow for the possibility of spiritualist or psychic phenomena. Most would disavow the existence of various elusive cryptids—the chupacabra, the Loch Ness monster, Bigfoot—although they would also be forced to admit that the mountain gorilla was only recently proven to exist to Western science, despite years of being considered mythological.

But these authorities would be wrong to insist upon such a rational world. Arth is a world of ancient sorcery and newfound psychic power. Creatures straight out of myth stalk the night and alien intruders trade with nomadic peoples. Dinosaurs survive deep under the earth, astral excursions happen with some frequency, and even stranger stuff abounds. A select few people are in the know about all this, and eventually these people are either considered crackpots, or they are called to a life of adventure.

ORGANIZATIONS

The world is fraught with all manner of human organizations, from sinister conspiracies, to philanthropic fellowships, from large corporations, to secret societies. Many of these organizations would be familiar to the reader—from the Freemasons and the Knights Templar, to Campbell’s Soup or Standard Oil—others are unique to Arth. A few are detailed below.

Real-World Inspirations

The real world is filled with organizations that might be pilfered or used for inspiration in an Arth game. Just do a quick search for “conspiracy theories” on Wikipedia.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF THE RIGHT

The Fraternal Order of the Right is an aged fraternal order and secret society that dates back to the early days of American independence. It was established in those early days as a mechanism for “right-thinking men to promote enlightened decency across the civilized world, and to undermine the influence and actions of the wicked.” Towards this end, it has worked from the shadows, directing communities and human endeavors. While originally an American organization, the Fraternal Order long ago expanded across much of the English-speaking world, and more recently has spread across much of the rest of the globe.

Today the Fraternal Order is a sponsor of many adventurers and expeditions across the globe. Furthering the knowledge of the right-thinking and increasing their ability to influence the world is at the top of its agenda. But the truth goes deeper than that.

Indeed, the hierarchs of the Fraternal Order seek more than just understanding. They seek a way to control the world itself, including everyone within it. The organization’s goal is nothing less than order incarnate. The right-thinking, the secret masters of the Order, abhor chaos, as only violence and death and wickedness come from such a lack of control.

HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is an organization dedicated to the study of the occult, metaphysics and the paranormal. It was founded in Britain in the 1880s, based on a set of coded manuscripts that describe magical initiation rituals. Known as the Cipher Manuscripts, the origin of these documents are

known, but they contain coded English, with numbers represented by the Hebrew alphabet.

Over the last three decades the order has spread throughout Britain and into parts of Europe and the Americas. In the last few years, however, a schism has developed between British and Continental lodges, and these two factions now are frequently at odds.

The Golden Dawn consists of three orders. The first, outer order teaches members esoteric philosophy based on the four classical Greek elements, as well as astrology and divination. The second, inner order teaches inducted members magic, including astral projection, scrying and alchemical practices. Finally, a third order consisting of the Secret Chiefs of the Golden Dawn is said to exist, communicating to the lower two orders only by means of spiritual communication. This final order is said to have transcended the material plane, and indeed may not even be human. Those in the know who have studied the Golden Dawn have speculated that the ultimate leaders of the order may be extradimensional, extraterrestrial, or even something else altogether.

THE NINTH DEPOT

The Ninth Depot is a secret society founded by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka sometime around the second century BC. Over the centuries the society has grown and evolved, passing down its secret duties to generation after generation. The purpose of the Ninth Depot is to secure and lock away both knowledge and paranormal artifacts that would prove dangerous to humanity if they fell into the wrong hands.

The form the secret society has taken has changed over the years. In recent decades the Ninth Depot has infiltrated and embedded itself within the colonial government of Bombay. It operates a large and heavily secured warehouse in

the countryside outside the city. There it stores the massive collection of dangerous artifacts that the secret society has amassed over the centuries. Most recently, acquired artifacts are stored in individual containers designed to seal in their malicious influence. Each of these containers and the artifacts they contain are indexed in a card catalog kept by the “librarians” of the warehouse. Some of the most ancient artifacts, however, have never been cataloged. These artifacts predate the warehouse, having been moved from older facilities maintained by the Ninth Depot.

The society recruits and regularly sends out members to track down rumors of strange happenings that might yield artifacts. These members are given credentials as agents of the Bombay colonial government. If sent elsewhere, they might also pose as members of other governments or authorities the world over.

SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MANKIND

On the surface, the Society for the Advancement of Mankind is a philanthropic organization dedicated to bettering humanity through the relentless pursuit of altruism and science. The organization sponsors prizes for scientists that solve some of the world's most pressing humanitarian problems. It also gives a yearly rating to all the industrialized nations of the world, judging their work in bettering the lives of their citizens. These activities have given the society a respected reputation. Society membership may gain one access to otherwise closed doors or even gain the ear of many in positions of power around the world.

But the Society has another, secret agenda. They seek to undermine, or even destroy, all of the paranormal activity in the world, leaving the mundane masses of humanity as Arth's sole custodians.

Thoughts on how to achieve this grand goal, however, is not something in which the Society is unified, and the favored method varies from chapter to chapter. The preferred methods employed by the society run the gamut, from indiscriminately seeking out and destroying anything paranormal—from sorcerers, to fae, to aliens, to weird science—to vigorous research into the nature of anything paranormal the chapter encounters, destroying the worst of it and separating from humanity the rest.

TRUE FORM FOUNDATION

Everyone knows that the True Form Foundation is an independent and privately-funded organization working to further world peace. Everyone even knows their motto: “The True Form Foundation: Seeking the True Form of Peace for Humanity.” The True Form Foundation has great marketing.

What people don't know is that the foundation is actually a cult dedicated to the worship of an unknowable inter-dimensional entity, and to the eventual destruction of the entire world. Of course, what people don't know won't hurt them, right?

The Foundation exploits its reputation as a peace organization for all that it is worth, but its agents have other, more paranormal resources to call on as well. Some whisper that the organization has one of the largest libraries of arcane knowledge on the planet, including many ancient tomes penned by mystically-inclined madmen that detail rites both forgotten and forbidden—the sort that require blood sacrifices and summon terrible entities from other worlds. Some also say that the High Lords of the Foundation are face-stealers, able to assume the identity of anyone of their choosing, and in doing so infiltrate even the most heavily-guarded organizations and facilities.

TIMELINE

In many ways the history of Arth resembles our own, only stranger and more fantastic. It is a progression of years filled with excitement, and one that may yield many adventures in the modern era.

What follows is a timeline of the world as it is both known and unknown. Littered throughout this timeline are many sidebars pointing out interesting events or potential adventure hooks. Hopefully this may give some insight into how the world came to be as it is today, and provide inspiration for many tales to come.

- **200,000 BC:** First modern humans emerge in Africa.
- **170,000 BC:** Early humans start to wear clothing.
- **75,000 BC:** The Toba super-eruption occurs at Lake Toba in Indonesia, plunging the world into a decade-long volcanic winter. Humans

are almost driven to extinction, leading to a genetic bottleneck. The beginning of the long decline of the bigfoot civilization.

- **60,000 BC:** Modern humans leave Africa and begin to spread out across the globe.
- **38,000 BC:** Neanderthals are driven to extinction on the surface of the Earth, but continue to exist in isolated pockets deep underground.
- **24,000 BC:** Height of the last Ice Age.
- **23,000 BC:** The first migrations to the Americas lead the ancestors of the modern day Native Americans across a land bridge from Asia.
- **13,000 BC:** The Hitch'Nyv leave their doomed homeland.
- **12,800 BC:** The Humid Period in North Africa leaves it a lush and fertile land with plentiful water.
- **12,000 BC:** Arrival of strange forces in the Antarctic.



Lost Continents

A number of lost continents once existed on Arth. While these ancient lands may be destroyed, they live on legend and in what they left behind.

Atlantis

The most famous lost continent is that of Atlantis, an island empire that once existed in the Atlantic Ocean. Its civilization was advanced for the era, with great walls constructed of brass, tin and a precious metal known as orichalcum. The ambitions of Atlantis were great; its armies conquered many lands in the western Mediterranean, bringing the conquered peoples back as slaves. At the height of its power, however, the island was destroyed in a single day and night. It is said that the people of Atlantis angered the gods, and they tore the land apart before it sunk into the sea.

Mu

In the Pacific Ocean, the continent of Mu once stretched from Easter Island, to Hawaii, to Guam. This land was inhabited by the Naacal people, among others, who possessed an advanced civilization for the day. Oceangoing voyages from the island influenced many nearby cultures. The continent, however, was an unstable one. It was held above sea level by the expansion of underground volcanic gasses. In a short but cataclysmic event around 9500 BC the pockets of gas burst in a great earthquake; the broken land fell into a fiery abyss, and the seawater rushed in to consume the ruins of the civilization.

Lemuria

Lemuria is a lost swath of land that once connected the Indian subcontinent to Madagascar. While not a true continent, it was said to have been home to a strange race of creatures. While humanoid, these Lemurians stood 7 feet (2.1m) tall, laid eggs and were hermaphroditic. They were said to be masters of the sorcerous arts, especially astral projection. No cataclysmic event is recorded destroying Lemuria. The land simply ceased to exist sometime around 6,000 BC. Perhaps it fell victim to some great mystical accident, or maybe a great ritual caused it to depart from the world entirely. Reports exist, however, of surviving Lemurians seen in and around Mount Shasta, along North America's Pacific coast.

Written Sumerian

Sumerian was the first true written language in the world, having been developed sometime around 3000 BC. It was the language of ancient Sumeria, in southern Mesopotamia. Sumerian is also a language isolate, meaning it is completely unrelated to any other known language either at the time or since. This makes Sumerian something of a mystery.

Most of what we know about ancient Sumerian texts has been translated not from the Sumerian itself, but from latter Akkadian translations. This means that much of what we know about the myths and the culture, we know secondhand.

This aura of ancient mystery makes great fodder for all sorts of plot hooks. Who knows what ancient secrets were lost or remain to be deciphered? What did the ancient Akkadians fear so much that they decided not to include it in their translations?

- **9500 BC:** The lost continent of Mu vanishes overnight from the Pacific. It is said to reappear occasionally when the celestial bodies are correctly aligned.
- **9400 BC:** Atlantis sinks into the ocean.
- **9000 BC:** Jericho—the oldest continuously-occupied city—is first inhabited.
- **3900 BC:** North Africa rapidly dries up, forming the Sahara Desert.
- **3500 BC:** First mummies in Egypt. Beginning of sorcerous understanding and practices.
- **3300 BC:** The Indus Valley Civilization emerges in India.
- **3200 BC:** The Norte Chico Civilization—the oldest civilization in the New World—begins in what is now the Incan Empire. The village of Skara Brae is founded in Scotland.
- **3000 BC:** Development of the first written language in Sumeria. Construction begins at Stonehenge.
- **2800 BC:** A set of supernaturally powered god-kings rule over much of China during the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors period.
- **2700 BC:** The Old Kingdom is established in Egypt.
- **2500 BC:** The last of mammoths go extinct on the surface world. Some survive in pockets deep underground.
- **2070 BC:** Yu the Great establishes the Xia Dynasty in China.
- **800 BC:** Rise of the Greek City-States.
- **753 BC:** Romulus and Remus found the city of Rome.
- **612 BC:** Nineveh—the largest city in the world at over 100,000 inhabitants—is destroyed in what is the largest blood ritual the world has ever known.
- **586 BC:** The First Temple is destroyed in Jerusalem.
- **563 BC:** The Buddha is born in the north of the Indian subcontinent.
- **509 BC:** Tarquin the Proud, the last king of Rome, is exiled, leading to the founding of the Roman Republic.

Artifacts & Fallen Civilizations

Questing for, recovering, and fighting over ancient artifacts of mystic or cultural importance is a staple of the pulp genre—and indeed, many other genres. GMs who want to come up with their own similar plot need to come up with both the artifact itself and the artifact's history, namely the civilization from which it originates. To help inspire GMs, below is a list of prominent ancient or fallen civilizations by continent:

- **Africa:** Egyptian (3100 BC), Nubian (1100 BC), Carthaginian (600 BC), Aksumite (400 BC), Sahelian (800 AD), Kanem (800 AD)
- **Asia:** Yangshao (5000 BC), Indus Valley (3300 BC), Majiayao (3100 BC), Assyrian (2000 BC), Andronovo (2000 BC), Nabataeans (1 AD)
- **Europe:** Minoan (3000 BC), Mycenaean (1600 BC), Urnfield (1300 BC), Thracian (800 BC), Etruscan (700 BC), Illyrian (400 BC)
- **North America:** Olmec (1600 BC), Hohokam (1 AD), Anasazi (700 AD), Mississippian (800 AD), Toltec (900 AD), Aztec (1300 AD)
- **South America:** Norte Chico (3200 BC), Cotocollao (1500 BC), Paracas (800 BC), Quimbaya (100 BC), Marajoara (800 AD), Muisca (1500 AD)

The Library of Alexandria

The Great Library of Alexandria, Egypt was one of the largest and most important libraries of the ancient world. By some accounts it held as many as half a million scrolls, and was a travel destination for scholars from across the Mediterranean and Near East. The library was also sacred ground, dedicated to the Muses, the nine Hellenic goddesses of the arts.

The library and its contents were burned in a series of stages, starting with a fire during Julius Caesar's civil war and continuing to a decree given by the Coptic Pope Theophilus of Alexandria.

Knowledge that was lost or that somehow survived the burning of the Great Library is a great plot hook. What if Pope Theophilus was trying to destroy some singular piece of knowledge that Man Was Not Meant to Know?

- **400 BC:** The Zapotec civilization reaches its height in what is now Mexico, leaving behind a variety of powerful artifacts.
- **331 BC:** Alexander the Great defeats Darius III of Persia in the Battle of Gaugamela. Alexander orders the destruction of Etemenanki, and ancient ziggurat dedicated to the god Marduk. The vengeful god lays down a curse on the families of all involved.
- **250 BC:** Rise of the Parthian Empire—the oldest unbroken empire still in existence today.
- **146 BC:** Carthage wins the last Punic War against Rome, leading to a purge of Roman colonies in North Africa.
- **29:** The crucifixion of Jesus.
- **68:** The Year of Four Emperors in Rome. During this year many of the powerful relics held by the imperial family are looted or hidden.
- **220:** The Three Kingdoms period begins in China after the fall of the Han dynasty. The following period is one of the bloodiest in human history. Otherworldly entities are thought to be involved.
- **285:** Emperor Diocletian splits the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western Empires.
- **335:** Samudragupta becomes ruler of the Gupta Empire in the Indian subcontinent. He is said to have possessed technology more advanced than his era would suggest.
- **410:** The Visigoths sack Rome.
- **489:** King Arthur comes to power in Britain.
- **570:** Muhammad is born.
- **750:** Beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, the political predecessor to the modern Caliphate today.
- **754:** Pepin the Short grants the pope power over the central Italian Peninsula. The Papacy soon rises as a governmental and military power.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a true marvel of the ancient world—a trading route that began at the Chinese city of Sian and continued westward to the eastern edge of the Mediterranean. Through this trading route the distant Chinese and Roman Empires knew of each other's existence. In 97 AD the Chinese general and explorer Ban Chao even sent an envoy to the Roman Empire, although the envoy never made it.

Traversing the ancient Silk Road makes for an exciting, continuing plot hook, allowing the GM to introduce many different cultures and threats across Eurasia. The Silk Road also works as a good explanation for how distant artifacts may have made it to disparate regions of the world.



Voyage to Fusang

Around the year 500 AD records show that a group of Chinese monks undertook an epic voyage eastward, across the ocean to a land they called Fusang. There the monks reported encountering a Bronze Age civilization and plants very much like the Mexican cactus.

An earlier account claims that the emperor Shi Huang sent two expeditions of over 3,000 convicts to the same land. These expeditions were led by Xu Fu, the Emperor's court sorcerer. The convicts were bound to be human sacrifices to an unnamed volcano god, who held the elixir of life. The first expedition was reportedly blocked by a giant sea creature, and the boats turned back. When the second expedition was sent out, however, it was never heard from again.

- **800:** Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor, marking the formal beginnings of the first Holy Roman Empire. Gunpowder is invented, based after secret formula that is said to have originated on the lost continent of Mu.
- **850:** The Srivijaya Empire spreads Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia.
- **900:** The sudden collapse of the early Mayan Empire.
- **1000:** Vinland established by Viking explorers.
- **1118:** The Knights Templar are founded to protect Jerusalem and European pilgrims.
- **1204:** Sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. Beginning of the end for Byzantine Empire.
- **1227:** Genghis Khan dies. The Mongolian Empire remains unified, despite infighting among his children.
- **1299:** The Ottoman Empire is founded by Osman I.
- **1325:** The Aztecs found the city of Tenochtitlan, beginning their empire.

Mississippian Civilization

The mound builders of the lost Mississippian civilization were perhaps the most advanced pre-Colombian culture north of Mesoamerica. They dominated the areas around the Mississippi River and its tributaries from 800 AD until the culture's virtual extinction due to old world diseases in the 1500s and 1600s.

The largest center of Mississippian culture was at the site of Cahokia, a massive temple structure in what is now East Saint Louis. This earthen mound is over 100 ft. (30m) tall, with a base larger than the Great Pyramid's. This great mound was surrounded by other mounds. By 1250 there were over a hundred surrounding mounds within a few mile radius.

But why was this site of such spiritual significance? And what secrets of mystic import did the Mississippians leave behind?

Hohokam Disappearance

The Hohokam culture flourished in southwest North America from about 300 AD to 1400 AD. It represented the interface between the sedentary cultures of Mesoamerica and the nomadic cultures to the north.

The Hohokam were an advanced civilization, with an elaborate system of irrigation canals and the ability to cast copper instruments. They also practiced death sports and human sacrifice—although not so much as their more populous neighbors to the south.

However, the Hohokam rapidly and mysteriously vanished in the early 1400s. Their achievements lived on only in memory, and even the name *Hohokam* means “those who have vanished.”

- **1347:** The Black Death begins the first of its many sweeps across Europe. By the time the plague is over, roughly half the population of the continent is dead.
- **1387:** Three popes each claim the title at the same time during the Western Schism.
- **1405:** Chinese naval expeditions begin, under the leadership of Zheng He. These will later lead to the founding of Chinese colonies in Australia, Africa and North America.
- **1431:** Joan of Arc is tried and executed.
- **1434:** The Medici family rises to prominence in Florence. This sets in motion many of the political struggles in the Italian City-States.
- **1453:** Constantinople falls to the Ottomans. Ottomans make Constantinople their new capital.
- **1492:** Christopher Columbus reaches the New World.
- **1503:** Nostradamus is born in Provence, France. Soon he will utter many prophecies.
- **1517:** The Ottomans defeat the Mamluks and gain control of Egypt and the Levant.
- **1526:** Pizarro defeated and killed in Tawantinsuyu.
- **1531:** The Incan Civil War is fought between the two brothers, Atahualpa and Huáscar.
- **1532:** The Church of England breaks away from the Roman Catholic Church and recognizes King Henry VIII as the head of the Church.
- **1534:** Nouvelle-France is founded by Jacques Cartier.
- **1560:** Countess Elizabeth Bathory is born. She will go on to kill hundreds of young women and bathe in their blood as part of a ritual to maintain eternal youth.
- **1578:** Zhimin Nan founded by the Chinese.
- **1590:** The Roanoke colony mysteriously disappears, leaving behind only the word “Croatoan” carved into a post.
- **1599:** The Mali Empire wins the Battle of Jenné, establishing it as a long-lived power.
- **1641:** The Tokugawa Shogunate expels foreigners and no one is allowed to enter or leave Japan.
- **1651:** English Civil War ends with a Parliamentary victory at the Battle of

The Many Plots of Aaron Burr

Aaron Burr was one of the most divisive of America's founding fathers. During the revolution he was dismissed from George Washington's staff for "antagonizing the general." In 1791 he made a lasting enemy of Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, during a contested senate race. Burr ran unsuccessfully for President in 1800, becoming Vice President, and was then removed from the presidential ticket in 1804—both losses he blamed on Hamilton. This led to the famous duel on July 11, 1804 where the former Vice President shot the former Secretary of the Treasury dead on the streets of Weehawken, New Jersey.

With a warrant out for his arrest in two states, Burr fled to his friend General James Wilkinson, who was also a spy in the pay of Spain. The two soon became co-conspirators in a plot to conquer Mexico, dispatching Colonel Zebulon Pike to scout out the most favorable route of conquest. Some say they were looking to create an independent empire along the Napoleonic model.

Burr was eventually betrayed by Wilkinson and arrested for treason. His trial in 1807, however, could only prove that he planned an illegal attack on Spanish territory. He was acquitted and later moved to Europe, where he failed to convince Napoleon to launch an invasion to conquer Florida.

- Worcester. The king is now subject to the rule of Parliament.
- **1692:** Salem witch trials begin in Massachusetts.
 - **1709:** Great Frost of 1709, coldest winter in 500 years.
 - **1718:** City of New Orleans founded by the French in North America.
 - **1733:** Russia claims Russian America.
 - **1773:** East India Company starts operations in Bengal to smuggle Opium into China.
 - **1776:** Bavarian Illuminati founded. United States Declaration of Independence adopted in Philadelphia.
 - **1789:** The French Revolution.
 - **1791:** Fei Zhou is founded by the Chinese in Africa.
 - **1791:** Haitian Revolution leads to the second oldest republic in the Americas.
 - **1799:** Napoleon stages a coup d'état and becomes First Consul of France.
 - **1804:** World population reaches 1 billion.
 - **1808:** Portugal conquered by Napoleon, Portuguese royalty flee to Portugal Novo and set up there.
 - **1811:** Paraguay gains independence from Spain.
 - **1814:** British gain control of Dutch Guiana.
 - **1815:** Napoleon escapes exile and begins the Hundred Days before finally being defeated and exiled to St Helena. In response, the Holy Roman Empire invades and conquers France. Papal Somaliland gifted to Pope by France in hopes of papal support against the Holy Roman invasion.

- **1816:** Unusually cold conditions wreak havoc throughout the Northern Hemisphere. This becomes known as the Year Without a Summer.
- **1820:** Discovery of Antarctica.
- **1820:** Liberia founded by the American Colonization Society for freed American slaves.
- **1821:** The Federated Republic breaks away from Mexico.
- **1822:** First Mexican Empire ruled by Emperor Agustín I of Mexico.
- **1830:** Greece breaks away from the Ottoman Empire after the Greek War of Independence.
- **1830:** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is established.
- **1834:** Spanish Inquisition officially ends.
- **1836:** Incan-Alto War.
- **1836:** Lone Star Republic is established.
- **1844:** First telegraph line in the world, between Baltimore and Washington, sends demonstration message.
- **1845:** First Anglo-Sikh War.
- **1846:** Native American tribes make deal with the Hitch'Nyv, granting the aliens the Old World in return for technology.
- **1847:** Australian Aborigine tribes make similar deal with the Hitch'Nyv, gaining aliens' support.
- **1848:** The Communist Manifesto is published.
- **1849:** Earliest recorded air raid, as Holy Roman Empire employs 200 balloons to deliver ordnance against Venice.
- **1850:** The Taiping Rebellion begins in China, leading to some 20 million deaths and the founding of the Taiping Kingdom.
- **1851:** The Great Exhibition in London is the world's first World's Fair.
- **1858:** Invention of the phonautograph, the first device for recording and playing sound.
- **1859:** Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species*.
- **1861:** American Civil War between the Union and the Confederacy. The Confederacy wins independence.



Scotland Yard

Scotland Yard is a nickname for the London Metropolitan Police. This is one of the world's preeminent police forces, utilizing the latest methods of forensic investigation. For example, the Henry Classification System of categorizing fingerprints was first introduced with the establishment of the Fingerprint Bureau in 1901.

The actual physical Scotland Yard building was abandoned by the police in 1890, when the station was moved to a newer facility in the Thames Embankment. This facility is sometimes called New Scotland Yard.

Prophecy: June 30, 1908

Recently, many different mystic groups have come up with a troubling prophecy: They say that the world is going to end on June 30, 1908. If true, that means everyone has but a scant four more years to live.

They say that the omens (or tea leaves or auras or spirits) say that the world will end in fire, beginning somewhere in Russian Siberia, and spreading out across the globe, destroying all in its path. They say the skies will open up and rain fire and ash until civilization as anyone knows it is consumed. Some say this will be a meteor. Some say this will be the vengeful hand of God striking out at the fallen world. Whatever it is, it can't be good.

- **1862:** Muisca Collective breaks away from the Viceroyalty of New Granada in the Grenadine Civil War.
- **1864:** Second Mexican Empire established.
- **1866:** Meiji Restoration. Japan embarks on a program of rapid modernization.
- **1879:** Anglo-Zulu War in South Africa.
- **1881:** Tripoli goes from being an Ottoman possession to a Holy Roman possession after Holy Roman invasion.
- **1883:** Krakatoa erupts, emitting one of the loudest sounds in written history. The released soundwaves circle the world four times.
- **1884:** Togo becomes Holy Roman colony.
- **1885:** King Leopold II of the Netherlands establishes the Congo Free State as a personal fiefdom.
- **1888:** Amazon Territory Treaty Signed. Jack the Ripper murders occur in London.
- **1890:** The cardboard box is invented.
- **1892:** Basketball is invented.
- **1895:** Volleyball is invented.
- **1896:** Olympic Games revived in Athens.
- **1898:** H. G. Wells publishes *The War of the Worlds*. The Boxer Rebellion in China is suppressed by the Eight-Nation Alliance.
- **1898:** Spanish-Confederate War.
- **1901:** British gain dominance in Gold Coast.
- **1903:** First controlled heavier-than-air flight by the Wright Brothers. Revolution sweeps Russia, followed by the breakup of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Pius X becomes Pope.
- **1904:** Union of South Africa is founded. The Present Day. The World's Fair (April 30th – Dec. 1st) and Summer Olympics (July 1st – Nov. 23rd) in Saint Louis.

WEIRD WIDE WORLD

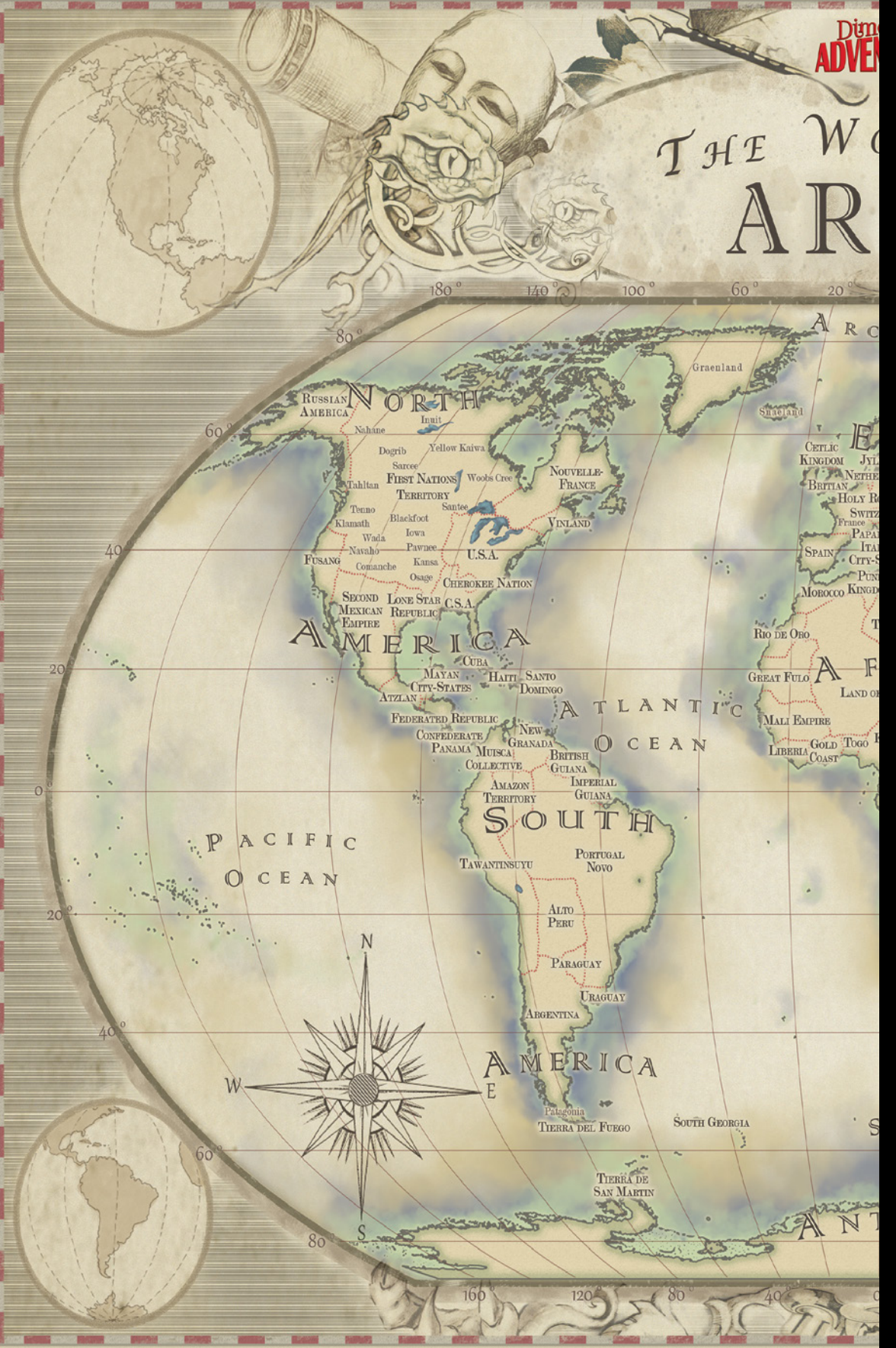
It's a wide and wonderful world out there, chock full of mystery, intrigue and adventure! Whether solving crimes on the streets of Chicago or raiding lost temples in the steaming Khmer jungles, there is plenty to do and see.



Empires and Colonies

This is an era when many regions do not have self-rule, and instead are governed by colonial administrations which answer to a distant ruling power. Below is a table of who answers to whom, divided by continent.

North America	South America
Confederate Panama: CSA	British Guiana: Britain
Fusang: Qing China	Imperial Guiana: Holy Roman Empire
Russian America: Russian Republic	New Granada: Spain
	Tierra del Fuego: Spain
Europe	Australia
Balkans: Holy Roman Empire	New South Wales: Britain
France: Holy Roman Empire	Perth: Britain
	Van Diemen's Land: Britain
	Zhimin Nan: Qing China
Asia	Africa
Bengal: Britain	British Somaliland: Britain
Bombay: Britain	Dutch Congo: Netherland Principalities
Korea: Japan	Fei Zhao: China
Madras: Britain	Gold Coast: Britain
	Imperial Congo: Holy Roman Empire
	Kamerun: Holy Roman Empire
	Papal Somaliland: Papal States
	Rhodesia: Britain
	Rio de Oro: Spain
	Togo: Holy Roman Empire



WORLD OF THE



NORTH AMERICA

North America is a diverse continent filled with both the vestiges of the old as well as the new and mysterious. Originally settled by Stone Age tribes via the Bering Strait, contact was reestablished with the old world in the 11th century when Vikings landed on the Atlantic coast. Large scale old world colonization did not begin, however, until after Columbus re-discovered America in 1492.

Unlike in our own world, on Arth the native peoples of North America were able to put up significantly more resistance to the westward expansion of European immigrants using unknown means, effectively stopping the expansion at the Mississippi River.

AZTLAN

- **Capital:** Tenochtitlan
- **Languages:** Nahuatl

Aztlan was formed in 1458 as an alliance between three cities. Eventually this alliance grew and was consolidated into the nation-state known today. When Spaniards arrived in 1517 they were quickly overwhelmed by the populous Aztecs and sacrificed to Chalmec, the god of the underworld. Since then the Aztecs have fiercely defended their borders, even to this day attempting to capture or kill unwanted outsiders who trespass.

Due to the extreme isolationism of Aztlan, outside of its borders little is truly known about the culture of the Aztecs. This may change soon due to a recent event in southern Mexico. In early January 1904 Aztecs began to pour across the Mexican border in droves, claiming that their god Chalmec had come to Arth and was leaving behind a swath of destruction. A

conference of the National Geographic Society has been called for in May to discuss an expedition into Aztlan, with an ultimate aim to discover what has truly occurred to this nation.

CHEROKEE NATION

- **Capital:** Tahlequah
- **Languages:** Cherokee

The Cherokee Nation was unified and founded as a legal and autonomous nation in 1796 by Chief Little Turkey. In 1798, a small group of Chickamauga Cherokee attacked Fort Oglethorpe, an American outpost along the northern border of Cherokee lands. In a deal to save the autonomy of his nation Little Turkey announced "the Separation." This effectively removed the Chickamauga from the Cherokee Nation and started the Chickamauga War. After two years of bloody guerrilla warfare, the Cherokees were victorious and the remaining Chickamauga were quietly disposed of. This is now a continued source of shame for the Cherokee people.

In the aftermath of the war the Treaty of Ayeliudot was signed by Chief Little Turkey and U.S. President John Adams, guaranteeing continued Cherokee autonomy.

Many of the cultural reforms enacted by the Cherokee were made in an effort to preserve their autonomy. While these reforms ultimately proved successful, many were made at the expense of traditional Cherokee culture. In recent months there have been sightings of strange lights seen in the sky above the Cherokee Nation. Some speculate that these are natural atmospheric auras, while others speculate that they are evidence of travelers from another world paying visit to the Cherokee.

CONFEDERATE PANAMA

- **Capital:** Panama City
- **Languages:** Spanish, English

Confederate Panama is a newly-formed colony of the CSA, having seceded from the Muisca Collective and shortly thereafter annexed—all within the last year. Even before the annexation, however, Panama had long held itself apart from the rest of the Muisca Collective. It is a region which was settled heavily by European immigrants—particularly those from the French-speaking regions of the Holy Roman Empire—in an earlier failed attempt to build a canal across the Panama isthmus. Panama's secession from the Collective was followed by a skirmish between a Confederate gunboat and Muisca forces, but no larger war followed. In February, the Confederacy started construction on their own attempt to build a canal, taking over where the Franco-Imperials left off.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

- **Capital:** Richmond
- **Languages:** English

The Confederate States of America were once part of the United States, but the region rebelled in the 1860s and won its independence through a bloody Civil War. The legality of slavery was a hot-button issue in this war, but ironically enough, the Confederate States abolished the peculiar institution through a process of manumission over the course of the 1890s. This change was in large part due to the suffering of the Confederate economy following its independence, and pressure from trading partners that disapproved of slave-holding.

In an attempt to revive its lagging economy, the Confederate States soon turned their

attention southward toward Latin America in a gambit to become a colonial power. The Confederacy fought a war with Spain (1898), winning the territories of Cuba and Puerto Rico—the former of which was given independence under Confederate oversight. More recently, the Confederacy successfully annexed Panama after the region declared its independence from the Muisca Collective.

The last two election cycles in the Confederacy have been accompanied by allegations of widespread election fraud, masterminded by a cabal of wealthy farm owners. Although these allegations have not yet been proven, Society for the Advancement of Mankind has put out a bounty on any information that would confirm or deny these suspicions.

FEDERATED REPUBLIC OF CENTRAL AMERICA

- **Capital:** San Salvador
- **Languages:** Spanish, K'iche'

Once part of the Mexican Empire, the Federated Republic broke away from its northern ruler following the precedent set by the Texan secession. The five districts of the new Republic ratified their own constitution and set out on an independent path. What followed was a brief war with Mexico, which ended in the withdrawal of Mexican forces.

Today the Federated Republic is troubled and isolated. Many of the local indigenous Mayan peoples have repeatedly rebelled against the federated government, and the country has struggled to hold itself together. In a bid for unity, the government of the Republic even petitioned the United States for annexation in 1899, but this petition was aborted after it passed the U.S. House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate.

In recent years, dissatisfaction is growing with the continued union of the five member states that make up the Federated Republic. Powerful interests within the Republic are looking for a skilled team of diplomats that can successfully negotiate a peaceful dissolution with all five regions, without it breaking down into armed conflict.

FIRST NATIONS TERRITORY

- **Capital:** None
- **Languages:** Chinuk Wawa, Lakota, Plains Sign Talk, and many others

On Arth, “First Nations Territory” is a term for the collective territories of the native peoples of North America, including the Inuit. This region covers much of the central part of the continent.

In the earlier days of European immigration it appeared as if the new settlers might push the native peoples back, and continue their expansion westward across the Great Plains. Certainly at the time many of the First Nations were weakened by old world diseases and in a period of resultant political turmoil.

A turning point came, however, in the 1830s, when an alliance of plains tribes—including the Lakota, Kiowa, Cheyenne and Comanche—began to strike back at U.S. and colonial expansion. This counterattack included the use of strange new technology, far beyond known means. With the boost this technological superiority provided, the grouping of allied tribes pushed settlement back to the banks of the Mississippi River.

Today the native peoples of the First Nations Territory mostly pursue their original tribal ways. They make alliances and war among themselves, and hunt in their own lands. By in large, however, the last couple centuries have

taught the tribes to be suspicious of outsiders, and few bands take to trespassing kindly.

Despite the potential dangers, for decades many governments around the world have been offering rewards for the successful recovery of working examples of the mysterious First Nations technology. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that it is extra-terrestrial in origin. Since its initial appearance, examples of this tech have appeared in the hands of an increasing number of tribes. Because of this proliferation, many worry that should it make its way en masse into the hands of the world powers, it could destabilize the balance of power across the world.

FUSANG

- **Capital:** Jiu Jin Shan
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Wu, Yukian

Fusang was established as a Chinese colony in North America during the early years of the Qing Dynasty, the late 1600s. Until the early 1800s, however, the colony remained small and centered exclusively around Fusang Bay. Life in the colony was primarily devoted to agriculture and the collection of tribute to send back to the Chinese mainland. At this point in time, however, China experienced a period of civil strife which resulted in thousands of mainland Chinese fleeing to the colonies, seeking safety and stability away from the wars at home.

The colony weathered the nineteenth century breakup of China by acting more-or-less independently, thereby sidestepping faulty political alliances that could have been the colony’s downfall. It maintains this independent outlook to this day, paying tribute to the Qing regime mostly in name. This independence has been bolstered in recent decades as the colony’s economy is booming and a stream of new

settlers continue to flow from Asia to Fusang. Meanwhile, the colony's relationship with the neighboring indigenous peoples has deteriorated, as the constant flow of new settlers has pushed the colony's borders outward.

Fusang may not be able to stay out of the Chinese political conflicts for long, however. Rumors are that Empress Consort Xiaodingjing herself is scheduled to visit the colony. Once there she plans to pressure the colonial governor and recruit allies for her faction at court. This visit is likely to be accompanied by attempts by opposition assassins and intrigue of all varieties.

LONE STAR REPUBLIC

- **Capital:** Austin
- **Languages:** English, Spanish

The Lone Star Republic won its independence from Mexico in 1842 after a bloody and prolonged war of independence that ended with the capture and beheading of the Mexican leader Santa Anna. Although the republic petitioned to join the United States, it was denied entry after a heated session of Congress.

These days the Lone Star Republic is a fiercely independent nation. The people (Texanos) are active in locally international trade, although the nation is far from being a world power.

There have been several small border wars with Mexico and the CSA over the last 50 years, and the CSA's recent colonial expansion into Latin America has the Texanos worried. Some are arguing that the Lone Star Republic would be best served by making its own inroads into the region, thereby countering CSA influence.

One prominent cattle baron has put out a bounty on the successful live capture of a breeding pair of chupacabras, believing that properly utilized, the beasts may have military applications.

MAYAN CITY-STATES

- **Capital:** Tikal
- **Languages:** K'iche', Q'eqchi', Yucatec Maya

The Mayan City-States are an alliance of indigenous city-states that so far have managed to band together to avoid subjugation by colonialists. While they have largely kept their native culture, they have also been quick to adapt to new methods of warfare and the tools necessary to keep their independence. Their warships are modern metal vessels that are known for their ziggurat-shaped cabins that sit atop the ship.

The Mayan City-States are more open to outside visitors than most other nations in the region, and in fact are in the process of developing a thriving tourism industry. The city-states, however, strictly enforce a no-missionary



policy—a policy dating back to the attempts by many early missionaries to burn Mayan writings.

The Mayans are looking to gain name recognition and prestige on the world stage and recently have been sponsoring fairs, expeditions, and other events that may promote their country to tourists. They are also looking for an outside spokesperson who is willing to help promote their national brand.

NOUVELLE-FRANCE

- **Capital:** Quebec City
- **Languages:** French

Nouvelle-France grew from a colony of fur-trappers into the expansive colony it is today. While historically a backwoods colony that suffered from royal neglect and conflict with both the British colonies and the native peoples, Nouvelle-France was given a population boost when many fled the French Revolution in the early 1800s. An even larger boost occurred following the conquest of France by the Holy Roman Empire.

Today Nouvelle-France is a prosperous independent nation. It has great timber resources, but is largely isolationist when it comes to world politics, despite a vocal faction that wishes to see the country officially side with French separatists in the Holy Roman Empire.

In fact, the Ligue Française Indépendance, a group supporting the French separatists, is covertly looking to hire smugglers willing to ship arms to allied partisans in the Holy Roman Empire. What the Ligue doesn't know is that one of their members is disloyal and is looking to sell this information to pirate groups who may want to acquire the arms themselves.

REPUBLIC OF CUBA

- **Capital:** Havana
- **Languages:** Spanish

The island of Cuba fought three wars for independence from Spain, but it was not until 1898 that the Spanish-Confederate War resulted in Spain losing Cuba as a colony. The island was then placed under Confederate rule until 1902 when it was given its independence under the leadership of President Tomás Estrada Palma, a former revolutionary general of the earlier wars.

The fledgling nation of Cuba is today still heavily influenced by the Confederate government. Relatively well-developed by Latin American standards, its main exports are sugar and tobacco.

A group of Texanos cattle barons are looking to fund a coup to overthrow the Confederate-allied government of Cuba. What they need are a group of patsies willing to lead this effort, but with connections that can't be traced back to the cattle barons, should the coup effort fail.

REPUBLIC OF HAITI

- **Capital:** Port-au-Prince
- **Languages:** French, Haitian Creole

The Republic of Haiti is the second oldest Republic in the Western Hemisphere, having been formed after a successful slave rebellion on the island. Initially, other powers were slow to recognize the Haitian government, but since the American Civil War, Haiti has been an ally of the United States government, giving the USA a foothold in the Caribbean—a region otherwise under the influence of the CSA.

Haiti is an unstable country and there have been many coups and other periods of unrest. The island is also home to the Vodoun religion.

A prominent fortune teller in Haiti is seeking help. She claims that a terrible natural disaster—an earthquake and then tsunami—is going to beset the island unless something is done to appease the angry spirit that is going to cause the disaster. The problem is that who the spirit is and what it wants has been concealed from her. She needs experts in this sort of thing.

RUSSIAN AMERICA

- **Capital:** New Arkhangelsk
- **Languages:** Russian, Inupiaq, Tlingit, Yupik

Russian America is a vast Russian colony in the northwestern region of North America. Although its land area is quite large, its population is not. This land is still mostly untamed and ill-explored by the Russian settlers. It's home to several remote prison camps, as well as a variety of hunters, trappers and other wilderness types. Of particular note are many of the prisoners held here, as many are political prisoners taken during the Russian Revolution. Some were once quite high ranking.

Royalist allies of the deposed and deceased Tsar believe that there are members of the royal family who are alive and being held in secret in one of these prison camps. They are looking for a group of people with the skills necessary to infiltrate the camp, locate the royal prisoners and then escape alive, with the royals in tow.

SANTO DOMINGO

- **Capital:** Santo Domingo
- **Languages:** Spanish

Santo Domingo was once Spain's oldest colony in the Americas, founded in the early years of the 1500s. Gold was found on the island,

prompting a gold rush during which most of the native peoples were enslaved as miners.

Today, Santo Domingo is a wreck. The country has been riven by revolutions, coups and collapses ever since its independence from Spain. It was even been occupied by the former country of France, and Haiti, each for roughly twenty years. The country's infrastructure is haphazard, each settlement attempting to construct it without central guidance, as the island lacks a viable system of roads. It may just be a matter of time before the next revolution or occupation of the country.

Lord Wilburbottom, a villain of some repute, is planning a takeover of Santo Domingo (see page 245). He sees the island country as the epitome of chaos, upon which he plans to enforce his iron will after the takeover. Wilburbottom has a variety of weird science on his side, as well as mysticism and a few well-placed agents in the Santo Domingo government. Only a skilled group at the right place and time can stop him from becoming an island dictator.

SECOND MEXICAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Mexico City
- **Languages:** Spanish, Nahuatl, Mixtec

The Second Mexican Empire is ruled by His Imperial Majesty Don Agustín II, By the Grace of God and Will of the People, Emperor of Mexico. It's a long title, and Emperor Agustín II is increasingly an unpopular ruler, despite his attempts to reform Mexico. These reforms include limiting the monarchy with a constitution and sharing power with a democratically elected congress. Despite his reformist leanings, he remains a close monarchist ally of the Holy Roman Empire, that empire having placed his adopted father into power some forty years ago.

Unrest in Mexico comes primarily from two different groups: There are those who oppose the monarchy and wish to see Mexico become a republic. And there is the church, which objects to the secularization laws in the reforms, among which is the inability for the church to hold property other than houses of worship and monasteries. Despite this unrest, Mexico has a growing economy and may one day be an emerging power in the region.

The flames of rebellion are also growing in Mexico, and one day soon may break out into a multi-sided civil war. On one side, the aging general Porfirio Diaz remains an influential figure and longtime opponent of the monarchy. On another side, Francisco Madero leads a progressive constitutionalist faction. And on yet another side, Ricardo Magón is organizing the anarcho-syndicalists.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- **Capital:** District of Columbia
- **Languages:** English

The United States won its independence from Britain in the late 1700s. Originally consisting of both the territories of the USA and CSA, the Confederate States broke away in the 1860s, leading to a bloody Civil War.

The United States originally had ambitions of spreading its territory across the North American continent, from the Atlantic seaboard to the West Coast, but this ambition was cut short in the early 1800s when the indigenous peoples fought back with unexpected ferocity—and some with mysterious technology. These attacks drove off early settlers and, with a few exceptions such as the city of Saint Louis, pushed back the USA's border to the Mississippi River.

Today the United States is a rising industrial powerhouse. Its population has swelled from the

masses of immigrants pouring into Ellis Island and it is looking to expand its overseas holdings.

The World's Fair is happening this year in the American city of Saint Louis. This event is drawing crowds from across the world. Many important figures are expected to be in attendance, and many new inventions are being put on display for the general public for the first time. Expeditions are fundraising and people from all over the world are meeting.

VINLAND

- **Capital:** Straumfjörð
- **Languages:** Vinland Norse

Vinland is by far the oldest European colony in the Americas, and one that was lost to Europe for centuries. Founded by the Vikings in the eleventh century, Vinland was the westernmost extent of the Norse world, and believed to be an island in the Atlantic. Over the next several centuries contact with the colony was gradually lost, until from the point of view of Europe, it dropped into legend. It wasn't until the sixteenth century that contact with the colony was reestablished.

Today Vinland is a deeply traditionalist country, still holding onto the beliefs and scalds of old. It has a strong Viking tradition, but one adapted to the modern world. It is also well-known for its fisheries and its proud navy.

Vinland is a country where many extended families long hold feuds. Two such families have held their grudges for at least three generations, with each trying to find a way to strike out at the other without the Jarls stepping in to limit the feud. One of these families is waiting for a group of travelers to come through. The plan is to attack the other family and then make it look like the travelers staged the attack, thereby striking at their rivals without the need to face the legal consequences.

SOUTH AMERICA

In 1904, South America is still very much a rugged wilderness. The coasts are relatively well-settled, but the interior of the continent remains sparsely-populated, mainly by nomadic tribes with stone age-level technology, many of whom remain uncontacted.

It is a frontier continent, full of peril. In the wilderness, Darwin's famous survival of the fittest rule is clearly evident in the jaguar's fangs, the viper's poison, and the weapons of both revolutionary guerrillas and indigenous spearheads. In the cities, merchants and nobles ply their intrigues in a manner made more ruthless by its subtlety and disguise.

ALTO PERU

- **Capital:** Ciudad de la Plata de la Nueva Toledo
- **Languages:** Spanish, Guarani, Aymara, Quechua

Alto Peru won its independence from Argentina and Spain in 1825. Since gaining its independence, Alto Peru has faced severe competition with its neighbors. The power of Portugal Novo is on the rise, the Incan Empire does not appreciate Western encroachment, and Argentina would love to bring Alto Peru back under its control. These conflicts have largely remained in the form of border skirmishes and economic pressures. However, a few full-scale wars have resulted, most notably the Incan-Alto War (1836-38), which resulted in a draw.

Mining has long been a center of industry in Alto Peru. The old silver mines have largely been exhausted, but the industry is focusing increasingly on newer tin mines. Left behind are a labyrinth of old abandoned mines that are largely unmapped. Some miners claim they can sometimes hear strange noises echoing out of these mines.

AMAZON TERRITORY

- **Capital:** None
- **Languages:** Chibcha, Wanano, Huitoto, Spanish, Portuguese

The Amazon Territory (AT) is a hotly-contested piece of land. The Muisca Collective, Viceroyalty of New Granada, and Portugal Novo all contest ownership of the territory and, given their heated past, the contest is fierce. However, in the interest of peace, the three powers signed a treaty in 1888. The terms of the agreement were thus: the AT is open to colonization by all three nations. On January 1, 1908, whichever nation has the most colonists in the territory by census will gain the AT and the other two nations will cease their contest.

This triggered a race to colonize and explore the AT. The going is not easy. This is the northern reaches of the Amazon Basin, a dense jungle. It is sparsely-inhabited for a reason—habitation is difficult. Consequently, the native tribes are not generally known for welcoming colonists with open arms. Lastly, there are rumors—unconfirmed of course—that the colonial and exploratory expeditions themselves have quietly disposed of small parties of rivals.

ARGENTINA

- **Capital:** Buenos Aires
- **Languages:** Spanish, Guaraní, Qom, Mocoví, Wichi

Formerly a Spanish colony, Argentina won its independence in the early 1800s. Establishing its independence was a long and difficult struggle, as evidenced by the successful secession of Alto Peru, Paraguay and Uruguay. In 1904, Argentina is well along the road toward supporting and stabilizing itself.

The vast Patagonian Pampas range through most of Argentina, though it also includes

the southern reaches of the Andes. Of all the South American nations, Argentina is the least rugged. Though it maintains its frontier atmosphere, the Pampas are great for farming and cattle ranching, and the mountains provide enough minerals for a thriving mining industry. The climate can be extreme, lying so near the pole, but the people of Argentina are nothing if not hardy.

Recently there have been a rash of sightings of a strange creature in Argentina. Witnesses describe it as a large and hairy beast—as big as an elephant. The creature walks on four legs, and possesses a long tongue. A group of researches in Buenos Aires believe that this creature could be a surviving megatherium—a giant ground sloth. They want to hire an enterprising team of hunters to bring it back for study, alive if possible.

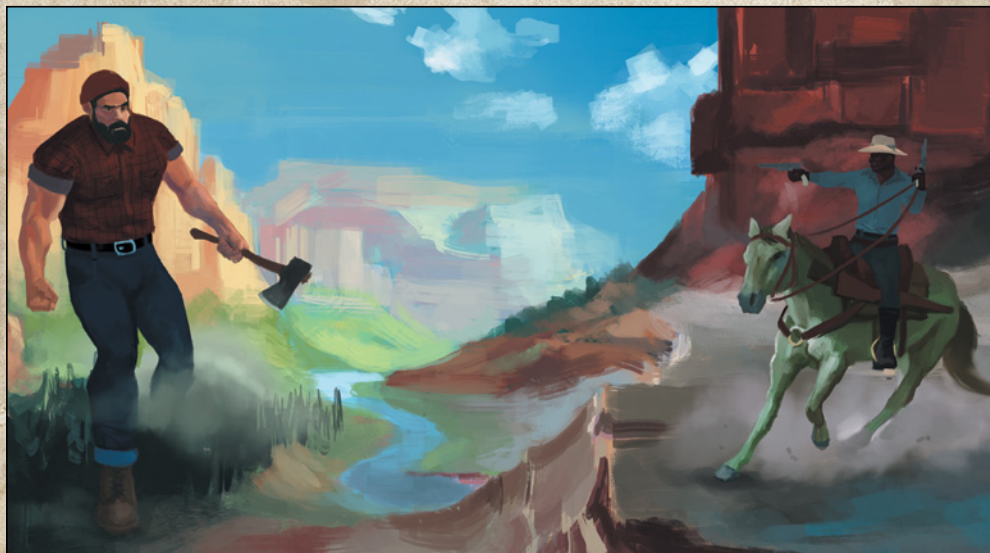
PATAGONIA

Patagonia is a sparsely populated region on the southern tip of the South American mainland. It is only nominally under the

control of the Argentine government. In practice the region is largely under the control of the indigenous tribes, who remain hostile to most outsiders. This may be due in part to the strange winds which sometimes blow north from Antarctica, to which the Patagons—as they are known by the West, though they call themselves Tehuelches, meaning fierce people—seem to be particularly sensitive.

The Patagons have adopted some of the West's technology, but mostly they maintain their old traditions. Their technology is centered on obsidian, basalt and wood. Though they are known to use Western iron tools and weapons, they are not believed to mine the material themselves.

When Ferdinand Magellan first arrived at the Patagonian coast in the 1520s, he wrote of an encounter with a race of giants. He named the land Patagonia, which was taken to mean “the land of big feet.” Some say the giants still live deep in the wilderness, and emerge at times when the strange winds blow from the Antarctic.



BRITISH GUIANA

- **Capital:** Georgetown
- **Languages:** English, Guyanese Creole, Sranan Tongo, Arawak, Bhojpuri

British Guiana remains a colony of Britain. Originally founded by the Dutch, Britain won the colony in 1814. With its colonial backing, British Guiana has a well-developed infrastructure and enjoys a fairly urban environment along the coasts, though the landscape rapidly turns rural as one moves inland.

As a colony, however, British Guiana is relatively weak. It is loyal as a whole, thus Britain maintains a comparatively small military presence. The new governor of British Guiana, Frederick Mitchell Hodgson, is noted for his diplomatic abilities and pragmatism, as well as his ruthlessness.

The rivalry between Britain and the Holy Roman Empire in Europe has slowly been spilling over to its colonies. This has led to an increased concern over the border between British and Imperial Guiana. The new governor wants to be ready to seize the opportunity should war break out between Britain and the Holy Romans. Towards this end, he is looking for spies to investigate the defenses on the Imperial side of the border.

IMPERIAL GUIANA

- **Capital:** Cayenne
- **Languages:** French, Guianese Creole, Arawak, Palijur, Kali'na

With the conquest of France in the early 1800s, France's colonial possession in South America became part of the Holy Roman Empire. The colony attempted to declare independence during the turmoil, and a brief but failed revolution ensued.

Like British Guiana, Imperial Guiana remains a European colony. This comes with both support for developing infrastructure and with an increasingly intense imperial rivalry with its neighbor. It may only be a matter of time until a European conflict spills out to these colonies.

There are reports that the Holy Roman Empire continues to ship its internal political prisoners to Imperial Guiana, in particular to the infamous island prison, Île du Diable ("Devil's Island"). A number of the prisoners held there are well-connected and have sympathizers across the world. They are looking to stage a prison break from the terrible island and are looking for outside conspirators.

MUISCA COLLECTIVE

- **Capital:** Bacatá
- **Languages:** Chibcha, Uwa, Barí, Spanish

Formerly a part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, the Muisca Collective successfully seceded during the Grenadine Civil War (1860-62). Many native peoples, led chiefly by the Muisca, rebelled against their Spanish overlords. After the rebellion, the Muisca sought a return to the strength of their past, remembering the now defunct Muisca Confederation that existed in the region some three centuries earlier. Inspired by this history, they worked to build pacts with other neighboring peoples, formally incorporating the Muisca Collective two years later.

Today the Collective is focusing on expanding its infrastructure, building new cities and highways and expanding the capital, Bacatá. The Collective is also driving settlement in the Amazon Territory, taking advantage of the fact that majority in the Collective are indigenous, and many speak languages related to those in found in the Amazon. The Muisca have success-

fully convinced several native tribes of the Amazon to join the Collective, counting their more permanent villages as Muisca settlements.

The Muisca are looking to hire a group of civil engineers to come in, survey, and advise them on city planning and other areas of developing infrastructure. This effort, however, has been threatened by traditionalist factions within the Collective who want to see a return to the old ways. These engineers will need bodyguards as well to deal with the threats, should the traditionalist factions make good on their word to attack the infrastructure survey.

NEW GRANADA

- **Capital:** Caracas
- **Languages:** Spanish, Wayuu, Warao, Pemón

Officially known as the Viceroyalty of New Granada, New Granada once consisted, not just of its current territory, but also those of the current Muisca Collective and Amazon Territory. Following the Grenadine Civil War (1860-62), the remaining loyalist territories reincorporated as the Viceroyalty of New Granada in 1863. Currently, New Granada is focusing on colonization – of its frontiers, and of the AT, working hard to win the AT back through the conditions of the peace treaty.

Reports occasionally come in of a species of small, hairy humanoids that live deep in the jungles or high in the mountains of New Granada. These so-called “Grenadine Hair Dwarves” apparently love technology and some even claim that they are extraterrestrial in origin. The Universidad Real y Pontificia de Caracas is looking to form an expedition to capture one of the dwarves.

PARAGUAY

- **Capital:** Asunción
- **Languages:** Spanish, Guaraní

Winning its independence from Spain in 1811 and from Argentina in 1842, Paraguay is an isolated nation. It has ties with its neighbor Alto Peru, but it regards Portugal Novo and Argentina as constant threats to its independence. President Colonel Juan Antonio Escurra is unhappy even with this state of affairs. Leading a military coup to seize power from the civilian government in 1902, Escurra is planning to press Paraguay's claim to the disputed Gran Chaco region, a territory also claimed by Alto Peru.

He may not have enough time to press any claims, however, as a conspiracy is growing to overthrow Escurra and his Colorado Party allies, thereby securing power for the Liberal Party. These plotters are Paraguayan exiles in Buenos Aires, who are in the process of acquiring weapons and making their plans to overthrow the Paraguayan government. They are looking for skilled allies. Of course, Escurra's government is also looking for those who might infiltrate rebellious movements.

PORTUGAL NOVO

- **Capital:** Rio de Janeiro
- **Languages:** Portuguese, Guaraní

In 1808, Napoleon's warpath reached Portugal, and the Portuguese royal family fled to their holdings in the colony of Brazil. However, with the defeat of Napoleon, the newly-independent Spain retained its hold on Portugal's ancient homeland. Faced with a more permanent exile than he had anticipated, King John VI reestablished Portugal in Brazil, calling the renewed nation Portugal Novo.

Portugal Novo is vast, spanning many time zones and climates. As the nation continues to reestablish itself, rapidly approaching its centennial in 1909, it suffers growing pains typical of a rising country: border disputes, minor rebellions, poor infrastructure and the consequent banditry, attempts at exploitation by foreign powers, and so on. Politics, merchant trade, frontier life; all are lethal in their own way, and all make their home in Portugal Novo.

In several remote villages in Portugal Novo there are rumors of a part-man, part-horse creature that appears during the nights of the full moon. This besta-fera runs through the villages, where it desecrates local tombs. It is followed by a pack of vicious dogs, which it whips as it runs the streets at night.

TAWANTINSUYU

- **Capital:** Cusco
- **Languages:** Quechua, Aymara, Puquina

Known to the West as the Incan Empire, Tawantinsuyu is the mountainous domain of the Inca people. The Spanish conquistador Pizarro first encountered the Inca in 1526 and immediately saw that they had great wealth. He gained the permission of Spain to engage in the conquest of Tawantinsuyu in 1529, and returned with a small expedition in 1532.

However, the Inca had not been idle. Engaged in their own civil war between the two sons of Huayna Capac, the Inca had made contact with Dutch merchants along the coast and traded for gunpowder weapons. The civil war itself ended in 1531, when Huascar died of small pox, leaving Atahualpa as the undisputed emperor.

When Pizarro returned with his expedition and began rousing the various tribes the Inca had subjugated against their overlords, Atahualpa raised his own army, equipped them with llamas and firearms, and sent them into

the field. They slaughtered Pizarro and his men, and dealt severely with the insurrectionist tribes, sacrificing their leaders to the Incan gods Inti and Pachamama.

In 1904, Tawantinsuyu is a strong empire, though it suffers from some internal unrest. No army has ever managed to stand against the fierce llama-riding cavalry while in their home mountains, but their military strategy is based entirely on mountain warfare and, consequently, they have yet to expand much beyond the Andes. The Incan's industry is strong, having imported and adapted many outside technologies to augment their own. However, the empire is still riven with political instability. Succession is still solely hereditary, which lends itself to civil strife between the sons of the emperor, and many of the subjugated tribes still yearn to be free, leading to occasional rebellions. One such rebellious tribe is seeking outside help in-fighting the central Incan government for their independence.

TIERRA DEL FUEGO

- **Capital:** Ushuaia
- **Languages:** Spanish, Ona

This archipelago lies just south of Patagonia, on the very southern tip of South America. It is a colonial outpost maintained by Spain. Though it is close to Antarctica, its oceanic climate ensures that its winters are not so severe, though its summers are also extremely mild. It is a frontier colony populated by hardy and adventurous people.

The colonists are uneasy, however. They feel the strange winds which blow north from Antarctica in the winter and hear harrowing sounds in the night. In 1903, pictures surfaced in Spain of a creature supposedly caught by a fisher in the Beagle Channel. Quickly denounced as a fake, the pictures showed a

small fishing vessel almost swamped under a vast, rubbery collection of tentacles, suckers, beaks, eyes and proboscises. The eyes glared uniformly at the camera, which was one of the chief arguments used to declare the picture false—surely no mere mindless creature could be aware of a camera.

URUGUAY

- **Capital:** Montevideo
- **Languages:** Spanish

Uruguay is an isolated country in the middle of an armed uprising. Following the election of President José Batlle y Ordóñez last year, the Uruguan Nationalist Party rebelled, leading a revolt in which the fighting still

continues. This rebellion is only the latest in an intermittent civil war that has raged on and off since the 1830s.

Despite the scars left from decades of fighting, up until this year Uruguay has been a country on the rise. Infrastructure spread rapidly throughout the 1880s and 1890s, boosted by the new wave of immigrants coming from Spain and the Italian peninsula. Whether the new outbreak of fighting will set back these gains, however, has yet to be seen.

Rumors are that an unnamed mad scientist is looking to sell experimental weapons to both sides of the Uruguayan conflict. Unless stopped, these weapons could mean the death of many on both sides, and a setback to all the progress made in the last two decades.



EUROPE

Europe is a continent at the height of its power. Its reach stretches across all corners of the globe and its interests have made their way into every continent on the planet. Its might, however, is matched by a fierce rivalry between the colonial powers, as well as corruption and conspiracy within.

BRITAIN

- **Capital:** London
- **Languages:** English, Welsh

Britain is a nation in ascent. It is one of the three Great Powers of Europe, and the kingdom knows it. While the nation has struggled in the past—particularly in regards to maintaining grip on the whole of the British Isles, as evidenced by the existence of the Celtic Kingdoms—in the last century Britain has shot to the top in both industrialization and the possession of overseas colonies. The sun never sets on the British Empire.

Britain's position in Europe has been helped by the decline and crises faced by many of its historical rivals—particularly those currently being faced by Spain, Jylland and the now-conquered France.

The British head of state is King Edward VII, a monarch known for his keen sense of fashion. The real power in the country, however, is held by the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Campbell-Bannerman is a leader of the liberal party and is sometimes referred to as “the radical prime minister.” His rule is a sharp turn from his predecessor, the conservative Lord Salisbury. The agenda pushed by his government has been met with fierce opposition in the House of Lords, but that is hardly surprising. This

seems to be leading up to a conflict in the British Empire that will echo throughout the British colonies and from there, throughout the world.

Britain is currently hiring privateers in secret, hoping to further undermine the kingdom's rivals. A hardy team with a ship and flexible morality might make a pretty penny in Britain's employ.

CELTIC KINGDOMS

- **Capital:** Edinburgh
- **Languages:** English, Gaelic

The Celtic Kingdoms are a minor power in the British Isles and have been a thorn in the side of Britain for the last two centuries. The country is divided into the two kingdoms—Scotland and Ireland—and although both kingdoms only possess a single king (currently King Rory II), they each possess a different parliament and administration. In the early 1700s, with the passage of the Acts of Union, it looked as if for a time that Scotland and Ireland would both unite with Britain into a single political entity, but that dream died with the sudden assassination of King James IV and I.

Today the Celtic Kingdom are an underdeveloped (by European standards) corner of Europe. The country is primarily agricultural, and is often used as a proxy in the struggles between the three Great Powers. This is much to the embarrassment of Britain, who would prefer to have a more solid grasp on “their islands.”

King Rory II fears that an unknown member of his inner circle is secretly planning his assassination. Unable to trust those closest to him, he is looking to reach out to an outside group of adventurers with a sterling reputation. These adventurers are to pose as visiting dignitaries and protect him when the assassin strikes.

GREECE

- **Capital:** Athens
- **Languages:** Greek

The history of Greece goes back to the very beginnings of Western civilization—from classical antiquity to the Byzantine Empire. In more recent centuries, however, Greece has spent much of its existence under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Always a rebellious province, Greece rebelled numerous times against the Ottomans, but didn't regain its independence until the Greek War of Independence in the 1830s.

Independence proved troublesome. Otto of Wittelsbach, Prince of Bavaria, was put on the throne, but he was eventually forced from power. King George I succeeded him and remains in power today—an old and tired monarch.

While Greece remains independent, it is often the subject of proxy battles between the three Great Powers of Europe—Britain, Russia, and the Holy Roman Empire. The country is also regularly troubled by revolts and skirmishes along its Balkan border.

Recently a heretofore unknown grave has been uncovered that some believe to be the tomb of Alexander the Great. A number of people working on the excavation, however, have disappeared under mysterious circumstances and the leader of the excavation suspects foul play.

HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Vienna
- **Languages:** German, French, Czech, Polish, Croatian

The Holy Roman Empire is one of the three Great Powers of Europe, and some would say the greatest of the three. It stands astride Western Europe like a colossus, dwarfing all surrounding

nations, other than Russia, by land area and all around it in terms of population.

Under its widespread rule the Holy Roman Empire has many different diverse peoples that speak a variety of languages. While the language of the Holy Roman government is German—and most of the elite in the Empire speak at least a spattering of German—the Empire also includes numerous French-speakers, various Slavic languages and others.

Despite its obvious might, the Holy Roman Empire is fractured and still struggling to incorporate all of its conquered territory. It is a hotbed of intrigue and covert activity, as struggles happen not just between the various peoples of the Empire, but also between centuries-old political structures and newer progressive developments.

Recently, the Holy Roman government has been investing in a variety of expeditions to the far reaches of the globe—from Antarctica to the horn of Africa. Spies within the Empire indicate that the Holy Romans are looking for something. But what is it? What could be so important?

THE BALKANS

The Balkans have always been a rebellious corner of the Holy Roman Empire, and are rife with factionalism and conflicts between the various ethnicities. This tendency for trouble has forced the Empire to give the region a limited autonomy—something that the occupied French regions of the Empire have looked on with envy.

The Balkans have a number of highly developed criminal networks that traffic in drugs, smuggled goods and protection rackets. Many of these organizations are loosely aligned with Balkan independence groups. After a recent high profile murder, a Holy Roman official is looking for a group to infiltrate these criminal networks and bring them down from the inside.

OLD FRANCE

The territory that used to be France is now officially a part of the Holy Roman Empire, conquered in the early 1800s in the wake of the French Revolution and the rise of First Consul Napoleon. Despite nearly a century under Holy Roman rule, however, France still remains an independent-minded and rebellious region. This rebelliousness is aided by the legacy of centuries of independence, a rich cultural heritage and a different dominant language than the German-speaking center of the empire.

Recently reports have come in that something has awoken the Tarasque, a sort of dragon-like monster that has up until recently slept the centuries away in a hidden spot near Provence. A French separatist group has claimed responsibility. A number of people—from Holy Roman officials to local farmers—would like to know what their plans are for the beast, and how it can be stopped.

JYLLAND

- **Capital:** Copenhagen
- **Languages:** Danish, Faroese, Icelandic, Greenlandic

Jylland is not one of the great colonial powers of Europe, but not for lack of trying. Until 1901 the kingdom was part of a union between the three kingdoms of Jylland, Sweden and Norway. This union broke apart, however, and while Sweden and Norway remain united, Jylland broke away, keeping its colonies of Snaeland and Graenland. The kingdom once also had a colony in the Gold Coast in Africa, but that colony has since been traded to the British.

Jylland has a long history dating back to the Vikings—a history to which it looks back on with pride when dreaming of being a world

power. Modern reality simply hasn't lived up to the dream, however. Jylland has fallen behind in the race to obtain colonies, and many of those it does have are either showing a growing independence movement—such as with Snaeland—or have been lost, such as with the colony on the Gold Coast.

To catch up in the colonial race, Jylland has turned its attention to the poles. It is looking to hire expeditions to both poles. These expeditions are intended not only to trek where no human has gone before, but also so scout potential locations for new colonies.

SNAELAND

Snaeland is a colony of Jylland, but it is a colony that increasingly has been pushing for home rule. In fact, this movement has gained such momentum that in the last few months Jylland has been forced to grant Snaeland a significant amount of autonomy, appointing Hannes Hafstein the first Prime Minister of Snaeland. Where this will new autonomy will lead Snaeland now has yet to be seen.

In the countryside of Snaeland the elves are becoming very upset. No longer content to remain hidden and invisible, living under their mounds, some elves have ventured out and attacked local farmers and travelers. The locals are becoming desperate to learn what has angered the elves and how to appease them.

GRAENLAND

Graenland is a frozen and largely empty land filled with endless ice and snow. The island has few inhabitants, and the few it does have tend to be an isolated and insular bunch. Jylland maintains a strict monopoly on trade between Graenland and the outside world. Rumors,

however, persist of secret military bases or even weirder things—perhaps even crashed space-ships—hidden deep under the ice of the glaciers.

ITALIAN CITY-STATES

- **Capital:** Many
- **Languages:** Italian

The Italian City-States are a feuding collection of small sovereign territories that have been intriguing and in-fighting for centuries. Power is held by a handful of extended families who have connections either through blood or marriage to half the other powerful families in the region. Important city-states include Corsica, Genoa, Lucca, Modena, Parma, Sardinia, Sicily, Trent, Tuscany and Venice.

Despite regular turmoil, the Italian City-States are known for their beautiful sites, as well as their rich history. The crumbling remains of the ancient Romans can be seen alongside majestic cathedrals and modern developments.

Many lost Roman artifacts are buried beneath the soil of these city-states, just waiting rediscovery. Unfortunately, navigating the permissions necessary to conduct large scale excavation can be difficult with so many squabbling powers at hand. Some have taken to circumventing permission entirely, conducting small and secretive digs in the dead of night.

NETHERLAND PRINCIPALITIES

- **Capital:** Amsterdam
- **Languages:** Dutch, Frisian, French

The Netherland Principalities is a collection of small territories that have banded together for mutual protection and influence. Made up of thirteen principalities, the nation is something of a secondary player on the European stage. Dwarfed by the three Great

Powers, the Netherlands nevertheless maintains a handful of active colonies from which it can exert its sway across the globe. Many of these colonies, sadly, are notoriously bad in their treatment of the native populations. One particular colony—the Dutch Congo, which is less an official colony and more a privately owned nation controlled by King Leopold II—is being singled out at the World's Fair for the atrocities committed there.

Despite this prominence on the world stage, however, the Netherland Principalities have been slow to industrialize—at least compared to their European neighbors. The presence of many individuals of French descent whose ancestors fled to the Netherland Principalities following the French conquest by the Holy Roman Empire has also driven a political wedge between the Principalities and the surrounding Holy Roman Empire.

If the rumors are to be believed, a powerful Dutch general has gone rogue. He has set out for the colonies where he plans to set himself up as a warlord. The Dutch monarchy—eager to save themselves future problems and embarrassment—want him quietly captured and brought back to the Netherlands for trial.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Constantinople
- **Languages:** Turkish, Arabic, many others

The Ottoman Empire is a venerable empire that holds land across three continents. In Europe it holds large amounts of land in the Balkans and around the Black Sea. Its holdings on the continent have gradually eroded away over the years, most notably with the loss of Greece during the Greek War of Independence in the 1820s and 1830s.

The Ottoman Empire remains the only primarily Muslim empire in Europe, although its rule includes many peoples of many religions—particularly Orthodox Christians. The Ottoman Empire's European holdings are also particularly rife with internal religious and ethnic strife. Numerous peoples hold grudges that go back centuries, causing the Empire to have to expend considerable resources keeping the peace.

The Ottoman Empire is described in full in the Asia section (see page 60).

PAPAL STATES

- **Capital:** Rome
- **Languages:** Italian, Latin

The Papal States date back to the 700s. They have existed for centuries as the temporal arm of the Roman Catholic Church (as opposed to the ecclesiastical arm), and are ruled over directly by Pope Pius X, as the territory's sovereign.

Although the Papal States have historically been a major player in the intrigue and politics of the Italian Peninsula, in recent decades

they have faltered in their temporal influence and importance. Many blame this decline in importance on the campaign of General Count Raffaele Cadorna, a Milanese general who invaded the Papal States in the 1870s and who briefly reigned there. This invasion, among other things, showed the world the weakening of the Papal States, and they lost much face.

Others blame this on Pope Pius X's hardline stance of isolating the Church. He has, among other decrees, forbid Catholics from voting, declared marriages to non-Catholics sacramentally invalid and declared an opposition to trade unions not made up entirely of Catholics. These, and other policies, have also driven a wedge between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, which rules—at least in theory—with the Pope's blessing.

Thieves have recently made off with a number of valuable Catholic artifacts, including a piece of the True Cross, the Santo Cáliz de Valencia and at least one Holy Nail. The Church has offered a reward for the artifacts' safe return.



RUSSIAN REPUBLIC

- **Capital:** Moscow
- **Languages:** Russian

For decades in Russia, strikes and worker unrest has been on the rise. Between 1895 and 1903, Russia was averaging some 176 strikes a year by workers in various locations around the country, and the stubborn Tsar Nicholas II was slow to listen. Medieval-style serfdom had only been abolished in Russia in 1861. The former Tsar Alexander II was assassinated by rebels some years afterward. Russia was in a world of rebellion.

In 1903, this all came to a head. Rebellions swept the country, tearing down the former order and removing the Tsar from power. A last-minute attempt at a peaceable solution—giving the peasantry representation on a ruling council, the duma—failed. And slowly a new order is emerging. Russia has now been declared a republic structured along socialist lines, a move that has terrified many of the rulers in Europe.

It is still too early to see the final state of the government that may emerge from the revolution in Russia. By all accounts, parts of the country are still in rebellion as the new government in Moscow struggles to gain a grip on the nation. Many different organizations took part in the Rebellion of 1903—from the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, to the Socialist Revolutionary Party, to the Union of Zemstvo Constitutionalists—and now all of these groups are struggling to have their say in the new order.

The bloodshed in the revolution may also have awakened something older. Deep in the Siberian wastes, a being known as Koschei the Immortal begins to stir. It is said that he is both ancient and powerful, possessed of sorcerous might. He has hidden his soul away, and cannot be killed unless his soul is first found and reunited with his skeletal body.

SPAIN

- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Languages:** Spanish

Spain is a nation in crisis. Despite Spain's successful conquest of Portugal in the early 1800s, it has floundered over the last century, gradually losing its colonies and overseas holdings one-by-one. All this culminated in the Spanish-Confederate War of 1898 which left Spain robbed of most of its remaining colonies and which embarrassed the nation on the world stage.

Spain is ruled by the young Alfonso XIII, who became king upon his birth, following the death of his father Alfonso XII in 1885. Because of this early rule, Alfonso only came of age and inherited his ruling powers in 1902, and in 1904 he is still only eighteen years old. As might be expected, he was born to be king, but he is in over his head. His country's crushing defeat came when he was only fourteen. And now he is expected to lead a nation.

Spain, meanwhile, has been a kingdom dominated by an oligarchy of large landholders. These landholders have dug into the Spanish political establishment and have been taking up an increasingly large portion of the nation's wealth, something that has prompted protests and riots by everyone, from anarchists to republicans to Carlists.

A new crop has become popular in the Spanish countryside. It is a type of vegetable with extremely large pea-like pods—large enough to hold a human body! As this crop has spread, people nearby have begun acting strangely, guarding the crop at night, acting in concert with other farmers producing the crop and insisting that others grow it as well. Some have even claimed that fully human duplicates are developed inside the large pods, and these pod people are secretly replacing the locals.

SWEDISH KINGDOM

- **Capital:** Stockholm
- **Languages:** Swedish, Norwegian, Sami, Finnish

The Swedish Kingdom is a nation in transition. Until a few years ago it was part of a united kingdom with both Norway and Jylland, but with the coming of the new century the union broke apart and now Sweden is joined by Norway alone. The elderly King Oscar II sits on the throne as monarch of both kingdoms, but his grasp on the country long ago slipped away, and it is obvious to all that his reign is in its waning years. Who will succeed him on the throne—or, indeed, if anyone will succeed him at all—is an open question.

In the last several decades more and more power in the Swedish Kingdom has been transferred effectively to the parliament, and parliamentary affairs have become more and more heated. Political parties have begun to assert their real power as Sweden industrializes, and the Swedish Social Democratic Party has been at the forefront of the changes. Sweden itself has been rife with socialist movements, and socialist labor unions have been growing in power in the country. The current Prime Minister, Erik Gustaf Boström, a conservative, has resisted many of the actions by the socialists so far—including cracking down on a potential revolution in the style of the revolution that has swept Russia—but tensions are high and an upcoming struggle remains.

A few months ago a longboat, straight out of Viking history, appeared along the Swedish coast. It was crewed by raiders seemingly from

the Middle Ages who were as confused as anyone else. This was just the first such event in the region where something or someone appeared from out of time, and in the last couple months these events have increased. Now a local scientist has come up with the theory that something in the region is manipulating time. This thing may even be located in the future!

SWITZERLAND

- **Capital:** Bern
- **Languages:** German, French, Italian

Switzerland is a land-locked country, mostly high in the Alps, known for its long tradition of neutrality. In fact, it has not been in a state of war since it regained full independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1815. The new government, known officially as the Swiss Confederation, has so far managed to avoid the tangle of alliances and secret pacts that have become commonplace across the European continent. They have defended their ways ever since, even completely rewriting their constitution in 1874 to allow for more of a direct democracy.

Today, Switzerland is a remote but rich nation. It has its financial hands in many pies across Europe, and it makes the most of its neutral stance in order to deal with and profit from all sides in European rivalries. The country is fiercely independent, and outsiders have great difficulty finding acceptance among the Swiss as one of their own.

Some crazy theorists have even insinuated that the reason the Swiss are so independent and accepting of outsiders in their midst is that they are secretly governed by a conspiracy of gnomes, which may or may not have psychic abilities.

ASIA

Asia is by far the largest continent. It is wide and varied, with frozen steppes, steaming jungles, burning deserts and windswept plains. It is a land of many diverse peoples, and one that outside powers are just beginning to fully explore. If the continent can be said to have a theme on Arth then that theme is mystery. Who knows what secrets lie in ancient and ruined temples, or hidden away on far-off mountain tops?

BRITISH INDIA

- **Capital:** Calcutta
- **Languages:** English, Khandesi, Tamil, Teluga, Bengali

Britain holds a number of colonies on the Indian subcontinent. Dominion over these colonies was transferred to the British crown from the British East India Company during the reign of Queen Victoria. However, these holdings have proven to be problematic for the British, as they are regularly swept by rebellions and other troubles.

BENGAL

Viceroy Lord Curzon heads the government in the Bengal colony. In recent years he has been pursuing an enigmatic series of reforms that have left many baffled. Most recently he has proposed dividing the colony into two, thereby separating it into an area with a clear Muslim majority and one with a clear Hindu majority. His advisors are urging him to avoid this, so as not to provoke new religious strife, but Curzon looks like he may pursue this change anyway.

Some in the Bengal administration worry that Lord Curzon has gone mad. They've secretly written to the King, requesting that Curzon be replaced, but have been rebuffed. As

the situation in the colony gets worse, some are plotting to take matters into their own hands. They just need to convince a group to openly move against the Viceroy.

BOMBAY

The most populous of all the British colonies in India, Bombay is also the foremost center for British economic activity in the region. Because of this, it has seen much westernization and development of infrastructure, as rail lines have been extended across the colony and telegraph lines continue to spread.

A strange phenomenon sometimes occurs with the telegraph lines in Bombay—messages are picked up in the middle of the night that have no known sender. These messages are almost always short and cryptic, written in one of the subcontinent's native languages. They also always tell of events that are to come in the next few days. The colonial government has assured the telegraph operators that they'll look into it, but thus far have largely ignored the issue. Meanwhile, the predictions contained in the messages have gotten more dire.

MADRAS

Nowhere is the movement for Indian independence from the British Empire stronger than in Madras. Towards this end, a group calling itself the Indian National Congress has formed, and has officially petitioned the King to turn Madras over to native rule. Thus far these petitions have been ignored.

Meanwhile, the colonial governor has been kept busy looking for a wanted woman by the moniker of Swathi the Tiger. She is a rebel who is said to be possessed of many supernatural powers, including the ability to alter her size, weight, and to kill by uttering the correct esoteric syllable.

BUCEPHALA

- **Capital:** Alexandria Bucephalous
- **Languages:** Bucephalian Greek, Sindhi, Rajasthani, Lahnda

When Alexander the Great swept across Asia he founded the city of Alexandria Bucephalous after his favorite horse that died in the Battle of Hydaspes (326 BC). Following Alexander's death this city would live on as the capital of a Greek-ruled pocket empire in northern India. Fueled by trade traveling the Silk Road, this empire would last through the ages, maintaining a unique Greek-descended cultural identity, despite mass conversions to Buddhism and the machinations of colonial powers.

To the outside observer, Bucephala is a strange mix of East and West. A distant Greek dialect is still the language of the ruling class here, although the lower classes speak mostly a mixture of Sanskrit-descended languages. The architecture is Indian, but the murals speak of Greek heritage. Bucephala is in the process of trying to modernize while retaining its independence from the outside powers that would exploit it.

A series of natural disasters has struck the city of Nicaea. First it was a terrible storm, then an earthquake, and finally a whirlwind from the sky. This has left the citizens uneasy, to say the least, and some claim that the ancient gods have been offended and demand a return to the sacrifices of old.

THE CALIPHATE

- **Capital:** Samarra
- **Languages:** Arabic, Farsi, Hazara, Pashtun

The title of Caliph has passed through many hands over the year. For several centuries the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire held the title, but it was lost in 1774 following the Russo-Turkish War. From there the title of Caliph passed to Crimea, and then through a series of short rulers before finally being claimed by the House of Saud, who hold the title today. The current ruler is Caliph Abdul Rahman bin Faisal.

The Caliphate is a vast Islamic empire that stretches across the Middle East and into South Asia. Many of these lands are primarily tribal, and in places sharia law is strictly enforced.



Recently a pre-Islamic tomb was discovered deep in the Arabian Desert. Once opened, the inside of this tomb was found to be covered in ancient writings and filled with sealed clay pots. One of the archeologists who discovered the tomb disappeared after taking and opening one of the pots. Now the workers excavating the tomb refuse to return, claiming that he unwittingly released a powerful and malevolent djinn.

JAPANESE SHOGUNATE

- **Capital:** Edo
- **Languages:** Japanese, Korean

In the mid-1800s it looked as if the Shogunate in Japan would collapse under the weight of the changes forced upon Japan by the American Admiral Perry and his fleet of gunships, and true rule would be returned to the Emperor. This period of doubt was short-lived, however, when Togugawa Yoshinobu's reforms proved ultimately successful and new life was breathed into the aging Shogunate. While these reforms included many moves towards industrialization and other modernization, they also included the reaffirmation of many traditional practices, such as the importance of the Samurai in both war and imperial administration, and the isolation of Japanese society from the outside world. In the 1860s, with renewed Shogunate vigor, and with the Americans distracted by the American Civil War, the Shogun cast the foreigners out and once again closed Japan to the outside world.

This would last three decades before Japan began to flex its might, focusing on outward expansion. The Shogunate conquered Korea in the 1890s, and today is on the brink of war with Russia.

Recently there have been repeated sightings of a large, saurian-like creature living in Lake Ikeda on Kyushu Island. Local legend has it that this creature, Issie, was once a white mare that took to the water, changing into this creature, after her foal was kidnapped by a samurai.

KOREA

With Japanese reforms mostly completed by the 1890s, Japan began to look toward outward expansion. Qing China was weakening, and the Shogun looked to pluck the Korean Peninsula—then largely a Chinese puppet state—from China's grasp. The Sino-Japanese War was to follow, resulting in the Japanese conquest of the peninsula.

Today many Koreans are unhappy with the Japanese occupation of their land. Resistance fighters on the peninsula are looking for allies and connections abroad, particularly those willing to send arms, supplies or aid to their cause.

KASHMIR

- **Capital:** Lahore
- **Languages:** Kashmiri, Punjabi, Urdu, Dogri

The state of Kashmir is a descendant of the now-defunct Sikh Empire. It won its continued independence from Britain during the Anglo-Sikh War in 1846 and since then it has struggled to maintain its power. Pratap Singh rules the country, and he is considering aligning the state with the Russians if that would stave off further British encroachment.

Reports have recently come in of herds of vampire-like deer attacking travelers in the southern reaches of Kashmir. In an effort to keep his country safe, the Maharaja has issued a reward for every such deer captured or killed.

KHMER EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Angkor
- **Languages:** Khmer, Vietnamese, Lao, Thai, Malay, many others

With the splintering of the Chinese Empire in the last century, the Khmer Empire has been left as the preeminent power of East Asia. Controlling most of southeast Asia and thousands of islands that trail out from the Asian mainland towards Australia, the Khmer Empire is truly a sight to behold—one that may soon turn its eyes on stemming the expansion of the colonial powers in the region, or even jump on the colonial bandwagon itself.

The Khmer Empire maintains its regional superiority and control over vast distances through technological superiority. The empire has the largest fleet of airships in the world. With these airships, the Khmer are able to attack ground-based enemies from afar. Many allied airship privateers in the region also allow the Khmer to hamper enemy supply lines without exhausting their own forces and other resources on the matter.

The current ruler of the Empire is King Norodom I, a successful albeit elderly ruler. In the last year the health of the king has declined noticeably. While the king recently designated his son, Prince Yukanthor, his heir, a succession struggle looks to be brewing, as it is an open secret that the king's half-brother, Prince Sisowath, seeks to claim the throne.

Sensing the weakness of the Khmer King, a number of outside powers have been bribing both local and foreign airship privateers to prey on Khmer's shipping. In response, the Khmer have stepped up their own airship patrols. The first great airship war may be brewing in the region, one which may pull in any number of outside pilots.

MONGOLIAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Avarga
- **Languages:** Mongolian, Kazakh, Mandarin, Tuvan

The Mongolian Empire was once the single largest land empire the world has ever known, and it still lays claim to a vast land, stretched across the breadth of Asia. Today, however, the empire is a hollowed out shell of its former glory. While a Khan still rules in name, in practice the Empire operates as a vast collection of more-or-less autonomous regions. These smaller regions each have their own lineages of rulers—most descended from the many grandchildren of the famous Genghis Khan—but they freely ignore the increasingly-rare edicts issued by the Great Khan. Most of these interior regions are technologically backward and underdeveloped. It is perhaps only the threat posed by the more well-developed and technologically-advanced empires that surround the Mongolian Empire on all sides which keeps the Empire together.

In a remote region of the steppe, tribal witnesses have reported that some sort of metallic ship from the heavens has crashed, streaking across the night sky like a comet. Clandestine experts on the Hitch'nyv threat have concluded that the spaceship is not one of theirs. The question then is: What sort of spaceship is it? Several expeditions are being launched to find out.

MYSORE

- **Capital:** Mysore and Srirangapatna
- **Languages:** Kannada

In 1897, an outbreak of the bubonic plague killed half of the population of Mysore, and the sultanate has struggled to recover ever since. The most recent recovery scheme involves a

series of planned infrastructure developments and rapid modernization. The sultan hopes that this will attract both outside investment and fuel migration to the sultanate.

Unfortunately for the workers laying down the new infrastructure, the dead haven't stayed dead. Late in the year 1903, the corpses of those killed in the plague outbreak began to dig themselves out from their graves. Since then their numbers have continued to grow as Mysore faces a full-on zombie epidemic.

NIAN

- **Capital:** Jinan
- **Languages:** Mandarin

The Nian state formed when the Nian Rebellion challenged the rule of the Qing Dynasty in northern China. Distracted at the time by the Taiping Rebellion, which was also going on, the Qing were unable to put down the rebellion and an independent state followed. Since then, regaining stability has been something with which the new government has struggled, leaving the region in a state of near anarchy.

In the midst of the chaos that is the Nian state, a secret society calling itself the White Lotus has been quietly spreading its influence. They are searching for knowledge and artifacts of mystic importance. This organization has regularly been reaching out to other areas of the world, where it may cooperate or compete with others seeking mystic power. To what end it is making these acquisitions, however, none outside the society can say.

NIZAM'S DOMINIONS

- **Capital:** Hyderabad
- **Languages:** Urdu, Telugu, Marathi

Also known as the Hyderabad state, the Nizam's Dominions are a primarily Islamic

patchwork of states in the Indian subcontinent. Officially aligned with the British Empire, the Nizam has an agreement with Britain that allows him full internal control of the dominions, while dealing exclusively with the British on the international stage.

High in the mountains, miners in Nizam's Dominions have recently drilled shafts down into what appears to be a vast cave complex, filled with untold wealth in the form of gems and precious metals. The only miners to descend into these caverns and return with treasures, however, quickly disappeared. Now one of the miners is claiming that the cave complex is nothing other than Patala, the Vedic nether realm.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Constantinople
- **Languages:** Turkish, Arabic, many others

The Ottoman Empire is an aged and crumbling empire, but it is one that refuses to go down without a fight. A variety of modernization programs have been implemented in the empire in the last several decades, including the construction of the world's first telegraph line—something that happened shortly after Sultan Abdulmecid issued its patent in person to inventor Samuel Morse. Other reforms include the secularization of Ottoman law, widespread industrialization, a transition to a modern conscripted army, and a variety of banking system reforms.

The Ottomans are in the process of sponsoring numerous archeological digs all throughout their Egyptian holdings, carting away mummified bodies by the hundreds, as well as pottery shards and other ancient relics. One particular tomb, however, is said to have cursed everyone who has entered. Now only one tomb explorer remains alive, and he is looking to hire a group that can protect him against whatever cursed him and his fellows.



PARTHIAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Rhages
- **Languages:** Farsi, Turkish, Kurdish

The Parthian Empire has survived in some form in the region around the Caspian Sea for thousands of years, making it one of the oldest empires still in existence today. While it, like many ancient empires, is a shadow of its past heights, the fact that it is still around is a testament to its longevity.

The Parthian Empire today is a satellite of the Caliphate. It remains a separate political entity despite several attempts by past Caliphs to subsume it by virtue of the fierce nationalism of its people, and the independent-mindedness of the Islamic sects that make their homes in the Empire.

In recent years the Ottoman Empire, in an attempt to regain some of its former influence, has reached out to the Parthian Empire, attempting to form an alliance and sway the Parthians away from the Caliphate's sphere of influence. Thus far, the Ottoman's attempts have been rebuffed, although there are signs that this may be changing.

Somewhere along the coast of the Caspian Sea there is said to be a cave that, when entered, allows the explorer to travel back to a point in the distant past. However, once a traveler goes through the cave, they have only 24 hours to return back to their own time, otherwise they're trapped in the past forever. This cave is said to be a secret that the local villagers around the cave would die to protect.

QING CHINA

- **Capital:** Shanghai
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Manchu

Qing China is all that remains of the Qing Dynasty and their once-glorious Chinese Empire. The Guangxu Emperor sits on his throne and pretends that his reign marks a Golden Age, while his empire crumbles around him. Due to his out-of-touch perspective, the real power in the country is subtly shifting towards both Empress Dowager Cixi and Empress Consort Xiaodingjing, each of whom have their own, mutually-exclusive plans for the country and a fierce animosity towards one another. The wild cards in the nation remain the generals, and who

they will side with in the upcoming political struggle largely remains to be seen.

Despite the changes in the last century Qing China still remains a largely traditional nation. While Empress Consort Xiaodingjing has pushed for political, cultural and technological reforms—such as the introduction of telegraph lines connecting the capital and its surrounding cities, Empress Dowager Cixi has opposed these, with the support of her more conservative faction.

Unbeknownst to the outside world, the Qing Emperor has a problem: He's missing and nobody in the court wants to acknowledge it. They still carry on in his name, attribute new actions to his personal decree and go about their business. Both factions know, however, that if the Emperor is not found, this situation cannot last for long. As a consequence, both factions are maneuvering to come out on top, should the Emperor's absence be revealed. Meanwhile, a number of movers-and-shakers in the court are looking to hire outside groups with discretion to find the missing Emperor.

RAJPUTANA

- **Capital:** Jaipur
- **Languages:** Hindi, Rajasthani

The state of Rajputana holds the ruins of the ancient and mysterious Indus Valley Civilization. These ruins have attracted all manner of explorers and scholars looking to uncover the treasures and past of this lost civilization. The native peoples here, however, do not always take kindly to outsiders digging up their ancestral grounds and disturbing their way of life.

Recently a strange object has been unearthed among the Indus Valley ruins. It is the size of an automobile, round and made from both metal and clay. Along its exterior is some form of proto-writing. A physicist who studied the object has

also made the startling announcement that it is radioactive, with enough contained energy to destroy a city if unleashed. Right now the object remains half-buried in a distant field, but it is only a matter of time until someone claims the object for their own purposes.

RUSSIAN REPUBLIC

- **Capital:** Moscow
- **Languages:** Russian

The Russian Republic, despite being a European power, controls a vast amount of land in Asia. Most of this territory, however, consists of the frozen wastes of Siberia—which is far from the most welcoming of locations. Most of the inhabitants of this region are tribal and are largely independent of the rest of Russia.

The Russian Republic is described in full under the section for Europe (see page 54).

SIAMESE EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Bangkok
- **Languages:** Thai

The Siamese Empire has been one of the most successful countries in Southeast Asia in maintaining autonomy by playing the colonial powers and Khmer off against one another. By doing this it has largely retained its traditional way of life, all the while working to lay railroad tracks and make other infrastructure improvements.

Siam has an incredible diversity of flora and fauna. In fact, new species are being discovered and recorded all the time. One prominent scientific group even believes that somewhere in the Siamese jungle never before seen creatures are being created whole-cloth from some sort of primordial ooze. They aim to fund an expedition to prove exactly this.

TAIPING KINGDOM

- **Capital:** Tianjing
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Wu

In 1836 Hong Xiuquan, a failed Chinese civil servant, fell ill, and in his ill state he received a vision in which he was told by God himself that he was the younger son of Jesus Christ, and that it was his sacred duty to purge all of China of “devils,” including the Manchu rulers and the followers of Confucius. With the help of Yang Xiuqing, a former firewood merchant, the two set out and founded the Taiping Heavenly Army. This army would rebel against the Qing rulers of China and immerse the region in the bloodiest war the world has ever known. Twenty million would die. But in the end, Xiuquan would carve out the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace, and rule as its theocratic dictator.

Today the Taiping Kingdom is a brutal theocratic regime. It is ill-regarded by its neighbors, but sometimes manages to play itself off as a friend of the Western powers.

Opium smugglers that operate out of the fringes of the Taiping Kingdom have recently been warning of odd occurrences happening with the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. They say that many high-up officials there have been infested with “brain slugs” that appear to control their host’s perceptions and thought process. Thus far, few have taken the smugglers seriously.

TIBET

- **Capital:** Lhasa
- **Languages:** Tibetan

Tibet is a remote and enigmatic land nestled high on the mountainous Tibetan Plateau. It is said to be a sacred land, filled with unknowable spirits and powerful mystics. Few outsiders are allowed to travel there, and so there is little to refute these rumors.

Tibet is a theocracy ruled over by the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Inhabitants in the region must adhere to the sometimes bizarre-seeming occult-oriented religious rulings pronounced by the theocratic leaders of the country.

In the last few months Britain has launched an invasion of Tibet, fearing Russian involvement in the region. The invading forces are led by Colonel Francis Younghusband. So far, the invasion has seen little bloodshed between Britain and the Tibetans, but it may only be a matter of time before Younghusband marches his men to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, and when he does, fighting is sure to follow.

YUNNAN

- **Capital:** Kunming
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Dungan, Zhuang, Naxi

Yunnan is a mountainous kingdom in East Asia. In the region there has long been conflict between the Chinese Empire and the region’s Islamic Hui majority. These tensions escalated to the point of all out rebellion in 1856, and the region successfully broke away from Qing China. These days, Yunnan is ruled over by the Pingnan Sultanate. The region is very much a backwater, even by the standards of neighboring countries. Nevertheless, the new independence enjoyed by the region has invigorated many of its inhabitants, and they have set about attempting to cast off the symbols of the old Qing rule and to build a new national identity.

Recently there have been reports of a giant spiked worm that has been sighted in a remote area of Yunnan. The worm is estimated to be over 100 yards (100 meters) long, and drills through the ground with an amazing speed. A reward has been offered for the worm’s capture.

AFRICA

Africa is a vast continent that is still largely unexplored by outside powers. It is a land that is home to a thousand different tribes and peoples, and one with vast stores of gold, ivory and natural resources. It is a land in conflict between once great native powers and foreign colonialists, and one beset by the walking dead.

ABYSSINIAN KINGDOM

- **Capital:** Addis Ababa
- **Languages:** Ge'ez, Amharic, Oromo, Somali

The Abyssinian Kingdom has long taken a strong stance against any encroachment by the colonial powers, and has successfully driven off several attempts to invade or otherwise subjugate the kingdom. The Abyssinian Queen has vowed that she will never bow down to a foreign power and will not bend to their ways. This has lead the people of the Abyssinian Kingdom to largely keep to their traditional lifestyles, despite mandatory conscription for all youths in the country.

Recently a captured sailor has let slip that the Abyssinian Queen has a secret cave. In this cave is a pool of a cold and liquid fire. Those who bathe in this fire develop strange powers—anything from flight to enhanced strength. He claims that this is one of the many secrets that the kingdom has kept to guard its independence.

BRITISH SOMALILAND

- **Capital:** Berbera
- **Languages:** Somali, English

British Somaliland is a colony that it is mostly left to its own devices. The British aren't much interested in the resource-barren region, and upkeep the colony both as a waypoint

en route to its other colonies and as a way to keep in check the other colonial powers in the region. The colony is sometimes called "the British Butcher Shop" as the only resource the British regularly export from the colony is meat. The indigenous peoples here have so far appreciated being left to live their own lives, and the colonial tension here is notably less than in many other colonies.

Recently some of the Somaliland meat arriving back in Britain has raised some questions. It doesn't seem to match the flesh of any known animal. Whatever the origin is, the creature has too many legs, not enough organs and must be at least the size of a horse. When eaten, the meat is potent and gamey. The import authorities are looking to hire an independent group to covertly investigate.

DUTCH CONGO

- **Capital:** Boma
- **Languages:** Dutch, French, Lingala, Kongo, Swahili

The Dutch Congo is also known as the Congo Free State. It is a privately owned nation controlled by the International African Association Corporation, a company itself controlled by King Leopold II of the Netherland Principalities. The colony is also perhaps one of the bloodiest regions on the entire continent. The country is plagued by tropical diseases. Starvation is rampant. Harsh rubber quotas are imposed on the populace, and a grim trade in severed hands has grown in the colony. Tales tell of odd rituals conducted to stave off the brutal quotas, and the discarded dead rising from the grave to reclaim their missing hands, or the lives of those around them. Recent tales even tell of the severed hands themselves coming alive and skittering across the floor to attack when least expected.

EMPIRE OF GREAT FULO

- **Capital:** Anyam-Godo
- **Languages:** Fula, Arabic, Malinké, Mandinka

The Kingdom of Great Fulo began as an alliance of nomadic tribes in resistance to the Mali Empire. Over time these nomadic groups banded together and formed more permanent settlements to resist Mali forces. The fledgling empire gained even more power after its defeat of the now-defunct Jolof Empire.

Today the Kingdom of Great Fulo is struggling to adapt to the world it's found itself in. The royalty of the nation remain animists, while the populace is increasingly Islamic, leading to internal tensions in the empire. Relations with its neighbors, including its old nemesis the Mali Empire, are poor. Additionally, the state has failed to keep up with the pace of modern innovation. This has led the Fulo monarchy to consider making a deal with outside colonial powers—a deal that they are loathe to make.

King Koli Budu has a plan to avoid any unpleasant deals. The plan involves capturing an army of dinosaurs and placing them under the psychic control of a corps of trained clairvoyants. Unfortunately his country lacks in both dinosaurs and trained psychics. To pull it off he will need to commission trustworthy outside help.

FEI ZHOU

- **Capital:** Dar es Salaam
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Swahili

Fei Zhou is China's westernmost colony and one of the most distanced culturally from the Chinese homeland. Established in the late 1700s, disease and other hardships in the early colony caused the colonists to rely heavily on the native tribes for survival. Over time this led to a blending of the East African and Chinese cultures in the colony, one very much evident

today. Eventually this led to the large-scale adoption of Islam by the local colonists.

These cultural differences eventually resulted in the Qing rulers declaring the Fei Zhou colony "too foreign" and when the Chinese Empire experienced the turmoil of the 1800s, Fei Zhou optioned not to come to the aid of their Qing rulers. Instead, they declared their independence and established their own monarchy. This would not last long, however, as the colony was reconquered by the Qing at the turn of the century, and a Qing military governor currently holds power.

Although the Fei Zhou royal family has been deposed for several years, many members still survive and are quietly plotting their return to power. To achieve this, however, they will need to execute a coup, and will need both military and material support from outside.

GOLD COAST

- **Capital:** Accra
- **Languages:** English, Ga, Akan, Dangme

The Gold Coast today is a British colony, but they have only held power over the colony for three years. The British gained dominance of the Gold Coast in the War of the Golden Stool in which they defeated the Ashanti people. Before 1901, the region was a patchwork mess of smaller colonies with sway held by Britain, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch and Jylland.

Today the Gold Coast is being heavily exploited for its gold, timber and cacao. The British are in the process of unifying the infrastructure and digging in for a long stay. Meanwhile, however, this has not gone without its share of mishaps and resistance. Project after infrastructure project has been sabotaged, and the British are pointing the finger at the locals. What they don't know is that the damage has been caused by a local nature spirit that wants revenge.

IMPERIAL CONGO

- **Capital:** Brazzaville
- **Languages:** French, Fang, Myene, Kongo, Lingala

Imperial Congo is a Holy Roman possession in Western Africa. It is a major source of ivory, rubber and timber for the Holy Roman Empire. The colony has undergone quite a bit of restructuring in the time that it's been in existence, and no single colonial governor has lasted more than a year—most dying of disease, going mad or disappearing in the night.

The locals tell strange tales about these lands, whispering that the dead do not rest here, but instead rise from the grave in ever-increasing numbers. They say that the land has been cursed, and that none of the dead will sleep well until the source of the curse is discovered and its cause rooted out. Until that day, they say, the numbers of walking dead continue to grow, lurking deep in the jungles by day, but coming out to devour the living at night.

The colonial governor has finally given up denying the existence of a curse in the region and is in the process of hiring an expedition to venture deep into the Congo to both find, and if possible, destroy the source of the curse.

KAMERUN

- **Capital:** Buea
- **Languages:** Basaa, Beti, Duala, German

Kamerun is technically a Holy Roman colony, although native resistance to Imperial mandates have forced the colony's governors to share rulership with the native Sultan Ibrahim Njoya. This has resulted in a social and political tug of war where the Holy Roman attempts to Westernize the colony while gaining influence over its natural resources, while the Sultan attempts to strengthen and unify the local

culture, while encouraging the locals to resist Holy Roman projects. Towards this end, the Sultan had had the local languages adapted to their own script—the Bamum alphabet.

The locals tell of a creature called the Ngoubou, which lives on the savannas. It is a living dinosaur, a ceratopsian-like creature with six horns on its frill and one on its nose. Recently this creature has been killing the local elephants, something that has angered both natives and colonialists alike. They want the Ngoubou captured or killed.

LAND OF 10,000 DEAD

- **Capital:** None
- **Languages:** Ju'hoansi, Bemba, Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde, many others

In the heart of the African continent lie dense sweltering jungles and vast barren deserts. This is a land where few from outside the region have explored, and one in which many mysteries remain to be uncovered. They say a person sent out here and left to her thoughts for too long will go mad—insane with power or crazed by isolation.

This is a wide and varied land with a many diverse peoples. This is also a land where the dead rise from the grave and attack the living with their undying hands.

Although surviving written records from these lands are scarce, a number of African occultists are looking to understand the walking dead phenomenon that currently plagues these lands. As best they are able to discern, the “necroepoch,” as they call it, dates back to at least the 1880s and appears to have originated somewhere near the western branch of the Great Rift Valley. They are currently offering a reward for any further information.

LIBERIA

- **Capital:** Monrovia
- **Languages:** English

Liberia is an independent republic modeled after the government of the United States. Founded as a colony by the United States for the purpose of repatriating African-Americans to Africa, the nation still maintains close ties to the USA. As a result, it has served the USA as a check against the expansion of CSA influence in the region.

The Americo-Liberian minority in Liberia hold all of the country's political power, and regularly act to suppress uprisings by the native African peoples. With the United States' money for support. The True Whig Party is the sole political party allowed in the nation.

A group of inventors in Liberia have been pursuing an odd line of innovation. They are looking to build giant humanoid automatons powered by oil and coal. So far they've only put together two early prototypes, but they have drawn up plans for many more. This effort has attracted the interest of the outside scientific community, many of whom are looking to duplicate these efforts on their own.

MADAGASCAR

- **Capital:** Antananarivo
- **Languages:** Malagasy

Madagascar is a kingdom ruled by the Merina monarchy. It is a geographic wonder with many strange species being found only on the island. It is also a nation in the process of rapid modernization. Almost a century ago the native Sorabe script was abandoned in favor of the Roman alphabet. Protestant missions dot the countryside. The island kingdom is

also undergoing a process of industrialization, producing soap, porcelain, metal tools and firearms. Its firearms are said to be some of the best quality firearms in the world.

Queen Ranavalona III of Madagascar, remembering the war against the Holy Roman Empire in the late 1890s, is currently attempting to establish a foreign legion to protect her country from attack from colonial forces. She's put out a call for skilled combatants of all types.

MALI EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Ka-ba
- **Languages:** Malinké, Mandinka, Fulani

Records surrounding the formation of the Mali Empire are scarce, but legend has it that in the early 13th century Prince Sundjata was born and was prophesied to be a great conqueror. Following his conquests, the Mali Empire was founded and it expanded from a city-state to a full empire in West Africa. Conflict between the empire and the nearby nomadic tribes led to the creation of the neighboring Empire of Great Fulo, and the two empires have been nemeses ever since.

The Mali Empire struggled to cope with the changing world throughout the 1600s but with the adoption of gunpowder, the Empire held itself together and put itself on a track to modernize the nation and hold off the encroaching colonial powers.

Locals tell of a massive hippo with a giraffe-like neck that lives far inland along the river. The creature, called the Mali, has a killer appetite—devouring both people and entire rice fields. Calls have increased in recent years to hunt down and rid the country of this pest.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- **Capital:** Constantinople
- **Languages:** Turkish, Arabic, many others

The Ottoman Empire has significant holdings on the African continent, although it is common knowledge that the Empire is in decline and its hold is crumbling. This is particularly evident in Africa, where many of the Empire's holdings have been gradually given more and more autonomy over the last several decades.

The full listing and description of the Ottoman Empire can be found in the Asia section (see page 60).

PAPAL SOMALILAND

- **Capital:** Djibouti
- **Languages:** Latin, Somali, French, Afar, Arabic

Papal Somaliland is the sole colony of the Papal States. It was gifted to the Pope in the late 1800s as part of a failed bid to secure the support of the Catholic Church in the war between France and the Holy Roman Empire. Since that time, the colony has become a gateway for Catholic missionaries on the continent. This missionary activity and the arrival of large numbers of foreigners has caused political conflict between Papal Somaliland and its neighbors, particularly Fei Zhou. It has also, however, attracted European investment, and today the infrastructure of Papal Somaliland is significantly better than most colonies in Africa.

Recently, a missionary belonging to an important Italian family has gone missing while doing mission work along the Papal Somaliland-Fei Zhou border. The family fears the worst, and is looking for an experienced team to travel to the colony and recover their missing relative.

PUNIC KINGDOMS

- **Capital:** Carthage
- **Languages:** Punic, Arabic

The Punic Kingdoms are a loosely-allied collection of small kingdoms and city-states. They have long been rivals of the Italian city-states, and consequently intrigue and skirmishes between the two groups are common. Today, the Punic Kingdoms are a regional trading power, as much of the shipping heading to North Africa or the Mediterranean travels through the kingdoms.

A number of sailors from the Punic Kingdom tell of a certain spot in the ocean, just off of the kingdoms' coast. If a ship docks at this point during the night of a full moon, the vessel and all of its crew will be transported by morning to an alternate reality where Carthage was annihilated by the Romans. Ships transported in this way can only travel back by anchoring at the same point on the next full moon.

RHODESIA

- **Capital:** Livingstone
- **Languages:** English, Nyanja, Bemba, Tonga,

Rhodesia is a colony under the administration of the British South Africa Company, which makes no secret that it is there solely to extract the region's vast natural resources. The company flag even shows a lion holding a tusk of ivory. Despite this, the colony has shown a number of separatist tendencies, even threatening to secede from the British Empire twice in the last decade. That latter threat resulted in a number of new British troops being stationed in the colony to keep it in line.

Numerous British South Africa Company operations have been attacked recently by a rogue elephant. The company is looking to hire someone to take the elephant down. So



far all of the locals have refused, claiming that this is no ordinary elephant, but a ghost elephant that has been angered.

RIO DE ORO

- **Capital:** El Aaiún
- **Languages:** Spanish, Arabic

Rio de Oro is a Spanish colony, although the area has been hotly contested between Spain and the Sultanate of Morocco. Challenging both claims are the fierce, indigenous Sahrawi tribes who recognize no outside rule and have violently rebelled, attacking forces sent into the territory by both powers. These tribes are currently in a state of great unrest and it may only be a matter of months before the next big rebellion occurs.

An ancient tomb has been recently uncovered deep in the desert. Originally thought to be from the time of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, it is now believed that the tomb dates back to at least 10,000 BC, and may be linked to the lost civilization of Atlantis.

SULTANATE OF MOROCCO

- **Capital:** Rabat
- **Languages:** Arabic, Berber

The Alaouite dynasty is in power in Morocco, and they have in recent decades been fighting hard to keep their country independent of the European powers—particularly from Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. During this time the Sultanate has frantically tried to modernize its military and economic base, not just to keep out the colonial powers, but to strengthen its hold on the Berber and Bedouin tribes as well.

Desert travelers have recently been telling stories about a pride of intelligent Barbary lions that live somewhere along the Moroccan coast. These lions can apparently speak in both Arabic and Berber, and have been stealing manufactured goods from traveling caravans. The sultan plans to dispatch a team to investigate.

TOGO

- **Capital:** Lomé
- **Languages:** French, Ewe, Kotocoli

Togo was made a Holy Roman colony in 1884 under the guidance of German explorer, medical doctor, imperial consul and Commissioner Gustav Nachtigal. Right from the outset, Togo attracted outside investment in its infrastructure and today some see it as the model colony. As the infrastructure has grown, there are three rail lines that stretch across the colony, connecting its many corners.

Recently the capital of Lomé has been plagued by an adze, a sort of vampire that turns into a firefly and back to human when caught. In bug form the adze will drink the blood of its victims, possessing them and turning them into witches that bring bad fortune to all around them.

TRIPOLI

- **Capital:** Tripoli
- **Languages:** Arabic, Tamazight

Tripoli was once an Ottoman possession with a long and rebellious history. Over the course of the 1800s, several unsuccessful revolutions swept the country, but it was not until the Holy Roman occupation of 1881 that the region moved out from under the Ottomans' thumb.

The Imperial occupation didn't last long. The Holy Romans withdrew the next year, leaving the country of Tripoli independent. Since independence, Tripoli has become a battleground for proxy wars between the various Italian city-states. The country is still regularly swept with rebellions, and a cholera outbreak in the 1890s halved the population of the country.

A contagious dance is spreading near Tripoli. Once caught, the victims dance until they collapse dead from exhaustion. It started in an outlying village and since then has moved on to

three other settlements. Is it a curse? Is it a virus? Experts are stumped, but the dance has attracted the interest of several outside organizations.

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

- **Capital:** Cape Town
- **Languages:** English, Afrikaans, Khoekhoe, Xhosa

The Union of South Africa is a newly-formed state that has been in existence just a few months. It consists of the old South African colonies established by the British and the Dutch, as well as numerous African peoples and large numbers of immigrants from China and India. The Union is riven by internal strife—both between the Afrikaans and the British, as well as between the colonial administration and everyone else. Some whisper that the South Africa Act of 1904 may have been pushed through too quickly and that the country is bound to collapse into a Third Anglo-Boer War sometime soon.

A crime spree has recently struck the streets of Cape Town and the police are baffled as to how the high profile heists have been pulled off. They are looking to hire a team of private investigators to solve the case and track down the criminal mastermind.



AUSTRALIA

Australia is a land of frontiers and unusual fauna. It is a continent split between outside colonies and its native peoples. It is also a land in the shadow of the strange energies of the south.

ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIS

- **Capital:** None
- **Languages:** Kalaw Lagaw Ya, Pitjant-jatjara, Yorta Yorta and many more

The vast majority of Australia is still under the control of its aboriginal peoples. These peoples, in the early years of outside colonization, suffered defeat after defeat, as they were pushed off their ancestral lands. All this changed, however, half a century ago when the Yorta Yorta tribe first made contact with the alien Hitch'nyv. A deal was struck between that tribe and the aliens, ceding right to the lands south of Australia in exchange for weapons and material support against the encroaching colonies. A similar deal was soon reached with many other tribes, and a Hitch'nyv outpost was established at Uluru in central Australia.

Today Aboriginal Australis Territory is a land ruled by its various tribes. And while the tribes sometimes clash among themselves, they are generally united in supporting raids against the colonial powers along the coast. The Hitch'nyv technology has made this job easier and has inspired fear among the colonists, but this technology is still a very limited resource.

Word of the alien Hitch'nyv outpost at Uluru has reached the outside world, and now a number of different groups are making plans to reach the distant site and raid the facility. Anyone going on such a mission will have to brave angry aliens, hostile natives and an unfriendly climate, not to mention the machinations of the competing groups.

AOTEAROA

- **Capital:** None
- **Languages:** Māori

Made up primarily of two large islands east of the mainland of Australia, Aotearoa is a strange land with stranger flora and fauna. No native mammals are known on the islands, but the islands are home to a number of native Māori peoples, who have just come out of a generations-long conflict following the introduction of muskets to the island and a largely-successful bid by the Māori to keep away European immigrants.

The Māori people are thought to have only reached Aotearoa around the year 1280, possibly displacing an even older civilization of inhabitants on the island. What few suspect is that this civilization wasn't human—it was a made up of intelligent dinosaurs! The few surviving dinosaurs have since retreated to the far reaches of the islands, where they have maintained a secret existence.

NEW SOUTH WALES

- **Capital:** Sydney
- **Languages:** English

The largest colony in Australia, New South Wales still manages to hold on despite regular assaults by enemy tribes and the infrequency of supplies sent by Britain. The Colonial Governor, Edmund Barton, oversees the region in the face of this adversity, despite his hopes for the federalization of the Australian colonies having fallen through in 1901.

In recent months there have been a series of deaths on the edges of the New South Wales colony. Bodies have turned up drained entirely of their blood, with strange suction marks found over the limbs and face. Members of one of the few friendly tribes have claimed that the killings are the work of a Yara-ma-yha-who, a sort of small red vampire that lives in the trees.

PERTH

- **Capital:** Perth
- **Languages:** English

Perth was once a thriving British colony, but today is a shadow of its former self. The colony in the last generation has come under consistent attacks from hostile tribes who are backed by some strange form of technological weaponry. With these attacks, all talk of a unification between the different British colonies has fallen through, and the colony of Perth has started to sink slowly back into the swamps upon which it was built. Nevertheless, the residents of Perth are organizing for one last attempt to secure their colony before they give up and begin a migration elsewhere.

Overwhelmed by its situation, the governor is calling for outside help to aid the colony's final defense. He is even willing to make deals with foreign powers or well-known adventurers if it means the survival of his people.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

- **Capital:** Hobart
- **Languages:** English

The largest prison colony in the British Empire, Van Diemen's Land has a sinister reputation. Strange lights can sometimes be seen in the sky to the south, and those on the island frequently experience troubled dreams and sometimes waking hallucinations. They say no one lasts there long at the prison colony with their sanity intact—least of all the jailers. Because of this, it is the policy of the British overseers to rotate stationed men through regularly, but in practice this is often overlooked or ignored entirely.

Some 75,000 convicts live on the island, under the lazy eye of British appointees. These convicts are largely left to sort things out them-

selves, building their own huts and foraging for their own food, if they can manage it. Occasionally, however, bands of convicts are rounded up for use as penal troops in the skirmishes against the tribes in mainland Australia.

A captured group who has fallen into conflict with the British government, their colonial administration or plotting representatives might be sent here. Once so imprisoned, they will have to deal with the hostile intentions of their fellow prisoners, the insane and power-crazed guards, and mysterious creatures in the night. They'll have to forage for their own survival, construct their own tools and make good an escape plan.

ZHIMIN NAN

- **Capital:** Àodàliya
- **Languages:** Mandarin, Wu

The oldest of the colonies in Australia, Zhimin Nan was founded in the waning years of the Ming Dynasty in the memory of the Yongle Emperor, whose fleets brought knowledge of the continent to China. As Australia's oldest colony, Zhimin Nan is the least frontier-like of the colonies, with well-established, if narrow, roadways and Chinese-style architecture.

Zhimin Nan is officially ruled over by a colonial governor, appointed by the Qing Emperor. With the splintering of the Chinese Empire in mainland China in the last century, however, the colonial governor has lost much of his authority and Zhimin Nan can come to be effectively ruled by the various Chinese trading companies involved in exporting goods from the colony back to China. The colony also has become the refuge for all manner of exiles, rebels and trouble-makers fleeing China.

The southern border of the colony sports a long system of walls that have historically aided in defending against aboriginal raids.

With the new technology that has been found in the hands of the tribes in recent decades, however, the walls have become less effective and partially fallen into disrepair.

The official position of the Zhimin Nan colonial governor is that there is no problem with the neighboring tribes, and that everything is under control. The colony is in perfect alignment with the Qing oversight, and there is no conflict in the Chinese mainland. Anyone voicing a disagreement with the official stance is subject to arrest for “spreading disinformation among the populace.”

ANTARCTICA

The mother of all blank spots on the map, Antarctica has been known to the outside world for less than a century. At first glance, a frozen wasteland filled with endless ice piled upon endless ice, the southernmost continent yet holds many mysteries left to be uncovered by daring explorers and their ilk.

But Antarctica is also an ancient continent, with a forgotten history buried beneath its mundane-seeming ice. Dark things dwell in the forgotten crevices of the world, and distant Antarctica has the darkest of all.

DOMINION MOUNTAINS

The Dominion Mountains have yet to be glimpsed by human eyes. They are an enigma, a mystery yet to be solved. There have been many strange reports of disappearances, lights in the sky, unexplained auras and harrowing sightings, over the years, surrounding Antarctica, and the Dominion Mountains lay at the heart of these strange encounters. What humans would discover there if and when they finally make it to the Dominion Mountains would shake even the bravest of souls.

MOUNT TERROR & MOUNT EREBUS

These twin volcanoes stand on Ross Island and continuously ooze magma from their many crevices into the sea below. Where the magma meets the sea, great amounts of steam and other gases are released, making it truly a land of fire and ice. This presents a hazard to would-be travelers. These volcanoes also have one of the only standing magma lakes in the world.

ROSS SEA

The Ross Sea is a frigid and largely untouched wilderness, pristine in its beauty but deadly in its natural fickleness. As one gets closer to the continent, the sea gives way to ice. The Ross Ice Shelf stretches across endless miles of ocean. Those few foolhardy explorers who have journeyed to the ice shelf and lived to tell the tale have brought back rumors and mad ramblings of things buried deep in the ice—barely visible as the sunlight filters down through it. They speak of massive and unknowable bodies, unreachable by human hands deep under the ice cover. They gibber about going mad at the mere sight of these primordial frozen behemoths.

SOUTH GEORGIA

This British island off the coast of Antarctica were recently home to a number of small whaling settlements. From the late 1800s until recently, these settlements served as seasonal bases for a few hardy whalers and sealers who trolled the local waters looking to make it rich.

More recently, however, the settlements have been left abandoned, their doors ajar and their equipment ruined. The abandonment appears to be sudden—in some buildings, food has been left on the table and personal effects left untouched

in their places about the rooms. The British navy ship that reported the abandoned settlements also reported that the ships were left on the dock—untouched. And that no people, or bodies for that matter, were to be found anywhere on the island. The cause of the whalers' sudden disappearance remains a mystery.

SOUTH POLE

No human being has yet set foot at the South Pole. It is a hypothetical point on the continent, a milestone in human progress that has yet to be reached. And despite the failure of the British-funded Discovery Expedition to reach the pole (1901-1904), it is only a matter of time before human beings push to the most remote and southernmost point on the planet and claim the prize.

The Discovery Expedition came to an end under mysterious circumstances. When the expedition left the last civilized base in South America and made its way to the

southern continent, it would at first send back regular messages. However, as the expedition continued, the messages became more erratic and began to contain strange content. The explorers spoke of seeing mysterious auras on the horizon, finding evidence of unexplained formations in the ice, and even of the curious and tragic loss of several members of the expedition. The last communication sent back never made it. The Discovery's messenger ship was found drifting in the ocean with no crew on board. On the ship was a sealed communique that contained only a short message asking for aid, a list of dead expedition members and some ramblings about the auras.

In fact, the True Form Foundation is publicly offering a grand prize of \$100,000 to the first expedition to successfully reach the South Pole and return again with proof of their accomplishment. This prize has stood open for three years now, and the strange failure of the Discovery Expedition has left the door open for other groups to try their hands.



TIERRA DE SAN MARTIN

This is the largest peninsula in Antarctica, sticking out from the main landmass and extending northward. Of all the lands on the Antarctic continent, this one has seen the most human exploration, with a number of expeditions to the peninsula and a few lonely seasonal research stations still remaining along its coast. The few who live in these research stations are a haggard and largely mad lot, working away at their scientific research that consumes them enough to bring them to the ends of the earth.

ELSEWHERE

Beyond the human sphere, beyond the world's surface there exist a variety of other realms known only in myth, rumor and scientific speculation. These realms are distant, isolated or hostile, but exist and wait exploration.

OUTER SPACE

High above the world, above the winds and atmosphere, exists the vast realm that is outer space. Although it is unknowably huge, this is not an empty realm, but one filled with planets, asteroids, stars and between those, the luminiferous aether. Still, this is a realm where few humans have traveled, and one populated by numerous distant alien species.

The moon is riddled with tunnels and caverns. This is the home of the Selenites, the moon men. They are an insect-like species that tends to underground fungal gardens and herds the bulbous, blob-like mooncalves which they raise for food.

An ancient humanoid civilization exists on Mars. Reduced to barbarism, it continues its existence amid the ruins of its once-glorious canals and cities.

The Hitch'nyv have crossed the stars, traveling to Arth in their vast sleeping colony ships.

And they say that darker, unknowable things of sheer madness make their way in the blackness between the stars as well...

THE HOLLOW EARTH

The world is not fully solid, but hollow inside. Within is an ancient and isolated land populated by prehistoric beasts, early hominid species and other creatures the surface world has never known. Many caverns are lit by electrically-charged gas along their ceilings, while an inner sun burns at the very center.

This is an unexplored realm known only through myth and rumor. Entrances to the Hollow Earth can be found in particularly deep cave systems throughout the globe, and they say that two vast entrances exist—one at each magnetic pole.

The Hollow Earth is also said to be the home of the Kingdom of Shambhala, an ancient and enlightened culture rich in spiritual knowledge and material splendor.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The four outer directions—north, south, east and west—are opposed by a fifth, central direction: inward. This is the direction of the Astral Plane. It sits between the physical and the spiritual.

The Astral Plane is a realm of thoughts and of dreams. It is to this plane that people travel to in their dreams. There, if the dreamer is sufficiently trained, she can touch the collective unconscious, the congealed thoughts and archetypes of all being in the world.

The Astral Plane is also inhabited by its own denizens—creatures made of pure thought, hopes and nightmares. Also dwelling on this plane are various spirits, souls and even angels.



SAGA MACHINE

Dime Adventures uses the *Saga Machine* system, tweaked and adapted to suit tales in a strange alternate history. Whether it's a daring duel atop a zeppelin or the tense exploration of an ancient ruin—*Saga Machine* can handle it.

In this chapter, we present the core of the *Saga Machine* system—the basics everyone needs to know—followed by the other mechanical systems used in the game. A few additional systems are presented elsewhere in the book: the character creation and advancement systems get their own chapter, and a few mechanics for villains and other NPCs are presented in the Friends & Foes chapter.

OVERVIEW

The core of *Saga Machine* boils down to two components: actions and consequences.

The action mechanic is used to determine whether or not an action taken by a character is successful. To help resolve this, the system employs a standard deck of poker cards with the jokers left in. One such deck per player, plus one for the game master (GM), is recommended.

The consequence mechanic, on the other hand, is used to represent the effect of actions on characters or in the game world. This mechanic is used to model status effects as well as environmental circumstances, obstacles or benefits.

ACTIONS

When resolving an action, the player will declare the intent for her character to act, and the GM will then call for a card to be played. This is called a flip. The value of this card will be added to a number representing that character's capability in the relevant area, and this total value is compared to a target number (TN). If the total is equal to or higher than the TN, the flip was a success. If it's lower than the TN, however, the flip was a failure. Either way, the GM then narrates the results of the action.

STATS

Every character has eight stats, each measuring the strength of a particular quality of the character. Whenever a character takes an action, one of these stats will be relevant. For example, should a character try to force open a jammed airlock door, the strength stat may be the relevant stat for that action. Often actions taken in this way will have other modifiers as well.

The eight stats break down into two categories—physical stats and mental stats. They are listed below:

Physical Stats	Mental Stats
Strength	Intelligence
Dexterity	Perception
Speed	Charisma
Endurance	Determination

MOXIE

Player characters (PCs), and possibly a few non-player characters (NPCs) as well, will have Moxie. This score represents the subtle advantages these characters have in the narrative, whether due to luck, pep or simple conviction. Moxie determines the number of cards the player draws at the beginning of each session.

CONSEQUENCES

Actions will often result in consequences. Consequences are *Saga Machine's* way of representing lasting effects in the system. These effects can be placed on either characters, objects or the scene itself. For example, tripping another character may result in a “prone” consequence for the target, setting a forest on fire results in an “on fire” consequence for that forest, etc.

Consequences come in three parts: an effect, a duration and a severity. This tells what the consequence does, how long it lasts and how severe the effect is, respectively. All consequences have the same hierarchy of severities:

Severity
Light
Moderate
Severe
Critical

Fractions & Rounding

Dime Adventures only makes use of whole numbers. If you ever encounter a fraction during the game—which usually happens as a result of halving a stat or similar score—always round it down. In this way $7\frac{1}{2}$ becomes merely 7, $22\frac{1}{2}$ becomes a 22, etc.

CHARACTERS

Mechanically, all characters in *Dime Adventures* are comprised of four parts: an array of eight stats, some number of skills, a few traits and some derived scores. Each of these mechanical components of a character are described in detail below.

THE EIGHT STATS

Dime Adventures divides a character's capabilities into eight different ratings representing how good the character is at a broad class of actions. These ratings are called stats and are scored for human characters on a scale of 1 to 10. The higher the number, the better the character is at the category of actions.

On this scale, the average joe—entirely average in all aspects—would be rated a 4 in each stat. Player characters, however, are not typically common specimens, nor are the villains they may face. These characters are a step above most people, and instead average around a 5 on this scale. The highest stat within human potential is 10, although nonhuman NPCs may go as high as 20. Mechanically, these stats are used to help determine the success or failure of the character's actions.

The eight different stats are divided evenly into two groups: physical and mental. Physical stats represent some physical aspect of the character, while mental stats represent some mental aspect of the character. Every stat has an associated card suit, which is used in the action mechanic to determine a trump (see page 87-88). What each stat represents is described on the next page.

STRENGTH (STR)



A character's strength is a measure of her muscle and physical power. It helps determine how much she can lift, how hard she can punch and what she can push around.

DEXTERITY (DEX)



A character's dexterity is her coordination, flexibility, agility and balance. It helps determine her athletic ability, aim for attacks and manual dexterity.

SPEED (SPD)



A character's speed is a measure of how fast she moves, her reflexes, her reaction time and her ability to get out of the way when malicious people are trying to beat her head in.

Anthropocentrism

Most characters in *Dime Adventures* will be human. Humans are, after all, the dominant species on Arth. As such, the game mechanics assume a character has basic human capabilities unless a trait specifically indicates otherwise.

This means characters don't need special traits for basic human things, such as the ability to walk, talk or use opposable thumbs. They also don't need special traits for basic human weaknesses, such as having an off hand, the necessity of breathing or the need for regular sleep. Some characters may vary from human norms in all these ways, but when they do, character traits and basic common sense should indicate it.

ENDURANCE (END)



Endurance is a measure of a character's toughness, health, constitution and stamina. It helps a character resist disease, keep from losing consciousness and keep from getting winded after a long jog.

INTELLIGENCE (INT)



Intelligence is an indicator of how quickly a character learns, how much she knows and what her capability is in terms of logical reasoning and deduction. Put simply, intelligence is used to know stuff and figure stuff out. Mechanically, any character with an intelligence of 1 or more is considered sentient.

PERCEPTION (PER)



A character's perception is a measure of how alert she is, how good her senses are and how aware she is of the world around her. Perception also includes a component of her speed of thought.

CHARISMA (CHR)



A character's charisma is her force of personality, presence, bearing, social skills and appearance all wrapped up into one. It's used when trying to make friends, influence others or strike a deal.

DETERMINATION (DET)



Determination is a character's resolve, mental fortitude, willpower and grit. It's used when resisting fear or mental effects, pressing on despite the hopelessness of the situation or seeing things through to the bitter end.

SKILLS

The eight stats represent innate human capabilities—after all, everyone has some degree of strength, intelligence and perception. Skills, on the other hand, are the mechanical representation of capabilities that are learned.

When a character in *Dime Adventures* takes an action, the action might have a relevant skill as well as a relevant stat—this will likely be true for the majority of actions. When this is the case, the skill's value will add to the action as well as half the value of the stat (see the “Actions” section, page 86).

SKILL VALUES

Some characters are more skilled than others. To represent this, skills are rated from 0 (unskilled) to 5 (world-class). In actions where a skill is relevant, this rating will add to the total, along with half the value of the relevant stat. The different skill values are described below:

Description	Value
No Training	0 (does not have skill)
Basic Proficiency	1
Skilled Amateur	2
Professional	3
Renowned Expert	4
World-class	5

Skill	Skill	Skill	Skill
Animals	Guns	Naturalist	Stealth
Athletics	Investigate	Occult	Streetwise
Awareness	Lib-Arts	Persuade	Tactics
Crafts	Mechanics	Science	Thievery
Deception	Medicine	Socialize	Vehicles
Empathy	Melee		

SKILL EXPERIENCES

Over the course of play, characters will gain experience using their skills. When a character gains an experience, she notes down what that experience is next to the skill in question. For example, experiences with the stealth skill might include “forest terrain,” “crowds,” “cover of darkness” or “hiding places.”

When a character is using a skill, one of her experiences might be relevant to the action in question. Should she have an appropriate experience to call upon, her action will gain a +1 bonus. Only one experience may be called upon at a time in this way.

SKILL BREAKDOWN

There are twenty-two skills available in *Dime Adventures*. Below is a table of all skills, followed by brief descriptions of each, including some example experiences.

ANIMALS

The Animals skill covers interacting with animals in a variety of ways—from reading their warning signs to training them to do tricks. The Animals skill also includes skill in riding an animal or using an animal to pull objects in a directed manner, such as a wagon or plow.

Example Experiences: Animal calls, animal training, bears, birds, body language, dogs, elephants, horses, monkeys, riding

ATHLETICS

The Athletics skill covers any number of athletic activities—from climbing to jumping and from racing to tumbling. This skill includes both aerobic and anaerobic activities, as well as feats of strength—such as bending bars or power lifting—and throwing weapons in a threatening manner.

Example Experiences: Acrobatics, balance, baseball, bicycling, climbing, jumping, running, swimming, throwing, weight lifting

AWARENESS

Awareness is more than general perception; it is a skilled alertness regarding one's surroundings. Awareness covers noticing someone is sneaking up on you. It also covers spotting someone in a crowd of people and noticing a strange smell when entering a building. It does not include more ponderous activities like reading a person's body language or investigating a murder; these are covered by Empathy and Investigation, respectively.

Example Experiences: Body odors, concealed weapons, crowds, darkness, hearing, peripheral vision, scent, taste, urban streets

CRAFTS

The Crafts skill covers the creation of art, crafts and simple devices with few-to-no moving parts. It can be used to create a realistic sculpture of a specific person, carve a makeshift spear out of a plank of wood, cook a tasty meal or paint a masterpiece. It does not cover the creation of more complex mechanical devices, for those use the Mechanics skill.

Example Experiences: Baking, basket weaving, carpentry, carving, improvised tools, leatherworking, makeup, metalworking, painting, sculpture

DECEPTION

The Deception skill includes telling convincing lies, giving off inaccurate body language, pulling the wool over the eyes of others and disguising oneself as someone else. Additionally, Deception is useful in gambling, acting and other activities that require making oneself difficult to read or which involve deceiving others.

Example Experiences: Blatant lies, disguise, distractions, faulty logic, gambling bluffs, half-truths, misleading body language, partial truths, poker face, sleight of hand

EMPATHY

Empathy is the skill used to read a person's body language and tone of voice. It's used to get an idea of a person's emotional state or to give some insight into their motivations. Empathy is not a lie-detector; it might let one know that another person seems nervous, but it wouldn't tell you they're nervous because of a specific lie or half-truth.

Example Experiences: Anger, attraction, body language, counseling, interrogation, nervousness, pushing buttons, sociopathy, taunts, tells in gambling

GUNS

The Guns skill covers firing, maintaining and operating any number of personal firearms and other projectile weapons, from pistols and rifles, to archaic bows and arrows. The skill does not cover thrown weapons—for that, use Athletics—nor does it cover artillery or vehicle-based mounted projectiles—for those, use Tactics.

Example Experiences: Aimed shots, autofire, blowguns, bows, head shots, pistols, point blank shot, rifles, shotguns, sniper shot

INVESTIGATE

Investigation is the art of looking into an unknown matter and trying to make sense of what is found, often by piecing together seemingly disparate clues. The Investigate skill covers searching a particular area for clues, as well as other aspects of investigation—such as questioning witnesses, checking informants and asking the right questions.

Example Experiences: Crime scenes, criminal mindsets, fingerprints, forensics, hiding spots, leaps of deduction, matching weapons, physical clues, question witnesses, search body

LIB-ARTS

Lib-arts is a broad skill covering a character's degree of education in the liberal arts and social sciences. It includes knowledge of history, geography, mathematics, the fine arts, economics and sociology. It does not cover applied cultural knowledge or artistic expression: for those, use Socialize or Crafts, respectively.

Example Experiences: Civics, classics, fine arts, geography, history, literature, mathematics, music, philosophy, sociology

MECHANICS

Mechanics is an applied skill covering the design, modification, upkeep, repair and assembly of pretty much any mechanical system. Use it for repairing a vehicle, drawing out an architectural diagram, designing a new invention or assembling a clockwork device.

Example Experiences: Airships, architecture, automobiles, civic engineering, clockwork, hydraulics, jury-rigged components, ships, steam power, trains

MEDICINE

This is the skill of applied medical knowledge. It's used to treat injuries and other medical conditions, make practical diagnoses, treat poisons, perform surgery, apply first aid and dress wounds. It does not cover experimental biological knowledge; for that use Science.

Example Experiences: Dress wounds, first aid, infections, long-term care, parasites, practical diagnosis, stop bleeding, surgery, treat poison, veterinary

MELEE

Melee is the skill used for hand-to-hand combat, street fighting, wrestling, fencing, boxing and any other activity mimicking close combat. Despite the prevalence of guns, simple fistfights remain common the world over.

Example Experiences: Boxing, clubs, fencing, fighting dirty, grappling, head blows, judo, kicking, knives, wrestling

NATURALIST

The Naturalist skill covers the ability to survive outside the bounds of civilization as well as the applied knowledge of the local flora and fauna, including the practical knowledge of both what's edible and what's dangerous. It covers tracking and foraging for food, firewood or other basic natural resources.

Example Experiences: Dangerous flora, desert fauna, edible flora, fire building, fishing, foraging for food, natural hazards, navigation, recognize tracks, tracking

OCCULT

This is knowledge of occult beliefs, both real and fictitious. It applies to magical charms, religious rituals, mystic energies, theories of psychic manifestations, spiritual hauntings,

stories of alien abductions, mystical philosophies and cryptid sightings.

Example Experiences: Alchemy, alien abductions, arcane lore, cryptid sightings, cult beliefs, hauntings, mystic energies, psychic powers, religious rituals, unsolved paranormal mysteries

PERSUADE

The Persuade skill covers a variety of tactics to get other people to see things your way or to otherwise comply with your requests. It covers sweet-talking, formal diplomacy, browbeating, fast-talking and intimidation. It covers knowing useful techniques in argument, as well as knowing the right social approach to use—from solid reasoning to subtle psychological tricks to seem more commanding. It does not include carousing, seduction or putting people at ease; for those use Socialize.

Example Experiences: Bargaining, browbeat, clear reasoning, commands, fast-talk, formal diplomacy, intimidation, leadership, rhetoric, sweet-talk

SCIENCE

The Science skill covers hard sciences, from the physical to the biological. It includes physics, chemistry, biology, geology, ecology and meteorology. Use it to understand scientific data, have a broad base of scientific knowledge, conduct an experiment or recognize different strata of rock.

Example Experiences: Astronomy, biology, chemistry, climatology, ecology, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physics, speleology

SOCIALIZE

The Socialize skill is all about being an enjoyable person and getting other people to like you. Those adept in socializing are the ones other people want to talk to or be around.

Use this skill to get a feel for the word on the street, pick up rumors, put one's rivals at ease, make a play at seduction or distract others with small talk or other pleasantries. Additionally, this skill covers knowledge of the appropriate customs, slang and etiquette. This skill does not cover convincing others to see things your way or for gaining deep insight into what people are feeling. For those, use the Persuade or Empathy skills, respectively.

Example Experiences: Distracting talk, formal etiquette, gather rumors, put at ease, put on guard, seduction, spread rumors, small talk, street greetings, working-class slang

STEALTH

The Stealth skill covers hiding and generally sneaking around. It includes any aspect of remaining hidden, from fitting into small hiding spaces to tailing people without them noticing and from setting ambushes to sneaking by guards. It does not include sleight of hand or shoplifting; for those, use the Deception or Thievery skills.

Example Experiences: Blending in, camouflage, covering tracks, crowds, hiding, moving silently, opportunistic dash, settings ambushes, shadows, tailing

STREETWIZE

This is the skill of being familiar with how things are actually done on the street and using this to your advantage. It includes knowledge of where to find illegal goods, which alleyways to avoid after dark and what might damage one's reputation on the street.

Example Experiences: Banned goods, dangerous alleys, fences, forgeries, gang territory, illegal weapons, secret signs, smuggling routes, street reputations, whom to talk to

TACTICS

The Tactics skill covers dealing with arms and armaments in ways other than direct ranged or melee attacks. It covers knowing how to put on armaments correctly, recognizing battlefield formations and general tactics, as well as the actual operation of large-scale weapons, such as artillery or vehicular weaponry.

Example Experiences: Aerial tactics, arctic warfare, artillery, forest warfare, hit-and-run, naval warfare, sieges, ship weapons, skirmish tactics, torpedoes

THIEVERY

Under the auspice of the Thievery skill falls many simple but questionable proficiencies. It includes the ability to pick locks, breaking and entering, larceny and picking pockets. It does not include con artistry or sleight of hand—for those, use Deception—nor does it include remaining hidden—for that, use Stealth.

Example Experiences: Break and enter, case building, combination locks, disable traps, forced entry, larceny, locate traps, pick locks, pick pocket, shoplift

VEHICLES

This skill is used to operate any vehicle—whether in two or three dimensions. It includes the operation of airships, boats, horseless carriages, trains, sleds and submarines. It does not include the design or maintenance of such vehicles; for that use the Mechanics skill.

Example Experiences: Airships, boating, horseless carriages, hot air balloons, racing, sledding, stunt driving, submarines, trains, warships

TRAITS

In addition to stats and skills, most characters also have a number of other attributes or capabilities, such as known languages, unusual knacks, fighting styles or particular weaknesses. These types of abilities are modeled mechanically as traits: special features that apply to a character. Nonhuman characters will also have traits that define their particular nonhuman capabilities.

In *Dime Adventures*, most traits are either chosen at character creation or purchased using stat experiences. More on the specifics of gaining traits is covered in the “Characters” chapter.

CREED & IDIOSYNCRASY

A character's Creed and Idiosyncrasy are special free traits possessed by all player characters. They represent a character's outlook on life and the character's most notable identifying quirk, respectively. These two traits act as roleplaying hooks, and reward players for playing them up by providing a mechanism to earn Moxie, thereby drawing more cards into her hand. For a full description, see page 156.

WEAKNESS TRAITS

Weakness traits are a special subcategory of trait that deserve note. These traits are usually wholly negative or restrictive in their effects on a character, hindering her in some way. These traits have no cost, but provide a way for a character to earn Moxie, thereby drawing more cards into her hand. For a full description, see page 175.

TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

Traits are listed in a standard format for ease of use. The basic format is shown below.

TRAIT NAME

COST

Stat Keywords

The trait's description is written here.

SCORES

Scores are the final mechanical component of a character. They are a variety of numerical values derived from a character's stats and used by the various systems in the game. For example, the Defense score is used by the combat system in determining whether or not a character is hit in combat, and the Wealth score is used by the wealth system in determining what purchases a character can easily make.

More on each score can be found in their relevant sections later in this chapter, but a list of all the character scores can be found below:

- **Damage Reduction (DR):** This is the ability of a character to resist damage. It is usually granted by armor or nonhuman traits.
- **Defense:** This is the ability of a character to avoid being struck in combat. It consists of two values: the target number to hit the character ($[\text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}] \div 2$) and the target number to score a critical hit on the character ($\text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}$).
- **Encumbrance:** This is the number of encumbrance slots the character has for carrying gear around (Str).
- **Health Points (HP):** This is a measure of how much damage a character can suffer before she is threatened by death ($\text{Str} + \text{End}$).
- **Lifestyle:** This is a measure of how well the character lives and what mundane resources she easily has at her disposal.
- **Moxie:** This is the number of cards drawn into the character's hand at the beginning of each session (usually 5, but it may be modified by traits).
- **Wealth:** This value is a measure of the character's ability to tap her financial resources. It represents not only cash in hand, but the ability to acquire loans and leverage other assets as well.
- **Willpower:** This is the ability of the character to avoid being overcome by mental effects, such as fear or supernatural compulsions. It consists of two values: the target number to affect the character ($[\text{Int} + \text{Chr} + \text{Det}] \div 2$) and the target number to critically affect the character ($\text{Int} + \text{Chr} + \text{Det}$).



ACTIONS

In order to determine the outcome of an action in *Saga Machine*, a simple mechanic is used. The player taking the action makes a flip. That is, she plays a card and adds its value to the appropriate stat for the action. Then she adds any relevant modifiers and compares the result to a target number (TN). If the result is equal to or exceeds the TN, the action was a success. If it is lower than the TN, the action was a failure.

If it ever becomes necessary to know how much of a success or failure the action was, determine it by figuring out the magnitude of the effect (Mag). The magnitude is determined simply by calculating the difference between the TN and the total. So, for example, an action that got a total of 16 on a TN 10 flip succeeded with Mag 6, and an action that got a total of 9 on a TN 13 flip failed with Mag 4.

Expanding on this simple action mechanic, two variant types of actions will often come into play: extended actions and opposed actions. We will now go over simple actions and these two variant types of actions in turn.

SIMPLE ACTIONS

Simple actions, the most common type of actions, are something of a building block other types of actions expand upon. When a player takes a simple action, she makes a flip. That is, she plays a card, flipping it over and revealing which card it is. This card can either be from her hand or from the top of her deck. The value of this card is then determined, which may require turning over subsequent cards. These subsequent cards are always from the top of the deck and never from the player's hand.

Once a card has been played, the player does not draw again immediately. Instead, she simply has fewer cards in her hand. If she has no cards

left in her hand and takes an action, she has no choice but to play off the top of the deck.

If no skill is involved with the action, the value of the card being played is added to the relevant stat. If a skill is involved, it's added to half the relevant stat and the relevant skill. Either way, this total is then compared to the TN.

Example: Agatha is making a "Dex/guns-10" flip. This action uses her Guns skill, is based off her Dexterity and has TN 10. She has Guns 3, Dexterity 4 and plays a card valued at 6. She adds the value of the card to half her Dexterity (half of 4 is 2) and her Guns skill for a total of 11—a success. If how much she succeeded matters, she has Mag 1.

CARD TYPES & SCORING

There are three types of cards found in the deck: value cards, face cards and jokers. Each is scored differently.

VALUE CARDS

Value cards are the simplest to score. They are the cards marked two through ten, plus the ace, which is low and has a value of one. Whenever one of these cards is played, it is worth the value printed on the card. This gives value cards a nice even distribution between one and ten.

FACE CARDS (ADDER)

Face cards are the jack, queen and king. These cards are worth +1, +2 and +3, respectively. Whenever a face card is played, the next card on the top of the deck is flipped over and placed on top of it. This is called a stack, and for most purposes in the game, a stack is treated as if it were a single card with the suit of the first (bottom) card of the stack. If the second card in the stack is also a face card, one

Why Half Stat?

The question occasionally comes up: Why do you use only half your stat when making a flip which includes a skill, but use the full stat when making a flip that does not include a skill? The answer is essentially: math.

Stats largely range from 1 to 10. This means that when making a flip that does not include a skill, you will be adding a number with that range (1 to 10).

On the other hand, skills range from 0 (unskilled) to 5. Adding this to half stat likewise generates a number between 1 and 10.

This means that both flips involving a skill and those not involving a skill are on the same scale, and can use the same target numbers.

does not flip over a third. There can be only two cards in a stack.

To determine the value of the stack, simply add the value of each card together. So a king (+3) and a 6 would have a value of 9. Or a queen (+2) and a jack (+1) would have a value of 3.

Setting up the Deck

The *Saga Machine* action mechanic makes use of a standard deck of poker cards with both jokers left in. For ease of play, we recommend all players and the GM each have their own deck, although all players could easily enough share the same deck in a pinch.

At the beginning of every session, each player draws a hand of cards equal to her character's Moxie (see page 92). The GM also gets a hand, although this hand is shared by all NPCs rather than being for a single character. The GM draws a number of cards equal to the number of players present at the session.

JOKERS

Jokers are both good and bad. Whenever a joker is used to resolve a flip, for any reason, the result of the action in question is always treated as a critical failure—that is, a failure with Mag 6.

The upside, however, is that after this critical failure is resolved, the player may refresh her hand. This means she may discard any cards from her hand she wishes and then draw up to her full Moxie. If she's already at full Moxie and does not discard any cards, she may instead draw a single card, putting her at one more card than she had before. After playing a joker, regardless of whether the joker was used to resolve the flip or not, the player must always then shuffle her discard pile into her deck, including shuffling into the deck the joker she just played. In this way there are always two jokers in the deck. Jokers never sit in the discard pile.

TRUMPS

Every stat has an associated trump suit. Whenever an action is taken and a card is played matching the stat's trump suit, the action is said to be trump. This increases the potential value for the action.

To determine which stat values correspond to which suits, see the table on the next page.

Stat	Suit
Strength	Spades (♠)
Dexterity	Hearts (♥)
Speed	Diamonds (♦)
Endurance	Clubs (♣)
Intelligence	Spades (♠)
Perception	Hearts (♥)
Charisma	Diamonds (♦)
Determination	Diamonds (♦)

When an action is trump, flip over the next card on the top of the deck and set it beside the card that was just played. Think of these cards as two different stacks. If the suits match—that is, if they both are trump—add the value of the two cards together when resolving the action. If they don't match, simply pick one to use (usually the highest value of the two).

To clarify things, here are a few examples:

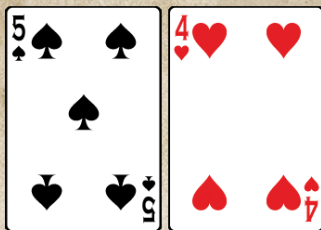
Example: A character with Strength 6 and Athletics 3 makes a flip. She plays the 5 of spades—a trump. She flips over the next card off the top of the deck: a 4 of hearts. Since the suits do not match, she takes the highest of the two (the 5 of spades) and adds it to half her Endurance and her Athletics for a final total of 11.

Strength 6
Athletics 3

Spades are trump!

Suits don't match:
Take highest!

Total 11



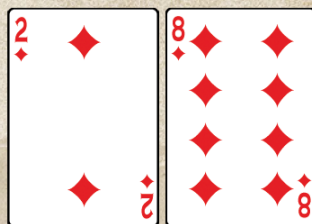
Example: A character with Speed 4 makes an action. She plays the 2 of diamonds—a trump. She then flips over the next card: an 8 of diamonds. Since these cards match, she adds them together and then adds her Speed for a final total of 14.

Speed 4

Diamonds are trump!

Suits match:
Add the values!

Total 14



Example: A character with Determination 7 and Socialize 3 makes an action. She plays a king of clubs—a face card and a trump. First, she flips over the top card of the deck, a 7 of hearts, and plays it on top of the king, forming a stack. This stack has a value of 10. She then flips over the next card, due to the trump, and places it beside the first stack. This card is a queen of diamonds—also a face card. She then flips over yet another card, ace of spades, and places it on top of the queen forming a second stack, with a total of 3. The second stack's suit (diamonds) does not match the first, so she takes the higher of the two and adds it to half her Determination plus Socialize for a total value of 16.

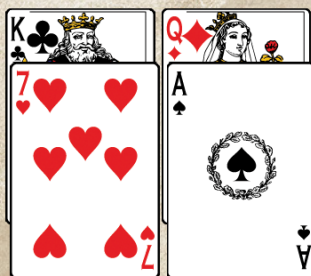
Determination 7
Socialize 3

Clubs are trump!
King is a face card!

Only suit of first card
in stack matters!

Suits don't match:
Take highest!

Total 16



Note that when a trump card is played, a joker will sometimes come up as part of the second stack. In this situation the player has a choice: take the joker, critically fail the flip and refresh her hand, or take the other card, resolve as normal and don't refresh her hand. Regardless of which card is picked, since a joker came up, the deck is shuffled afterward.

Action Convention

Saga Machine uses a simple convention to convey the important mechanical aspects of an action when referencing them in the text. This conveys the relevant stat, relevant skill and target number. If the action is extended, it also conveys the interval and tally. Examples of this convention are given below:

- **Int-7:** Intelligence action, TN 7.
- **Per/awareness vs. Dex/stealth:** Perception action with the Awareness skill opposed by a Dexterity action with the Stealth skill.
- **End/naturalist-10 (10, 1 day):** Extended Endurance action with the Naturalist skill applying, TN 10, Tally 10, Interval of one day.

The convention is to use the abbreviation of the relevant stat (see page 77), followed by a slash and then the relevant skill, if applicable. This is followed by a dash and the TN. If the action is extended, the tally and the interval will follow in parentheses. Finally, if the action is opposed, instead of a TN there will be a “vs.” and then the opposing stat and skill.

TARGET NUMBERS

The target number (TN) of an action is chosen by the GM. She may or may not decide to share it with the player making the action. The GM should ask herself: would the character know exactly how difficult this action is? The higher the target number, the more difficult the action will be and the greater the chance of failure. The following TNs below should be used as reasonable guidelines:

Difficulty	Target Number (TN)
Trivial	6
Easy	8
Average	10
Difficult	12
Daunting	14
Desperate	16
Absurd	18
Impossible	20

TAKING STAT

Sometimes a character is not being threatened, distracted or under intense pressure, and yet wants to take an action. In these situations, it may not be worth going through the full exercise of playing a card. When this situation arises, either the player or GM can opt for the character to take stat.

To do this, the player simply resolves the action as if the relevant stat were her card value. The total is then compared to the target number and success or failure is determined as normal.

Example: Job is in port shopping for unusual medical supplies. The GM calls for a Chr/medicine-10 flip to locate the supplies he needs. Since Job isn't under threat or pressure, Job's player ops to take stat. Job has Charisma 6 and Medicine 2, which would normally provide a bonus of +5. He adds to this Job's Charisma, for a total of 11—enough to find the supplies he needs.

GROUP EFFORT

Sometimes multiple characters work together in an effort to accomplish a task, such as prying open a jammed tomb door or investigating a suspicious secret society. In these situations, use the group effort rules to model this sort of cooperation.

For the action, one character is designated as the primary actor (usually the one accomplishing the bulk of the work) and the rest are designated as secondary. All involved characters then make a flip as if they were taking the action, although only the total of the primary actor will directly matter; all other characters will simply provide a modifier to the action. Every secondary character with a total less than the primary adds +1 to the action, while every secondary character with a total equal to or greater than the primary adds +2. Secondary characters who critically fail add -4. The total bonus from group effort can never exceed +4.

Example: Frida is trying to defuse a doomsday device and has her team of three other characters helping her out by applying technical expertise, holding coils and doing other grunt work. Frida makes a Dex/mechanics flip and gets a total of 11. Her team also makes flips and gets 8, 9 and 15, which gives her group effort bonuses of +1, +1 and +2, respectively. This totals to +4, which is the maximum possible from group effort.

EXTENDED ACTIONS

An extended action is a drawn-out endeavor where the time it takes to complete the action is of particular importance, or where events can happen throughout the course of the endeavor that affect it in some way. Examples include a foot chase through

an untamed jungle, repairing a boat moored at the dock before a volcanic eruption destroys everything around or sneaking into a particularly well-guarded compound.

Mechanically, extended actions work like a series of flips taken sequentially until the action is complete. Each flip in the series represents an interval of time spent working on the extended action. The exact amount of time varies from action to action. The interval for fixing a broken down vehicle may be an hour, while the interval of a foot chase may be a mere ten seconds.

In addition to a TN and an interval, each extended action also has a number called a tally. After every flip in the extended action, the magnitude of success is added to a running total. Once this total equals or exceeds the tally, the extended action is complete. Failure on the extended action is running out of time before the action is complete.

Example: Geraldine is attempting to navigate the jungle where she has been lost, trying to warn her compatriots of an upcoming attack by a duplicitous naval captain. The GM declares this is an extended Per/naturalist-10 action with an interval of a day and Tally 10. Geraldine only has three days before the captain launches his attack. She makes a flip for the first day and gets a total of 12. This adds Mag 2 to the total—not a great start. She then makes a flip for the second day and gets a total of 14. This adds Mag 4 to the total, bringing it up to 6. She only has one more day to find her way back, and makes a flip for the final interval. Unfortunately, she only scores a 12. This adds another Mag 2, bringing her total up to 8, but that's not enough to reach the Tally 10 that she needs. She will arrive late, finding the aftermath of the attack. She vows revenge!

Random Number Flips

Sometimes a rule in *Dime Adventures* will call for a special type of flip called a random number flip. This type of flip is not a function of a character ability, instead simply generating a random number between 1 and 10, weighted towards the lower end of the range.

To generate a random number in this way, simply flip the top of card of the deck and take the card's value. This flip is not associated with a stat and thus cannot be trump, nor do face cards cause a second card to flip. A character's Moxie may not be used to affect this flip. Finally, should a joker come up in this way, the GM is free to describe how something goes horribly wrong, exactly as with a critical failure. Jokers that come up in this way refresh Moxie and cause the deck to be shuffled, as usual.

Example: Alice tries to dodge. She makes a random number flip, turning over the top card of the deck and getting an ace. This has a value of one.

Example: Bob tries to resist a mental effect. He makes a random number flip, turning over a king. This has a value of three. He does not flip a second card, since face cards do not do that for random number flips.

TALLY GUIDELINES

Since an extended action's tally represents the amount of work an extended action will take to complete, it is useful to have some guidelines for GMs to know what sort of values at which to set an extended action's tally. Use the table below:

Amount of Work	Tally
A Bit	5
Fair Amount	10
A Lot	15
Tons	20
Absurd	30

The Rule of Three

When calling for an extended action, the GM should think about how it affects the pacing of the game session. It's not that fun to repeatedly flip cards time and time again until a success is reached. When in doubt, the GM should frame an extended action as a series of three intervals—that is, three flips are made and then the action is resolved one way or the other. This gives ample time for the extended action to build a sense of tension without drawing out the endeavor to the point of boredom.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

Many times a character will want to attempt some action another character is actively trying to thwart. These are opposed actions. Examples of opposed actions include hiding from a stalking tiger or trying to win a formal debate.

There are two parties involved in opposed actions: the initiator (the party taking the action) and the target (the party opposing the action). To make matters potentially even more complex, opposed actions could also be group effort actions or extended actions.

Mechanically, opposed actions work just like all the other types of actions with one exception: they do not have a fixed TN. Instead, the initiator's flip sets the target number for the target's flip to resist.

Example: Abebe is trying to sneak by a guard. This is a Dex/stealth vs. Per/awareness flip. Abebe—the initiator—makes his flip and gets a total of 14. This sets the target number for the guard to notice him. The guard then makes her flip to resist and gets a 12. She fails to notice Abebe sneaking by.

If the magnitude of an opposed action is needed, it can be found simply by taking the difference between the two totals. Since the initiator sets the TN for the target and a success is normally equal to or exceeding the TN, the target effectively wins ties.

MOXIE

All player characters—and occasionally non-player characters—have a score called Moxie. This score represents the subtle advantages these characters have in the narrative: whether due to pep, good luck or simple conviction.

At the beginning of each session, the character's player draws a number of cards equal to her Moxie score. The number of cards held

is the character's current Moxie, and it will fluctuate during the game, as cards are played or more cards are drawn.

If a character spends a Moxie, this does not affect her permanent score, instead it only affects her current Moxie—the number of cards she holds in her hand. Similarly, if a character gains a Moxie during play, she simply draws a card. This likewise does not affect her permanent Moxie score.

Moxie is gained when a Weakness trait affects a character in some significant way. It can also be awarded by the GM for playing up the character's Creed or Idiosyncrasy, or for actions that particularly fit the genre or enhance the game in other ways. Finally, a character may regain Moxie when a joker is used to resolve a flip (see *Jokers*, page 87).

DRAWING THE JOKER

If a player ever draws a joker into her hand, she must immediately discard the joker as well as any other cards from her hand that she does not want. Jokers are never held in a player's hand. She may then draw, replacing all of the cards that were just discarded. Afterward, she shuffles the discard pile back into the deck—remember, jokers never sit in the discard pile.

SPENDING MOXIE

In *Dime Adventures* Moxie can be spent in four ways:

- **Activate Trait:** Some traits cost a Moxie to use. To activate such a trait, the player discards a chosen card from her hand. The value of the card discarded in this way usually does not matter.
- **Play a Card:** When making a flip, a player may play a card from her hand in place of the usual card from the top of the deck.

This may result in additional cards being played from the top of the deck, as per the usual rules for face cards and trumps.

- **Luck:** Immediately after a flip has been made from the top of the deck, but before any consequences have been declared, a player may discard a Moxie to flip another card from the top of the deck, playing it as a new stack. She may not do this if the initial card was a joker. When resolving the action, she takes her choice of the two stacks (usually the highest). If the suits of the stacks match, she adds together the value, just as with a trump. The value of the Moxie discarded does not matter.
- **Serendipity:** A player may discard a card to announce the existence of some small, convenient coincidence. A use in this manner must be accepted by the GM and may not derail or be detrimental to the game. Examples include declaring that the character remembered to bring some rope or declaring that a vehicle takes a couple tries to fully start at a particularly convenient moment.

GM MOXIE

In addition to the players, the GM has Moxie of her own. This represents not just the Moxie of a single character, but the Moxie of all minor NPCs collectively. At the beginning of a session, the GM draws a number of cards equal to the number of players present. She may spend the Moxie for any of her NPCs, just as a player would spend Moxie for her player character.



CONSEQUENCES

In the *Saga Machine* system, actions are just half the equation. The other half are consequences—the direct mechanical effects of a character's action. Consequences can represent many things: receiving a mortal wound, experiencing fatigue, being on fire, being broken, lusting after another character, being the life of the party, etc. They are as many and as varied as the actions characters can take. Furthermore, cleverly placed consequences can be exploited by crafty characters and made to be a significant mechanical boon.

WHAT IS A CONSEQUENCE?

Consequences as a unified mechanic are a concept many role-playing games lack; nevertheless, they are quite simple. A consequence is simply the mechanical representation of a status effect upon a character or upon some part of the scene. Look at some example consequences in a little more detail below:

Example: Xuan is attacked by a group of hired thugs. He takes the action to dive for cover behind a train car. This action grants him the Cover consequence, which hinders the thugs' incoming attacks.

Example: Natasha is attending a fancy party of Philadelphia's most elite. Also in attendance is Juan, a rail baron who tried to have her assassinated. She takes the action to gossip with the attending dilettantes, undercutting his credibility and standing in these social circles. This gives Juan the Humiliated consequence, penalizing his social actions.

Example: Tarun, a skilled storyteller, wants to tell a chilling tale about a king who was haunted by malevolent spirits. As he takes the action to tell his story, a hush falls over the crowd as the scene is granted the Spooked consequence. This consequence gives a penalty to those present to avoid the effects of fear.

The outcomes of all of these situations are consequences. Note that in all of these cases, there is some clear benefit or hindrance to be had from the consequence of the action, although a consequence in some situations may provide both a benefit and a hindrance. This might potentially be exploitable by any party, friend or foe. Also note consequences can be applied either to characters themselves or to the scene around the character. Deciding which consequences apply to actions is a task performed by the GM, who takes into account a number of rules of thumb detailed below. Players are, however, free to declare their intent when taking such an action or to make suggestions.

LEVELS OF SEVERITY

Not all consequences are created equal; some outcomes obviously are more severe than others. Because of this, consequences come in four different levels of severity. Each level increases the severity of the effects of the consequence in question. The different levels of consequence severity are as follows:

- **Light:** Light consequences are the least severe type of consequences. They are the small cuts and bruises, the single case of stuttering when delivering a speech or the minor misconception in understanding a complex story.
- **Moderate:** Moderate consequences are a bit more severe. They are the nasty gash dealt to one's arm, the insistent wavering of one's voice when making a speech or the flawed understanding that affects a minor but still significant part of a story.
- **Severe:** Severe consequences cannot be easily ignored. They are the profusely bleeding wound in one's stomach, the almost unintelligible speech being delivered or the deep-seated bias rendering the understanding of a story mostly useless.

- **Critical:** These consequences—critical consequences—are the most severe. They are the mortal wound, the passing out from hyperventilation during a speech or the flawed understanding of a story rendering it worse than useless.

ADJUDICATING CONSEQUENCES

As a general rule of thumb, the better the success or failure of the action, the more severe the consequence produced by it. Start with a light consequence, and as the magnitude of success or failure increases, the severity of the consequence increases as well. Refer to the table below:

Consequence	Magnitude
Light	0
Moderate	2
Severe	4
Critical	6

This is not a hard and fast rule, and GMs should feel free to bend it when appropriate. Rather, it is a standard guideline for assigning a severity to consequences produced by an action.

EFFECTS OF CONSEQUENCES

Consequences can have a variety of effects, and deciding upon an appropriate and balanced effect is something of a learning process. GMs should endeavor to make all consequences of a given severity roughly on par with each other, although there will always be a certain amount of wiggle room.

Nevertheless, it is good to have a few standards from which to judge the appropriateness of consequences. A “standard” consequence provides a modifier based on its severity to a class of actions where its application makes sense. For example, a “looking extraordinary”

Scene Consequences

The GM may want some scenes to begin with consequences already on them. In this manner, clever players can use these initial consequences to their benefit. These sorts of consequences are called “scene consequences” because they were placed on the scene before it began. Perhaps a scene already has the “noisy” consequence, applying a penalty to actions to socialize and applying a bonus to characters using the noise as a distraction when trying to use Stealth. Maybe the scene has the “slippery” consequence, forcing characters running through it to make an action against slipping in the fluid.

Scene consequences can be a useful tool for the GM to promote certain behaviors among characters in different scenes, because they provide characters with a reward for behaviors making use of the scene consequences. For example, a GM might want to promote caution in a scene by giving it a “danger lurking in every corner” consequence that makes ambushes or fear particularly easy.

consequence might apply as a bonus to social actions but may also apply a penalty to actions to blend into a crowd. The standard modifier per severity for consequences is given below:

Consequence	Modifier
Light	±1
Moderate	±2
Severe	±3
Critical	±4

A list of common consequences used by various systems in *Dime Adventures* is provided on page 253 and may also be used as a benchmark when adjudicating consequences.

DURATION OF CONSEQUENCES

Consequences don't usually stick around forever: infatuations change, people get over bad first impressions and structures on fire are either put out or burnt to the ground.

By default, consequences stick around either until the end of the scene or until an appropriate action is taken to make the consequence go

away. The type of action that is appropriate, of course, will vary with the nature of the consequence. For example, an “on fire” consequence may go away once an action is taken to put out the fire, and a Stun consequence may go away once a character takes a moment to concentrate and gather her wits. Many consequences will have an obvious action that can be taken to bring them to an end; for other actions, the GM will have to make it clear. When deciding upon these, the GM should keep in mind game balance and common sense.

Some consequences, however, are lasting. These consequences stick around past the end of a scene and involve some more significant act to bring it to an end. Such consequences are usually special cases, and should also be noted as such.

As a general rule of thumb, an action that causes a lasting consequence should cause a consequence that is one or more severities lower than it normally would. So, for example, an action that succeeds with Mag 6 would normally cause a critical consequence, but if the consequence is lasting, it might only cause a moderate consequence. In essence, severity is traded for duration.

HEALTH POINTS

A hero's life is full of action and adventure. Danger lurks around every corner, from two-bit thugs to a hidden temple's traps and other hazards. Over the course of the game, most characters will at some point take damage, representing a setback to their health and well-being. They may even die!

A character's health in *Dime Adventures* is represented by her Health Points (HP). When a character takes damage, she loses HP; similarly, when she heals damage, she regains HP.

Every character has a maximum HP, representing a state of good health. Her current HP can never exceed this value. A character's maximum HP can be calculated using the formula below.

$$\text{Max HP} = \text{Strength} + \text{Endurance}$$

DAMAGE

When an event—such as being struck with a weapon or a great fall—harms a character's health, she takes damage. Damage reduces the character's current HP by an amount equal to the damage taken. So, for example, a character taking 10 damage loses 10 HP.

DAMAGE REDUCTION (DR)

Some characters will have damage reduction (DR). This usually takes the form of a certain resistance to damage granted by an innate property (such as tough hide) or a piece of equipment (such as armor). Whenever a character takes damage, she reduces it by her DR before applying it to her HP. If this would reduce the damage taken to zero, she still takes one damage, however. In this way, a successful hit always has some sort of impact.

Some DR values are also accompanied by one or more card suits. When a suit is present alongside a DR value, the DR only applies if the attacker's card matches one or more of the listed suits. For example, if a character has DR 3♦♣, the DR would apply if the attacker played a diamond or club, but not a spade or heart. If no suit is listed, the DR value always applies.

Effects that allow an attack's damage to be treated as another suit do not apply to DR. That means, for example, DR 3♠ does not apply when the attacker has played a heart and selected the Vital Hit critical effect (which allows an attack to inflict its normal spade damage). The card is not a spade, even if it is dealing damage like one. DR 3♥ would, however, apply.

CONSEQUENCES

Some traits or critical effects allow a character to impose a consequence on another when damage is successfully dealt. Consequences imposed in this way are usually increased a step in severity when the damage is dealt. For example, if the damaged character did not have the Stun consequence and it is imposed, it would give her the consequence at light severity. Taking damage and imposing the consequence again would increase its severity to moderate.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS

When a character is reduced to zero HP or below, she risks being rendered unconscious from her accumulated wounds. Every time she takes damage at this point, she must then make an End action. The TN of this action is equal to the number of HP she is below zero. So, for example, if she took damage reducing her to -9 HP the action to resist unconsciousness would be End-9. If she succeeds on this action she continues on as before. If, however, she fails, she is rendered unconscious and begins dying.

DEATH & DYING

Once a character has been rendered unconscious, unless she gets immediate medical attention, she usually begins dying. At the beginning of every round she should make an End-10 flip, keeping track of previous successes and failures. Every success or failure by 5+ Mag counts as an additional success or failure, respectively. Taking additional damage after being rendered unconscious also counts as an automatic additional failure.

If she accumulates three successes this way she stabilizes and ceases to be dying. At this point she is still unconscious, but unless she takes further injury, she is no longer at risk of death. If, however, she accumulates three failures, she dies, and no force on Arth can revive her.

RANDOM DAMAGE

Sometimes it's useful to be able to quickly generate a random amount of damage. This can be due to the result of a critical failure, a hero getting hit by a tumbling boulder, a fall or simply bad luck.

To do this, make a random number flip and use the result as the damage amount (see page 91). If a greater amount of damage is desired, instead make two such flips and add them together.

Example: Gerald fails to maintain his balance when traversing a steep mountain path. He tumbles down the mountainside and the GM rules that he takes some damage. The GM makes a quick random number flip, revealing a king (+3). This means that Gerald takes three damage in the tumble. His ego is perhaps bruised as much as he is.



HEALING

Humans, and most other creatures on Arth, have the ability to heal naturally over time. Healing is a special sort of extended action that is completed once a character's HP is back to full. At the end of any day in which a character took the time to relax and rest up—usually while sleeping for the night—the character will heal naturally. For every day spent resting in this way, the character regains a number of HP equal to her Endurance.

FIRST AID

First aid can be used to patch up wounds shortly after they occur or to stop bleeding. First aid must take place within an hour of receiving a wound, and a character may only benefit from first aid once per set of wounds received.

To apply first aid, the healer should make a Dex/medicine-10 flip. Apply the usual penalty if she does not have appropriate tools. On a success, she may heal the patient for a number of HP equal to the patient's Endurance. She may also remove the patient's Bleeding consequence, stabilize a patient who is dying and wake the patient up if she had been rendered unconscious.

First aid typically takes 10 minutes to heal wounds or an AP if only treating a patient's bleeding (see "First Aid in Combat" on page 104).

THE 'NOT UNTIL IT'S OVER' RULE

Damage cannot be healed until what's causing it is no longer affecting the character. Bullet wounds cannot be healed until the bullets are removed. Damage from poison cannot be healed until the poison is out of the character's system. Damage from drowning cannot be healed until the character is breathing once more. GMs and players should use common sense when tracking this. No amount of first aid is going to heal a person dying of starvation.

DEFENSE

Often one of the foremost goals of combat is to avoid being hit, and thus avoid being injured. This is where a character's Defense score comes in. It is a measure of how difficult she is to hit in combat and how difficult it is to hit her well. Mechanically, a character's Defense is actually two numbers: one representing the TN to hit the character and the other representing the TN to critically hit the character. This score is written with a slash separating the two numbers. Elsewhere in the combat system, these are referred to as a "hit" and as a "critical hit," respectively. Hits usually result in the attacker dealing damage to her target. On a critical hit, however, other effects can typically be applied as well (see Critical Effects on page 111).

To calculate a character's Defense TN, use the following formulas:

$$\text{Hit Defense TN} = (\text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}) \div 2$$

$$\text{Critical Hit Defense TN} = \text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}$$

Example: A character has a Spd 5, Per 6 and Dex 4. Her Defense TN would be "7/15" $(5 + 6 + 4) \div 2 = 7$ and $5 + 6 + 4 = 15$). This would mean an attacking character would need a total of at least 7 to hit her and at least 15 to critically hit her.

DEFENSE MODIFIERS

Many consequences or other situations can give a modifier to a character's Defense score. When a modifier is given to Defense, it applies to both numbers. For example, if a character with Defense 7/15 gains a +3 modifier, her effective Defense with the modifier is 10/18.

DEFENSIVE REACTIONS

Anytime an attack is made against a character's Defense she may respond with one defensive reaction. As with all reactions, these require spending an AP (see page 100). A character may only declare a defensive reaction if she is aware of the attack—that is, she cannot react to attacks she doesn't see coming. There are three possible defensive reactions.

DODGE

Declaring a Dodge reaction allows the character to make a random number flip and add its value to her Defense (see page 91). As usual for random number flips, the card flipped in this way does not have a trump suit, nor do face cards cause a second card to flip. Additionally, Moxie may not be spent on this flip. Dodging can be risky, as flipping a joker results in the attack being considered a critical hit.

Example: Sanja is being attacked. Her Defense is 7/15. The attack action then achieves a total of 10. Normally this is good enough to hit. She declares a Dodge reaction and spends an AP. She flips a card and gets a queen. This gives her a +2 bonus, making her effective Defense 9/17. The attack, unfortunately, still hits.

PARRY

Declaring a Parry reaction allows the character to add her Melee skill as a bonus to her Defense. This defensive reaction can only be chosen if the attacker is at melee range. The character cannot parry bullets, but she may be able to knock the attacker's gun aside if the shot was taken point blank.

Example: Sanja is being attacked. Her Defense is 7/15 and her Melee skill is 4. The attack action then achieves a total of 10. She declares a Parry reaction and spends an AP. She adds her Melee

skill to her Defense, meaning her effective Defense is 11/19. The attack misses entirely.

TAKE COVER

Taking cover allows the character to make the best use of the cover provided by her surroundings. When choosing the Take Cover reaction, the defender can double the bonus to her Defense provided by her Cover consequence. For example, if she has moderate Cover, this will increase the provided bonus from +2 to +4. Naturally, this is of no benefit if the character does not have cover.

Example: Sanja is being attacked. Her Defense is 7/15 and she has moderate cover (+2). The attack action then achieves a total of 17. Normally this would be enough for a critical hit, but Sanja really can't afford to take a critical effect right now. She declares a Take Cover reaction and spends an AP. This doubles her cover bonus and gives her an effective Defense of 11/19. This means the attack is still a hit, but it's not a critical hit.

WILLPOWER

Dime Adventures is filled with tales of love, moments that terrify and revelations that excite the minds of its characters. Arth is also home to strange and wondrous creatures that can assault the very minds of their victims.

The ability of a character to resist these mental effects is measured in her Willpower score. This works very much for mental assaults the way Defense does for physical attacks. A character's Willpower score is actually a set of two TNs, separated by a slash. The first represents the difficulty to affect the character, the second represents the difficulty to critically affect her. To calculate a character's Willpower TN, use the following formulas:

$$\text{Effect Willpower TN} = (\text{Int} + \text{Det} + \text{Chr}) \div 2$$

$$\text{Critical Effect Willpower TN} = \text{Int} + \text{Det} + \text{Chr}$$

Example: A character has Int 4, Chr 5 and Det 7. Her Willpower TN would then be "8/16" $([4 + 5 + 7] \div 2 = 8 \text{ and } 4 + 5 + 7 = 16)$. This would mean that a character making a mental assault on her would need a total of 8 to affect her and 16 to critically affect her.

RESIST

Anytime an action is made against a character's Willpower, she may optionally respond by attempting a Resist reaction. This works for Willpower very much how the Dodge reaction works for Defense. She makes a random number flip, turning over the top card of the deck and adding its value to her Willpower (see page 91). As usual, the card flipped in this way does not have a trump suit, nor do face cards cause a second card to flip. Resisting can be risky, as flipping a joker results in the mental assault being considered a critical effect.

As with most reactions, performing a Resist reaction costs an AP. Additionally, a Resist reaction can only be made if the target is aware of the mental assault. It's easier to subtly slip past one's mental defenses if you can catch them sleeping or unaware.

Example: A character is the subject of an attempt at intimidation, which targets Willpower. She has Willpower 8/16 and the intimidator got a 12. She decides to resist, and flips a card with a value of 6. This adds to her Willpower, making it effectively 14/22. The intimidation attempt fails.

COMBAT

Arth is a world of danger and excitement, with physical confrontations taking forms ranging from down-and-dirty street fights to honorable duels with sabers. Any of these confrontations can be modeled with the combat system.

In the combat system, the action in the game world is broken down into 10-second increments of time called rounds. Every round, characters have the opportunity to declare actions and have those actions resolved. Actions declared in combat almost always require some number of action points (AP) to perform. At the beginning of each round, characters will gain a few AP, which over the course of the round can then be spent on actions or reactions.

The bulk of the actions in a combat are likely to be attacks. Successful attacks reduce the HP of their target, bringing them one step closer to incapacitation or death. Sometimes attacks impose other consequences as well on targets, hindering them in various ways.

Eventually one side of the combat or the other will lay defeated, will have made a retreat or will have surrendered. The combat is then over and the usual narrative flow of the game resumes.

ACTION POINTS (AP)

During combat, characters will gain and spend action points (AP) to perform actions or make reactions. AP can be tracked using poker chips, glass beads or even tally marks on paper. Personally, we recommend physical tokens of some sort, as they gave a very clear tactile indicator of the number of AP each character possesses.

Unless something dictates otherwise, all characters will gain 3 AP at the beginning of combat and on their turns every round. Some NPCs may have abilities that give them more or less, and being surprised at the beginning of combat may negate some or all AP the first round.

At the beginning of a character's turn, all leftover AP are discarded—that is, AP from one turn do not carry over to her next turn. When a character's turn begins, she always goes back to her normal starting number of AP (usually 3).

STARTING A COMBAT

It's usually obvious when to bust out the combat system and begin to break the action down into rounds. Someone will draw a gun, a bear will charge out of the woods or someone will throw a punch. When the situation is in doubt, however, declaring the start of a combat is up to the GM.

Hidden Combatants

Some fights may feature hidden combatants, where the opposing side is not yet aware of the presence of these combatants in the battle. Because their presence is not yet known, these characters cannot normally be chosen to act next, however:

At the end of the round, before the next round begins, any character who wishes to reveal herself may choose to do so and take her turn as normal. Characters who wish to remain hidden may secretly take a turn, but this does not count as “acting last” in the round, meaning characters who take secret turns never pick who goes first the next round.

STARTING CONSEQUENCES

At the beginning of combat, the GM should describe the scene and the locations of the different characters. Additionally, she should make sure each character has the appropriate number of AP to begin the round. Some characters may begin the combat with consequences already on them—of particular note are Cover and Concealment, although other lasting consequences, such as Fatigue or Fear consequences, will crop up frequently as well.

SURPRISE

Sometimes one party will attempt to ambush the other at the beginning of combat, catching them unaware. This is typically handled by making a Dex/stealth vs. Per/awareness flip. On a success, the characters in the surprised party do not begin the combat with AP. On their first turns, however, they will gain AP as normal.

Additionally, a character in the party that gained surprise gets to begin the combat.

Three or More Sides

The situation may occasionally arise where a combat has three or more sides, although this is usually something of an oddity. In this situation, the GM is the final arbitrator of what counts as “being on a different side.”

ROUNDS

When using the combat system, the action taking place in the game world is broken up into short increments of time called rounds. During every round each character in the combat will get one turn. For the first round, the character who initiated the combat gets the first turn. Her player declares her actions, and those actions are resolved.

That player then gets to decide which character in the combat gets the next turn. The new character acts, and then decides who gets the next turn after her, and so on. These choices, however, have two restrictions:

- A player may not pick a character who has already acted earlier in the same round. That is, all characters only get one turn each round.
- If the character who acted before the current one was in the same team, she may not pick a character who is also on the same team, unless all characters on other teams have already acted. In other words, no more than two characters on a side may go in a row, unless there are no other characters to choose from.

This continues until all characters in the combat have had a turn. Once all characters have had a chance to act, the round ends and the GM declares “new round,” beginning the next round.

In all rounds in a combat after the first, the player of the character who acted last in the previous round gets to choose which character acts first in the next round. The same restrictions apply for this choice, although at this point none of the characters will have acted yet in the new round.



ACTIONS

When a player's turn comes up during a round, she may declare one or more actions. These actions are declared and resolved one at a time. Multiple actions may be declared per turn in this way, but a player may only declare one action that requires a flip to resolve. Once an action requiring a flip has been executed, no others may be declared that turn.

All actions cost some number of AP—usually one—and all actions break down into one of four basic categories. These categories are listed below. Later sections cover each type of action in more detail.

- **Attack:** This category represents actions that are an attack of some sort on another character.
- **Concentrate:** This category represents an action that is mostly mental in nature—usually removing some undesirable consequence or invoking some sort of mystic power.
- **Interact:** This category of action represents interacting with the environment or other characters in some way, such as drawing a weapon, intimidating another character or opening a door.
- **Move:** This category of action represents actions mostly made to move in some fashion, whether running across the battlefield or standing up from laying prone.

In addition, there are also reactions that characters can take outside of their turn—usually as the result of an attack and usually

requiring 1 AP. Players may opt to not spend all of their AP during their turn in order to leave enough left for reactions later in the round.

REACTIONS

A few special reactions exist which can be triggered during another character's turn. When a trigger occurs, a character may immediately declare and resolve the reaction, interrupting the triggering event. Unless specified otherwise, all reactions cost 1 AP. These reactions include Wait, Zone of Control, Dodge, Parry, Take Cover and Resist. Except for the Wait reaction, these are each described in the section following the type of action that triggers them. Wait is a more general reaction and is described below.

WAIT REACTION

Sometimes a character wants to take a particular action in response to another's behavior. For example: "If she walks through the door, I will shoot her." These types of declarations can be made with a Wait reaction.

To declare a Wait reaction, the player must specify both the trigger event and the response during her turn. Examples of trigger events include: "if she speaks," "if she does anything violent," and "if she starts to run." Examples of response actions include: "I shoot her," "I chase after her" and "I run away very fast."

Declaring a Wait costs 1 AP for the reaction itself in addition to any AP required for the response action. The cost for the reaction is paid during the character's turn. The cost for the response action is paid only when the trigger occurs.

A Wait reaction lasts until the trigger occurs or until the character's next turn. If the trigger does occur and the player has since changed her mind about the action or she doesn't have the necessary AP for the response action, she may decide in that moment not to perform the response

Offhanded Actions

It's more difficult to do things with a character's off-hand than it is with a character's primary hand. Thus, all actions taken with a character's off-hand are at a -2 penalty. This applies not only to attacks, but to any action taken with the off-hand.

CONCENTRATE ACTIONS

Concentrate actions are those actions which are primarily internal or mental in nature. This includes aiming, observing, recalling facts and summoning up one's self control to end mental consequences. A few Concentrate actions of note are described below.

AIM

With an Aim action, a character may take a moment to apply some extra focus and attention when lining up an attack. When this action is taken, the character must specify the target, who must be visible. Every AP spent on the Aim provides a +2 bonus to her next attack on the target to a maximum bonus equal to the character's Perception. This bonus can carry over round to round, but the character's Aim is broken if she takes any action other than to continue to aim at the target or if she takes a dodge or a zone of control reaction against a different target.

END CONSEQUENCE

Many consequences list their duration as lasting until a Concentrate action is taken to end them. These consequences mostly represent mental states or afflictions of some kind. To

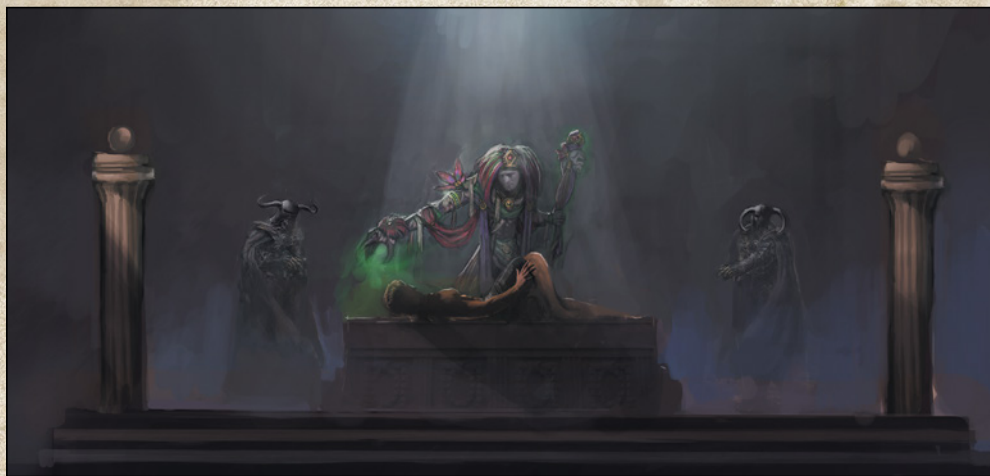
bring one or more of these consequences to an end, the character simply needs to take a moment to clear her head and get herself under control. To do this, she takes the End Consequence action and spends AP. For every AP, she spends she may remove a severity of one of these consequences. Removing the last severity of a consequence removes the consequence entirely. She may divide the AP between any relevant consequences as she sees fit, and provided she has enough AP for it, she may end multiple consequences at a time in this way.

OBSERVE OR RECALL FACTS

Sometimes a character really needs to remain alert or to recall a critical piece of information. This can be done by taking this action to concentrate, and making a Perception or Intelligence flip, as appropriate.

PARANORMAL ABILITY

Some characters in the game world may have the ability to call upon paranormal forces, such as mystic invocations or psychic powers. Many of these abilities will primarily be mental in nature, and unless specified otherwise, their use is considered a Concentrate action.



INTERACT ACTIONS

A variety of interactions can take place in combat, either with the environment or with other characters. These can be as simple as drawing a weapon or as complex as coordinating an attack with one's allies. Interact actions are a good catch-all for maneuvers that don't otherwise fall under the other categories. If it's not an attack, not primarily moving around and not primarily a mental task, when in doubt, it's an Interact action.

A few Interact actions of special interest are detailed below.

COORDINATE

There's a reason that the great powers are moving towards a centralized military structure with regular training. Groups of people fight better when coordinated. In combat, a character may take an Int/tactics-10 flip to try to coordinate her allies. A character may coordinate up to a number of allies equal to her Intelligence. This requires the ability to clearly communicate with the coordinated allies, and coordinated allies must be in the same zone as the coordinating character. A character may not coordinate herself. On a success, all coordinated allies increase their Bolstered consequence by a severity. With 5+ Mag, they increase it two severities.

DRAWING OR RELOADING

Drawing a weapon or reloading one is a simple Interact action that involves taking a weapon out or putting ammunition into one. This costs at least 1 AP if the weapon or magazine was in a holster or other easy-to-access position. It costs at least 2 AP if it was harder to reach, such as stowed at the top of a pack or tucked inside one's boot. Some weapons may have longer reload times, requiring more AP. This will be noted in the weapon's properties.

FIRST AID IN COMBAT

To apply first aid in combat, the healer should make a Dex/medicine-10 flip. The action benefits from having the appropriate tools (see page 185). On a success, she may remove the patient's Bleeding consequence and/or stabilize a patient who is dying (see page 97). A character may heal herself in this way. Outside of combat, more extensive first aid is possible (see page 97).

INTIMIDATE

Sometimes it is possible to intimidate a foe in combat, causing her to reconsider the benefits of backing down. Intimidating a foe is a Str/persuade vs. Willpower flip. The foe must be able to see and communicate with the character for this to work. It costs 1 AP per targeted character. The GM should also consider possible modifiers—for example, having appropriately threatening gear probably counts as the right tools for the job, and attempting this when outnumbered almost certainly makes it more difficult. On a success, the target gains the Fear (light) consequence. With 5+ Mag this increases to Fear (moderate).

TRICK

Sometime it's possible to trick an enemy, granting an opening that can be exploited in combat. The player should describe the nature of the trick and then make an Int/deception vs. Willpower flip. Regardless of the nature of the trick, on an effect the foe's Stun consequence increases a severity, or by two severities with a critical effect. Enemies are quick to pick up on tricks, however, and after an attempt to trick an enemy has been made, the character cannot attempt a trick against the same enemy again in the same combat.

MOVE ACTIONS

Outside of combat, players can simply declare where they're moving and the GM narrates the results, setting scenes in the journey as necessary. In this way, a trip from one country to another could be described in a few passing sentences or it might be an adventure on its own.

In combat, however, the exact movements and positions of the characters are a little more important. To help track this, combat scenes are divided up into a number of zones, each representing some distinctive part of the environment. These zones need not be regular in either shape or size, but ought to be roughly the same order of magnitude in terms of scale. Characters will be in one of these zones and can take actions to move between zones or affect other characters in nearby zones.

For example, if a battle breaks out around a waterfall, there may be one zone for the water above the fall; one for the water below the falls; one for each of the right and left banks, both above and below the falls.

Zones should be drawn out by the GM in such a way that every zone is adjacent to some other zone, forming a map of the battlefield. Physically drawing out these zones either on paper, a washable battle matt or in a virtual tabletop application is recommended.

BASIC MOVE

A character may normally take a move action to move from her current zone to an adjacent zone, although there may be restrictions (see Zone Borders on page 106). This action can be performed multiple times in a turn to move multiple zones.

A basic move can also be taken to move around within the same zone. This is useful if the character wants to take advantage of any Cover the zone might have to offer.

Occupying Zones

In combat, a character is ever only in one zone at a time. This represents the character actually being present in that location in the game world. Multiple characters may occupy the same zone, and all characters in a particular zone are considered to be in melee range of each other.

For example, a given zone may represent a small meadow between two forests. A character standing in the meadow is said to occupy that zone. Many other characters could also be standing in that meadow, and if they were, they would be considered to be within melee range of each other, as the other characters are just a quick jaunt across the meadow..

There are times when exact measurements may be useful for the narration. During these times, assume a character can move $\text{Spd} + \text{End}$ in yards (meters) per AP, if running or half that distance if walking. This distance may be adjusted downward if the character is facing difficult terrain or upwards if the character is moving across a flat open plain.

OBSTACLES

Movement isn't always across flat, open surfaces. Often it involves climbing, jumping, swimming, bouncing around in zero-G or other obstacles. Overcoming one of these obstacles is a move where the player must succeed on a flip—usually it is Str/athletics, Dex/athletics or End/athletics. The GM sets the difficulty of the obstacle. If exact measurement becomes important, every 1 AP and successful attempt gains the character the average of her Spd and End in meters.

POSTURE

By default, characters are assumed to be standing. There are times, however, when a character might want to kneel, crouch, sit or lay down. Changing between any of these postures is a move action, and one change in posture may be tacked on for free to another move action, such as a basic move or taking cover. This action is used to remove the Prone consequence and works identically to the End Consequence action (see pages 255 and 103).

ZONE BORDERS

The borders between zones may be difficult for characters to cross or even impassable unless certain conditions are met. For example, the border between two zones might represent a wall and be impassable unless a character can pass through solid objects or can bust through it. In addition, a border between zones can represent thick forest growth and be difficult to move through.

In the case of borders that are impassable without certain conditions, whether a character can move through the border or not is simple: She can move through if the conditions are met; otherwise, she cannot.

In the case of borders that are difficult to pass through, moving across these borders costs an additional AP on top of the AP spent for the basic move. Moving through a border might require a successful flip be made as well (see Obstacles on page 105).

ZONE OF CONTROL

REACTION

When two or more characters are within the same zone as each other, they are said to

be within each other's zones of control. Leaving another character's zone of control may provoke a Zone of Control reaction.

Whenever a character takes a move action to leave a threatening character's zone of control, the threatening character may immediately spend 1 AP to make an attack with a readied melee weapon. As this is a reaction, it is resolved immediately.

EXAMPLE

Below, an example battlefield is shown. The different zones represent a road through the jungle, a nearby hut and the surrounding woods.

The GM has determined that the lines around the hut represent walls, which cannot normally be passed through; however, the hut has a doorway leading to the road and to the forest behind the hut. Furthermore, moving between the nearby forest and the forest behind the hut is difficult terrain, taking one more AP than normal. Finally, both severe Cover and moderate Concealment are possible in all forest zones. Neither Cover nor Concealment is available on the road. If combat begins, the bandit will start it with moderate Concealment.



ATTACK ACTIONS

Ultimately, most combats are going to boil down to a series of attacks. In any attack, the aggressor picks a target and then tries to harm or hinder her in some way. When making an attack, there are a number of attack options and other situations to consider. These are detailed below.

BASIC ATTACK

Broadly speaking, attacks break down into two categories: attacks in melee (hand-to-hand combat) and attacks at range. Melee attacks are Dex/melee vs. Defense flips. Using a gun or other ranged projectile is a Dex/guns vs. Defense flip. Throwing an object as an attack is a Dex/athletics vs. Defense flip.

When making an attack, the attacker takes her action and compares the result against the target's Defense (see page 98). If she hits the first Defense number, she scores a hit. If she hits the second Defense number, she scores a critical hit. Should she score a critical hit, she will have a number of critical effect options to pick from after damage is dealt (see Critical Hits on page 111).

With either a hit or critical hit, the attacker usually gets to deal damage to her target. Every weapon has a series of four damage ratings, each corresponding to one of the four card suits. Look up the damage corresponding to the suit of the card played in the attack. If multiple cards are involved in the attack, use the same suit that determines if the action were trump. The target takes this amount of damage (see "Damage," page 96).

AREA ATTACKS

Some attacks—such as grenades or explosions—are able to target all characters in a particular zone or in several zones at once.

When making this type of attack, the attack action is made only once and the result is compared to the Defense of each target in the affected zones. A character's Cover bonus also counts as DR for the purposes of these attacks. If a critical hit is inflicted through such an attack, the Knockback effect must be chosen. A critical failure on one of these attacks usually indicates that the attack strayed into an unintended adjacent zone. Attacks that affect an entire area are incompatible with Called Shots.

AUTOMATIC FIRE

Automatic fire involves firing a rapid string of shots at a target. It's an option that must be chosen before an attack is made, and the weapon must be capable. This means it will have the Auto property, followed by a numerical rating—for example Auto 3.

The Auto rating applies a bonus to the attack equal to the rating itself. For example, Auto 2 would add a +2 bonus to the attack. Additionally, should the attack score a critical hit, the attacker may choose to have the target take a second hit at the same damage rating as the critical effect.

The downside of automatic fire is that it takes more shots than a basic attack and always costs at least 2 AP. The number of shots it takes is the square of the Auto rating—for example, Auto 3 would take 9 shots.

On anything but a critical hit, shooting with automatic fire into a zone with friendly targets is likely to harm them as well. The GM should pick a friendly target randomly and compare the attack to that target's Defense as well.

An attack may be made at a lower Auto rating than the maximum with which the weapon is capable. For example, an Auto 3 weapon can attack at Auto 2. There is no Auto 1; that is simply a normal shot.

Called Shot

With a Called Shot, it is possible to attack a particular part of the target's body. When doing this, the attack costs additional AP, as it has to be carefully aimed. Called shots are incompatible with Area Attacks.

Arm: Attacking an arm costs an additional AP. On a hit, the character drops anything held with that arm and cannot use it for the rest of the round.

Head: Attacking the head costs two additional AP. On a hit, treat damage as if the attack were of the next highest suit—clubs are treated as diamonds, diamonds are treated as hearts and hearts are treated as spades. Spades remain the same, as they are already the highest suit.

Leg: Attacking a leg costs an additional AP. On a hit, the character's Prone consequence increases a severity, and she may not use that leg for movement for the rest of the round.

Disarm

This attack forces the target to drop her weapon. To do this, declare the Disarm when making the attack. This attack costs an additional AP. On a hit, the target is disarmed and the weapon lands near her feet. On a critical hit, the weapon flies and lands a zone away (attacker's choice). This attack does not deal the usual damage.

Dodge (Reaction)

When subject to an attack, the target may opt to make a Dodge reaction. Dodging allows the player to make a random number flip and add its value to her Defense rating. (For more on the Dodge reaction, see page 98.)

Fighting Blind

It is difficult to fight effectively when you cannot see your target. All attacks made against

an unseen target normally cost an additional 2 AP. Making a successful Concentrate action to observe immediately ahead of time can reduce this to one additional AP. Unseen targets cannot be aimed at. These extra AP costs do not apply to area attacks.

Grapple

Sometimes the best tactic is to grab one's opponent with one's bare hands and grapple with her. This is a Str/melee vs. Defense flip. To do this, the attacker must have a free hand. Should she not have a free hand available, she may immediately drop whatever she is holding, thereby gaining one or more free hands to grapple with. Being in a grapple has three effects on combatants:

- Characters in a grapple may not take move actions until the grapple is broken.
- Grappling combatants give each other the Cover (moderate) consequence. This means that attacking into a grapple may hit the incorrect target (see Cover consequence, page 253). Increase or decrease the severity of this consequence by the relative Size trait of the opponent. For example, grappling with a small opponent (Size -1) only grants Cover (light), whereas grappling with a large opponent (Size +1) grants Cover (severe).
- Longarms and polearms—such as any weapon with the Hands 2 or Reach properties—may not be used in a grapple.

Breaking a grapple is free for the initiator of the grapple, but for other characters, it requires a successful Str/melee vs. Defense flip—an attack action. This attack does not deal damage. Additionally, as an attack action when already in a grapple, a grappler may make Str/melee vs. End flip to choke her target. On a success, this increases the target's Fatigue consequence a severity. If she's already at Fatigue (critical), it instead renders her unconscious.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS

Sometimes a character may be caught without a weapon on hand and will want to fight with the objects around her. Treat these as improvised tools, with either a -2 penalty or none, depending on the nature of the object. The damage dealt by an improvised weapon is typically more than an unarmed attack—usually increasing the damage by at least +2. The GM should use her discretion when making these rulings.

LINE OF FIRE

Missed shots can still kill! Anyone making a ranged attack into or through a zone with friendly targets might accidentally hit one. If the attack is a critical failure, a random friendly target in line of fire is automatically hit.

With automatic fire, on anything but a critical hit against the intended target, the GM picks a random friendly target and compares the total

from the attack with the target's Defense. If this would indicate a hit, the target also takes damage.

PARRY CREATION

When subject to an attack originating from the same zone, the target may opt to make a Parry reaction. This allows her to add her Melee skill as a bonus to her Defense. (For more on the Parry reaction, see page 98.)

PULLING PUNCHES

Sometimes when delivering an attack, the attacker doesn't want to deal the full usual damage, instead lessening the damage to something minimal. This is possible with any attack that lists Strength as part of the attack's damage. Simply choose this when declaring the attack, and the attacker may substitute any lower Strength score for her own when determining damage—even Strength 0.



RANGE

A character making a Ranged attack can target opponents outside of the zone she is currently in. These attacks will have the Range property with a value indicating the maximum number of zones away they can target. For example, a weapon with Range 2 can target up to two zones away. A weapon with Range 0 or no Range property can only target within the current zone.

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE

Any weapon capable of automatic fire can also put enough shots in the air to make moving around potentially lethal. The suppressive fire option must be chosen when the attack is declared. The attacker picks a zone within range. Until the character's next turn, any character taking an action in that zone has the potential of being hit.

When a threatened character takes an action, the GM should draw a card. If it's a red card with a value equal to or lower than the

Auto rating (count aces as 1, and don't count face cards), the character is hit for damage corresponding to that suit. Double the Auto rating for move actions. A character's Cover severity subtracts from this number needed to hit.

TAKE COVER (REACTION)

When subject to an attack, the target may opt to dive for cover. This allows the target to double her Cover bonus to Defense. (For more on the Take Cover reaction, see page 99.)

UNARMED ATTACKS

Sometimes a character is caught without a weapon and must fight with her bare hands. Using one's fists against an opponent armed with a melee weapon counts as improvised tools (-2 on the attack). Don't bring only your fists to a knife fight. They deal ♠Str+1/♥Str-1/♦Str-2/♣Str-4 damage on a successful hit. Unarmed attacks are also listed among the weapons in the Equipment Chapter for ease of looking up damage (see page 191.)



CRITICAL HITS

When an attack meets or exceeds the target's second Defense number, it deals a critical hit. Not only does the attack deal the usual damage or effect, but the attacker may also choose a critical effect to apply to the target. Some attack options restrict the critical effects that may be chosen, such as area attacks, which may only choose the Knockback critical effect. A table of critical effects is below, followed by descriptions of each effect:

Critical Effect	Restrictions
Called Shot	Cannot be area attack
Dazing Hit	—
Disarm	—
Grapple	Melee attacks only
Knockback	—
Two Birds	—
Vital Hit	Attack must deal damage

CALLED SHOT

The player may retroactively declare this to be a Called Shot (see Called Shots on page 108). Selecting this option as a critical effect does not cost any extra AP.

DAZING HIT

The attack not only injures the target, but also causes the target extra pain or distraction, leaving her mind fuzzy. With this critical effect, the target's Dazed consequence increases a severity.

DISARM

In addition to the usual damage from the hit, the attacker also disarms her target (see Disarm on page 108). Selecting this option as a critical effect does not cost any extra AP.

GRAPPLE

In addition to the usual damage from the melee strike, the attacker then grapples her target (see Grapple on page 108).

KNOCKBACK

This attack either makes the target off-balance or knocks her down entirely. This can be achieved by bodily knocking her to the ground, shooting her leg or any other number of methods. She increases her Prone consequence a severity.

TWO BIRDS

The attack hits not only its primary target, but may hit an additional secondary target as well, dealing damage to both of them. If the attack renders the first target unconscious or otherwise helpless, the player may pick a second character she would be able to target and compare the attack total to that character's Defense (or Willpower, if relevant). If this would hit, the attack deals its damage to the second character as normal. Since this effect is chosen before damage is applied, its use is something of a gamble.

VITAL HIT

The vital hit has struck some particularly important part of the target's anatomy. For the purposes of dealing damage, treat this attack as if the suit were a spade (see page 96). This gives the attack maximum possible damage.



QUICK COMBAT

Sometimes a fight doesn't merit busting out the full combat system, either because the fight isn't meant to be a real challenge, or because there's just not enough time in the session for a full-length combat and the GM wants to get on to more important scenes. In these situations, the game master may opt to use the quick combat resolution.

Design Intent

The quick combat system is intended as a fast way to resolve minor combats without wasting too much time at the table. As such, it is highly abstracted and leans heavily in the players' favor. GMs should call on it when it's a given that the result of the combat will fall in the heroes' favor, or when the combat itself isn't the point of the scene: for example, when the point is finding clues on the defeated enemies.

SETTING THE SCENE

The GM should begin by describing the situation and the enemies that the heroes are facing. Each player should then describe what her character is planning to do in the combat, picking a stat, a skill and telling how she plans to use them. Any stat or skill are valid, but these should make sense for her described actions. Generally, combat skills and their related stats are going to be the most common and the most useful.

The GM should then call for each player to make a flip whose difficulty is based on the

competency of the enemies being fought. Refer to the table below. It is recommended that when in doubt, just use TN 10.

Difficulty	TN	Example
Easy	8	An average citizen
Average	10	Lowlife with a gun
Difficult	12	Two lowlives with guns
Daunting	14	Squad of low-rent ninjas

In theory, the GM can pick a target number greater than those shown on the table, but in general more difficult fights should be handled using the standard combat system rather than the quick combat system.

If the situation is particularly advantageous to a player's chosen tactic, assign her a +2 bonus; if it's extremely advantageous, instead assign her a +4 bonus. Similarly, a particularly disadvantageous situation might merit a -2 penalty or even a -4 penalty.

RESOLVING THE COMBAT

On a success, a hero managed to win the fight, navigating her way through it unharmed. On a success with Mag 5+, she particularly shined and the GM should narrate the spectacular results. She may even earn a Moxie.

On a failure, the hero still won the fight, but the enemies collectively get a single successful action against the hero in the process. Usually this means they get to deal the hero damage, but other actions are possible, such as screaming to alert nearby guards or throwing a hostage off a cliff, etc.

When dealing damage, if the GM has a damage listing for the enemy, she can simply flip a card and use the damage for the associated suit. Otherwise, she can improvise damage

by having the enemy deal an amount equal to the character's Mag failure plus the value of a random number flip. DR protects as normal.

Example: Jill only gets a 7 on her quick combat action (TN 10), meaning she fails with Mag 3. The GM makes a random number flip for damage and gets a King (+3). This adds to her Mag for a total of 6 damage. Thankfully, her armor provides her with DR 2, so she only loses 4 HP.

Example: Jack is trying to jump a servant who caught him sneaking into a castle, before the servant can alert the guards. He makes his quick combat flip (TN 8) and gets a total of 11. The GM rules that he successfully renders the servant unconscious before she can scream to alert the guards. Had Jack failed this flip, he would still have rendered the servant unconscious, but she would have let out a loud scream before he could do so.

Math: Only if You Must

The above system is intended to be quick and easy. It doesn't depend on the stat blocks of the enemies, because the design intent is to not require GMs to have to come up with stat blocks: just pick a TN and go with your gut instinct as a storyteller.

If you, as GM, feel that the TN must reflect an enemy's stats, however, here's how you can estimate what it should be: Take the enemy's first Defense number and add it to the enemy's most relevant combat skill. For example, an enemy with Defense 8/16 and Guns 2 would be TN 10, assuming the enemy's primary tactic is to shoot the heroes.

INJURY & DEATH

Characters who take damage as a result of failing a quick combat flip may be forced to make Endurance actions against unconsciousness. Players should make these as normal, but if they fail they shouldn't have to worry about dying. Simply consider them unconscious and stable. After the battle, conscious heroes can use first aid or otherwise apply healing as normal.

DEFEAT

In a quick combat, the heroes' are only defeated if all player characters fail their respective flips, otherwise—despite some potential injuries—they prevail in the end. Should all of the players fail, the GM should skip ahead to whatever scene is prompted by their defeat. Perhaps they are captured and dragged off to confront the villain as captives, or maybe they are placed in some sort of nefarious death trap.

GMs are discouraged from outright killing heroes facing defeat in quick combat. This sort of death doesn't befit the bold heroes of adventure fiction. Epic deaths by combat should probably be a result of the full-fledged combat system.

AMMO & OTHER RESOURCES

Heroes using a tactic in combat that expends limited resources will naturally use up a few of these over the course of a quick combat. The GM should use her discretion when deciding how many are expended. As a rule of thumb, the GM can make a random number flip and use its value for the number of bullets or other resources expended.

DUELS

One-on-one duels of honor are a staple of the adventure genre, whether the duel is a sword fight, a duel with pistols or simple fist-cuffs. Below is a system for resolving these sort of duels in a dramatically appropriate manner.

THE CHALLENGE

For a duel to occur, one party must first issue a challenge to the other. This might involve a lot of pomp, such as the literal throwing down of a glove, or it might be as informal as a mean look and a muttered "let's have at it!"

Regardless of the nature of the challenge, mechanically, the challenger picks a Moxie from her hand and places it facedown on the table in front of her. The challenge has been issued, and the honor of the challenged party is on the line.

The challenged party may then either accept the challenge or reject it. If she accepts the challenge, she takes a Moxie from her own hand and likewise places it facedown on the table in front of her. These two Moxie will become the ante. The duel then moves on to the Face Off stage below.

If the challenged party rejects the duel, she must discard one of her own Moxie due to the loss of face. In this case a duel does not happen. Once a character rejects a duel in this way, she does not need to discard a Moxie to reject a duel for the rest of the session. She's already lost face for it and cannot lose any more face this way.

NO MOXIE IN HAND?

If the challenger doesn't have any Moxie in hand she can't issue a duel—at least not in the mechanical sense using this system. She may still yell about dueling or even provoke a fight

with the other party, but she lacks the literal Moxie to make a formal duel challenge stick.

If the challenged party doesn't have any Moxie, she can still accept a duel; she just doesn't ante any Moxie if she's unable.

FACE OFF

Once the duel begins, both opponents will typically try to stare each other down, taunt each other or show the appropriate graces in the face of adversity. This can win them an advantage in the Opening Shots step below.

Depending on the tactic chosen by the player, each side will make either:

- Str/persuade vs. Willpower for intimidation.
- Chr/empathy vs. Willpower flip for taunting.
- Chr/socialize vs. Willpower flip for good graces.

A character may only make a Resist reaction if she foregoes her own flip in the face off.

On a successful effect, double any damage scored by that character in the opening shots. On a critical effect, triple any damage scored.

OPENING SHOTS

The opponents having faced off, the duel can begin in earnest. Both sides should decide simultaneously whether they are going for speed or for safety.

Both sides may make an attack during the opening shots. The benefit of going for speed is that if you are the only party going for speed, your attack is resolved first, possibly striking down your opponent—or in a fight to first blood, winning the duel—before she has a chance to attack back. The benefit of going for safety is that you are able to declare reactions to the attack, such as Dodge or Parry.

- Attacks made for speed will be Spd/melee vs. Defense, Spd/guns vs. Defense or even Spd/athletics vs. Defense flips, as appropriate. Any party going for speed may not attempt a reaction to one of these attacks. Should both parties go for speed, have both parties make flips and resolve the one with the highest total first. In the case of a tie, resolve both simultaneously.
- Attacks made for safety will be Dex/melee vs. Defense, Dex/guns vs. Defense or Dex/athletics vs. Defense flips, as appropriate. Resolve these attacks after any attacks for speed have been resolved. Should both parties go for safety, have both make flips and resolve the highest total first. Ties are resolved simultaneously.

FOLLOW-UP

After the opening shots have been made, one party may lie defeated or have had blood spilled. If this would end the duel, move on to Winning the Duel. Otherwise, from this point on, the duel uses the normal combat system, with the challenger acting first in the combat.

Play out any remaining attacks for the duel as necessary. Any damage bonuses from the face off do not apply to these subsequent attacks.

WINNING THE DUEL

Once one party has won the duel, she collects her anted Moxie back from where it was placed facedown on the table. If the opponent also anted a Moxie, she discards that card and the victor draws one.

CHEATING

Over the course of a duel, one side or the other may attempt to cheat, such as using prohibited weapons, prohibited tactics or involving others in the one-on-one fight. Should one side cheat, that side suffers a loss of honor. In this case, her opponent will immediately gain the anted Moxie (see Winning the Duel above), and the cheater must discard an additional Moxie, should she have one to discard. In all other respects, however, the duel continues as normal, with the cheater getting the benefits of the cheating.



WEALTH

Money is a complicated fiction: entire industries have risen around nothing more than its transfer and manipulation. The great powers of Europe and America have plundered the world, established colonies, and entered into trade agreements, all in its pursuit. Monopolies have risen, been forcibly broken up and trade unions have formed, all in the effort to influence its distribution.

WEALTH RATING

The mechanical representation of a character's access to money is her Wealth rating. This Wealth rating encompasses more than just the money or gold she has on hand. It encompasses her ability to gain credit, transfer assets and take advantage of special pricing. It's an abstract value, which means the players don't need to track every dollar, investment, transfer or loan. They need only worry about the big picture.

In some ways, a character's Wealth rating can be thought of as a ninth stat—although there is no such thing as a Wealth action. The rating has a value commonly ranging from 0 (dirt broke and in debt) to 10 (filthy rich), although the super-rich can have wealth ratings that well exceed 10. The average middle-class character has around Wealth 5, although some places are wealthier than others and local average may vary significantly.

Over the course of play, a character's Wealth rating will fluctuate. Making large purchases can lower the rating as the character taps into her resources. Similarly, receiving large payments or other windfalls can increase her Wealth rating, giving her more to spend or borrow against.

Finally, Wealth ratings are exponential. That is, each rating is roughly twice as rich as the rating below it. So, for example, if a character increases her Wealth rating from 5 to 6, this represents an approximate doubling of her effective wealth.

STARTING WEALTH

Unless a trait chosen by the player would indicate otherwise, all player characters begin play at Wealth 5. Depending on the character's social class and backstory, this may be more or less than she might normally be expected to possess. Players wanting to explain this are free to come up with a story about a pauper's recent windfall or why her noble is temporarily down on her luck.

COST RATINGS

Whenever a character purchases a piece of equipment or incurs some other sort of expense, this expense has a Cost rating. Like the character's Wealth ratings, this Cost rating is an abstract measure of the cost to the character, abstracting away the need to worry about rebates, loan payments or maintenance costs. Like Wealth rating, a Cost rating is exponential with each Cost rating being approximately double the cost of the rating below it.

For the most part, GMs and players need not worry about the actual in-game market price of the expense. Nevertheless, it's sometimes useful for roleplaying to be able to quote numbers and have them be consistent. If a GM or player wants to do this, she can refer to the table on the next page. This table maps Cost ratings to approximate game world costs in United States dollars.

Cost	Approximate
15	\$5,120
14	\$2,560
13	\$1,280
12	\$640
11	\$320
10	\$160
9	\$80
8	\$40
7	\$20
6	\$10
5	\$5
4	\$2.50
3	\$1.25
2	\$0.62
1	\$0.31

EXPENSES

When a character incurs an expense—such as when purchasing a piece of equipment—her Wealth rating may be affected. Typically expenses whose Cost rating is equal to or lower than the character's Wealth rating do not incur any reduction to her wealth. This represents the character being able to fork over small amounts of petty cash without worrying about breaking the bank. For example, a character with Wealth 5 can easily afford a daily pack of cigarettes without going heavily into debt.

The GM should keep an eye on these sort of purchases during play to ensure they aren't abused. A good rule of thumb is that a character gets a number of “freebie” points of cost rating per day equal to her wealth rating. So, for example, a character with Wealth 5 could make a Cost 2 and Cost 3 purchase in a day or five Cost 1 purchases in a day without straining her

resources too much, but more than that may incur reducing her Wealth rating a point.

Characters may also pay for expenses up to a few levels above their current Wealth rating, although these purchases will be significant for them and will reduce their Wealth, as they tap into their savings. A character may pay for an expense up to four points above her current rating, but she may not pay for one more than twice her Wealth rating in this way. For example, a character with Wealth 5 could purchase a piece of equipment with Cost 9—four levels above her rating—but a character with Wealth 2 could only purchase a piece of equipment with up to Cost 4—two levels above her rating—since higher costs would be more than double her rating. Note that under this system, a character with wealth 0 is worse than broke, as she can't purchase anything that's not close to free.

When a character pays for an expense whose cost is more than her Wealth rating, her Wealth rating decreases by a number of points equal to the number of points the cost was over her rating. For example, a character with Wealth 6 purchasing a piece of equipment with Cost 8 would have her Wealth decreased by 2. This would make her new rating 4. A character will never drop below Wealth 0 in this manner.

BULK PURCHASES

Sometimes characters may want to make bulk purchases, buying lots of a particular thing. For example, a character may want to outfit her team of eight with guns, or she may want to buy many boxes of supplies. When making one of these purchases, GMs should keep in mind that each Cost rating represents something twice as expensive as the rating below it. This means buying two of something will typically cost one point more than the base thing, and buying four

of something will cost two points more, etc. For ease of reference, refer to the chart below.

Example: Sam wants to outfit her team with guns. The gun she has in mind is Cost 6 and she needs to buy 8 of them. Eight would be +3 cost, for a total of cost 9.

Units	Cost Mod	Units	Cost Mod
2	+1	64	+6
4	+2	128	+7
8	+3	256	+8
16	+4	512	+9
32	+5	1024	+10

POOLING MONEY

At some point, characters may wish to pool their money together to make a large collective purchase. This is possible, but requires a little bit of math. To determine the combined Wealth rating of everyone involved, use the following system:

- Two characters with the same Wealth rating have a combined Wealth rating one higher than their individual ratings.
- Two characters with different Wealth ratings have a combined wealth rating equal to the higher of the two.
- If more than two characters are pooling money, combine them two at a time until everyone's wealth is pooled, going from lowest to highest.

Example: A team of five adventurers are pooling their money to buy a new automobile. Their Wealth ratings are 4, 5, 5, 5 and 6. The Wealth 4 and one of the Wealth 5 adventurers pool their wealth, giving a combined Wealth 5—the higher of the two. This combined Wealth 5 is combined with another Wealth 5, giving Wealth 6. This is combined with the last

Wealth 5, leaving it still at Wealth 6. Finally, the wealth 6 adventurer combines with the pooled Wealth 6, giving a total of Wealth 7.

When paying for an expense that would decrease Wealth rating, the total points that are reduced are spread among the characters pooling their money. These reduced points are applied one at a time, always coming from the highest individual Wealth rating first. If two or more individuals are tied, they can decide among themselves who takes the reduction.

Example: The same team of adventurers mentioned above makes a Cost 10 purchase. Since their combined rating is Wealth 7, they will lose 3 points of Wealth among them. Since this always comes from the highest Wealth first, the first point is taken from the Wealth 6 adventurer, reducing her down to Wealth 5. The final 2 points are then taken from two of the four scrappers now at Wealth 5, and they can decide among them which two take the hit.

INCOME

Everyone loves income. It can come from pay upon completion of a successful job, from selling equipment or from any other number of unexpected windfalls.

In many ways, applying income works like applying expenses, but in reverse. Every monetary gain has an Income rating. This works exactly like a Cost rating, and the same table can be used to estimate the approximate amount of wealth this represents (see the table under Cost Ratings above).

Income ratings below the character's current Wealth rating aren't big enough to have any significant effect. So, for example, an industrialist with Wealth 8 gaining Income 2 will barely notice the difference, and she remains at Wealth 8. If the Income rating is above the character's

Design Intent

The world is full of lots of little expenses: meals, tickets, tolls, fluctuating stock, fees, accommodations. The Wealth and Lifestyle systems (see below) are intended to speed up game play so players and GMs can get to the good stuff, focusing on the adventure elements of the game. It's also written so players don't feel compelled to penny pinch in ways that would be awkward in the context of the game world ("I can't eat dinner tonight. I've got to save up for my guns!").

The tradeoff for this simplicity, however, is abstraction. Because of the abstract nature of the wealth system, edge cases can sometimes give counter-intuitive results. When these sorts of situations arise, it is keeping within the intent of the system for GMs just to make a common sense ruling and move on, getting to the good stuff so to speak.

current Wealth rating, however, her Wealth rating may go up. Her rating will increase by one half the amount the income rating is over her current Wealth rating (minimum 1).

Example: A character with Wealth 5 gains Income 10. This is 5 points over her current Wealth. One half of this is 2 (since everything rounds down), which brings her up to Wealth 7.

SELLING EQUIPMENT

Used equipment rarely sells for as much as it was originally purchased for. After all, every merchant is out to make a profit. Because of this, equipment typically sells for an Income rating one or more less than its original Cost rating.

CONTINUING INCOME

Some characters are lucky enough to have a steady source of income, usually from regular employment of some kind. Mechanically, continuing income is just an Income rating applied at whatever interval at which the character is paid. For example, if a character's salary is Income 5 and she is paid monthly, then once a month Income 5 is applied to her Wealth rating using all the rules above.



LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle varies significantly across the world of Arth, from the crowded townhouses of Boston to the nomadic camps of the Sahara. Different cultures, different environments, different levels of wealth: all of these play a part in how a character lives. Despite these variations, however, all but the most austere characters tend to collect a variety of mundane items and accoutrements they use to live their lives—from clothes to furniture, from writing implements to even the humble toothbrush.

These items number far more than can easily be tracked on a character sheet, and really there's no point in tracking all of them. Abstracting away the need for this is the point of a character's Lifestyle rating.

LIFESTYLE RATING

Every character has a Lifestyle rating. This rating is on the same scale as her Wealth rating—it ranges roughly from 0 (homeless and possession-less) to 10 (incredibly wealthy with servants and estates), but a few super-rich individuals might have even higher ratings. Whereas a character's Wealth rating measures her monetary assets, a character's Lifestyle rating measures her standard of living and thus what mundane assets or equipment she might have easily available. These two ratings measure different things but are often intertwined.

As with a character's Wealth rating, the average middle class character lives at around Lifestyle 5. Brief descriptions of the different lifestyles along the spectrum are given below. These descriptions are meant to give a ballpark idea of how a character at that Lifestyle might live. Specifics will, of course, vary with culture,

and these examples assume someone living in an urban setting in a developed nation.

- **Lifestyle 0:** The character is homeless and possesses little beyond the clothes on her back and what she can fit in a backpack. She may have an alleyway or cave in which she regularly squats.
- **Lifestyle 1:** The character is homeless, but has access to a poorhouse or similar institution. There she has access to items for personal hygiene and maybe even the ability to get a spare change of clothes, if necessary. She also possesses a backpack with personal items.
- **Lifestyle 2:** The character is technically homeless, but has a stocked campsite or some area she can reliably use as a home. This area is likely shared with several other squatters and isn't really secure, but simple things can be left here. She may have access to a lockbox somewhere, or place where she can reliably hide valuable items. If traveling, she is likely a stowaway or illicit traveler who has managed to hop a freight train.
- **Lifestyle 3:** The character has a small room rented where she can sleep and store her belongings. This comes with access to shared hygiene facilities. In a more rural environment this may be a crude shack or dugout. If she is traveling, this is the lowest lifestyle that covers legitimate paid travel accommodations, but these will still be the lowest class available.
- **Lifestyle 4:** The character has a small apartment she shares with several other people. There is enough shared furniture to suit the space, and she has the usual living amenities. If she lives in a city with an elevated rail or subway system, she can afford to regularly use public transit. In

a more rural environment this may be a furnished shack with some insulation against the elements.

- **Lifestyle 5:** The character has a small house or cabin for her family. This is likely to consist of two to three small rooms. She has enough furniture to fill her rooms, as well as the usual living amenities. In an urban environment with public transit, she can afford to use it regularly. In a more rural environment she may own a draft horse or mule.
- **Lifestyle 6:** The character has a medium-sized house for her family, with all the usual amenities. She almost certainly owns a horse, can afford to occasionally see a doctor and has no issues with public transit, should it exist. When traveling she can afford good accommodations.
- **Lifestyle 7:** The character has a medium-sized house for her family in a convenient location. It is fully outfitted with good quality amenities. She certainly owns a horse or two, and likely a carriage as well.
- **Lifestyle 8:** The character has a large house for her family in a good location. She likely has either a couple horses and a carriage, or her own automobile. She can regularly see a doctor, and she may also be a member of exclusive clubs or other discerning societies. She may have a single domestic servant on her staff, to upkeep her home. When traveling she can afford the best accommodations.
- **Lifestyle 9:** The character has a large house for her family, with the very best location and accommodations. She may even have an estate out in the country. She gets the best medical care, and likely has several carriages or a couple different automobiles. She likely has a few domestic servants on her staff, such as a maid, cook and gardener.

- **Lifestyle 10:** The character has a large house in the best of locations and probably a large and expansive estate elsewhere. She likely has a score of personal attendants she keeps on her payroll for mundane tasks and is a member of multiple exclusive clubs or societies. She has multiple automobiles and carriages, or instead may have her own ship or airship. She has the highest quality accommodations and the very best medical care.

LIFESTYLE USES

When a character wishes to access a piece of mundane equipment or service she feels she would normally have on hand, she may call upon her Lifestyle. If the GM also agrees, the character simply makes use of the equipment or service with no special tracking required. For example, a player might believe her character has paper and a pencil on hand for taking notes, has a spare bowler hat she can lend to a compatriot or even has an automobile parked at her expansive estate.

Just because a character's Lifestyle rating indicates she owns something, however, doesn't mean she necessarily has it on her person. The GM is well within her rights to say, "Sure, you own a bicycle. It's at your house; you just have to go get it." Lifestyle isn't intended to be a measure of what a character has with her so much as a measure of what she owns, and thus what she doesn't have to use the Wealth system to purchase. If the character has left her estates behind to explore the world, the character will be limited to what she has in her luggage, regardless of her luxuries back home.

Ultimately, what can be called upon as part of a character's Lifestyle is up to the GM. As long as what is being called upon isn't game breaking, doesn't ruin the

scenario or isn't abusive in some way, GMs are urged to give the player the benefit of the doubt. After all, the point of the Lifestyle rating is to make tracking things easier.

LIFESTYLE UPKEEP

At the end of any month in which a character drew upon her Lifestyle's resources, a character must pay her Lifestyle's upkeep. As long as she keeps her Wealth rating equal to or higher than her Lifestyle rating, she needn't worry about the expenses of keeping up her Lifestyle. This is figured right into the Wealth system. Should her Wealth rating dip below her Lifestyle, however, it begins to affect her.

At the end of the month, when this happens, she must either pay for an expense equal to her Lifestyle rating—as she dips into her reserve funds to keep her Lifestyle—or lower her Lifestyle rating by 1—as some of her assets are stopped or sold to make ends meet.

Example: Sarah has Lifestyle 6, but at the end of the month she is only at Wealth 4. Accounting for her lifestyle upkeep, she must either reduce her living to Lifestyle 5, or pay for Cost 6 as upkeep, reducing her to Wealth 2.

If a character does not draw upon her Lifestyle's resources in any significant way in a given month, this payment does not need to be made. Instead, her Lifestyle simply fades into the background, and is assumed to look after itself. For example, if she has a grand manor house back in France, and she is overseas adventuring, far away from where she can draw on her Lifestyle's resources, she is assumed to still have the manor upon her return. While the manor and grand lifestyle aren't relevant, players need not worry about it too much.

RAISING OR LOWERING LIFESTYLE

A character can voluntarily raise or lower her Lifestyle rating, but doing this takes time because she has to either sell off possessions or take the time to acquire them. At any time in the game, a character with a bit of downtime can declare she's seeking to raise or lower her Lifestyle. In her downtime she then begins to go about taking the actions needed to make this happen.

Assuming nothing goes wrong, after she successfully pays for her Lifestyle upkeep at the end of the month, her Lifestyle rating increases or decreases a point as desired. Should she be forced to lower her Lifestyle this month, then despite her best efforts, her Lifestyle does not otherwise change. In this way, she will never drop two Lifestyle ratings at once (due to both lack of funds and voluntarily lowering), nor does she ever go down one due to lack of funds just to go back up from increasing her Lifestyle.

Example: Sarah is at Lifestyle 6 and wishes to increase her lifestyle further. Because she is at Wealth 7, she can afford to do this. In her downtime, she begins shopping for furniture and making acquisitions. At the end of the month, her lifestyle upkeep happens, and then she goes up to Lifestyle 7. Had her Wealth fallen below 7 by the end of the month, not only would she have to either pay upkeep or lower her Lifestyle, but her intended increase in Lifestyle wouldn't happen either.

INVENTIONS

Arth is in an era of discovery and advancement. New inventions are brought into the world every day, and science pushes the boundaries of human understanding ever further. Some player characters may be the technical sort: mad scientists or even aspiring industrialists. They may want to try their own hand at assembling new devices or systems. For this there is the invention system.

OVERVIEW

At its most basic level, inventing is a special extended action (see page 90). As with other extended actions, it has a TN, an interval and a tally. Unlike other extended actions, however, the relevant skill may change between different stages in the invention process. Each flip will also have an associated Cost rating and the possibility to introduce flaws into the final design.

No matter the nature of the invention, the process will always have at least two intervals—the concept and then the prototype. Depending on the aims of the creator, it may then have up to two more intervals—both doing quality control (QC)—but what sort of mad scientist does that?

DEFINING PARAMETERS

The first thing the GM needs to do is determine the parameters of the extended action, including TN, interval, tally, cost and the skills involved. To begin, the player should explain to the GM what she is trying to achieve in a few sentences. The GM should then go through the following steps.

TARGET NUMBER

Some concepts are going to be more complex than others. This complexity will set the TN of the extended action. Some example concepts and their complexities are given in the table below. The GM should use these as benchmarks when determining the complexity of the character's concept.

TN	Concepts
TN 8	Winch and pulley system; Customized gun handle
TN 10	Hidden suitcase camera; Designer firearm; Clockwork timing mechanism; Airship navigation charts
TN 12	Novel chemical compound; Pneumatic mining system; Steam-powered vehicle
TN 14	Automaton; Novel brain surgery; Radioactive instrument; Mechanical implant

Example: Wilma is trying to create a retractable grappling gun she will use to infiltrate a hostile compound. The GM decides that this involves simple mechanics and should be fairly straightforward, but reeling in her weight requires materials with a high tensile strength. It merits a TN 10 extended action.

COST RATING

Beginning with the prototype stage, every flip in the invention process will have an associated Cost rating. This is normally equal to half the TN. For example, a TN 12 invention will have an associated Cost 6 for the prototype flip and possibly the QC steps, if they're involved. This expense must be

paid before the flip can be performed. If the character cannot pay, then she must abandon that step of the project due to lack of funds.

This assumes, however, the character has access to an open market and is paying out of pocket. Sometimes a character will already have part of the design, have some of the components or will be constrained to using only the components she has at hand.

■ **Preexisting Design or Components:** Having part of the design or components already will reduce the associated cost for the prototype steps. How much it reduces the cost is up to the GM and based on how much extra work remains.

■ **Constrained Components:** Being constrained in the components that can be used will decrease the Cost rating at the expense of increasing the TN. For every point the Cost is lowered, the TN increases a point. This means if the character literally can't purchase anything for the project, the entirety of the cost will be added to the TN. For example, a "TN 8, Cost 4" design would become "TN 12, Cost 0."

Example: Since the project is TN 10, normally this would call for Cost 5 payments. However, since Wilma already owns rope and a basic grapple, she can leverage it in her design. The GM decides that this will halve her costs, reducing them to Cost 4. These costs will go towards purchasing the spring mechanism used to shoot the grapple.

INTERVAL

The interval of the extended action will need to be something of a ballpark estimate. The GM should come up with an estimate for roughly how long she thinks designing and building a

prototype of an invention should take and then make the interval half that—after all, every invention will take at least two intervals.

A variety of example inventions and their associated intervals are listed below. The GM can use these as a benchmark when coming up with her own estimates.

Interval	Concepts
1 hour	Winch and pulley system; Customized gun handle
1 day	Hidden suitcase camera; Designer firearm; Novel brain surgery; Radioactive instrument
1 week	Clockwork timing mechanism; Airship navigation charts; Novel chemical compound; Mechanical implant
1 month	Pneumatic mining system; Steam-powered vehicle; Automaton

■ **Rush Jobs:** There are times when a player will want to do a rush job, reducing the time it takes to produce an invention. This will decrease the interval but at the cost of increasing the TN. First determine how much the player wants to cut the interval by and then add this to the TN. For example, if a player wants to cut the interval in half, the TN would be at +2. On the other hand, if she wants to invent in a quarter of the time, she would add +4 to the TN. Reducing the time to a tenth would increase the TN by 10!

Example: The GM thinks about it and decides that putting together this grappling gun would take a couple days, so she decides that the interval is 1 day. Wilma wants the gun completed faster, however. She decides that she

wants to cut this time in half. This will add +2 to action's TN, increasing it to TN 12, but the interval would only be half a day.

TALLY

This step is relatively easy. Unless an invention has some particular twist making it more or less flaw-prone, inventions are always Tally 10.

Example: The GM decides that Wilma's grappling gun is pretty typical, so the usual Tally 10 will suffice.

SKILLS

The final parameter for the GM to define is to pick the skills involved with the extended action. Unlike most extended actions, an engineering project will usually involve two skills: one for the concept and one for the prototype.

For a concept flip, the skill involved should be the one associated with the application of the invention. Inventing new guns will use the Guns skill, improving a vehicle will involve the Vehicles skill, etc. On the other hand, for the prototype flip an applied skill is called for. This will often be Mechanics, but could also conceivably be Crafts, Medicine or any other number of skills.

For some example engineering projects and skill pairings, refer to the table below:

Project	Concept	Prototype
Mechanical implant	Medicine	Mechanics
Designer handheld firearm	Guns	Mechanics
Steam-powered vehicle	Vehicles	Mechanics
Novel brain surgery	Science	Medicine

Example: The GM thinks about it and decides since Wilma wants the grappling gun for quiet infiltration; it will have a variety of concerns she needs to work into her design relating to the Thievery skill. Actually constructing the prototype, however, is going to be pure mechanical engineering, which requires the Mechanics skill.

CONCEPT

The first step a character performs when inventing is to design the initial concept. This is not just gathering the high-level ideas, but vetting the conceptual technical details as well.

The concept step forms the first flip of the invention's extended action, and is usually based off Intelligence and the relevant conceptual skill—for example, Int/science. This also is usually the only flip in the invention process without an associated Cost rating, although the character still needs appropriate equipment.

On a success, the character moves to the prototype step. On a failure, however, she isn't able to come up with a working design. She may usually try again, but an interval passes and the character may run out of time.

If by some incredible chance enough Mag is achieved by this flip to meet the Tally, the extended action is still not a success—a prototype is not built from thought alone! If this happens, the character must still make the prototype flip in the next step, but she only needs a basic success to pull it off.

Example: Wilma is trying to do the initial design for her grappling gun. This is an Int/thievery-12 action. She makes the flip and gets a 14, which means she succeeds with Mag 2. This counts towards the Tally 10.

PROTOTYPE

Now that the design is complete, it's time to build the initial prototype. Before this can happen, the character must first pay the Cost rating. If she is unable to do this, the inventing process stalls due to lack of funds. Provided she pays, she can then make the prototype flip.

This flip is typically based off the applied skill and an appropriate stat for what it means to build the prototype—physically constructing a machine may be Dexterity, watching closely for medical symptoms may be Perception, etc.

On a success, the Mag applies towards the Tally. If the Tally has been fully met, the prototype now works perfectly. The invention is done!

If this flip was a success, but the Tally hasn't been fully met, the GM should skip to the flaws section below. The device will likely work, but there may be serious issues or side effects.

If this flip wasn't a success, then the prototype was a failure. Not only was the time for the interval wasted, but the money for the cost was as well. The character may be able to retry building the prototype, but this will mean spending more time and paying the cost for the prototype step again.

Example: Wilma begins building her gun.

This is a Dex/mechanics-12 action, and she succeeds with Mag 4. This adds to the Mag 2 from the concept step, for a total of Mag 6. Her gun works, but there will be flaws.

FLAWS

Anytime the Tally hasn't been fully met at the end of the prototype step there will be flaws in the design. Flaws are a sort of consequence on the project. Every flaw has a severity and an effect. The GM should note how many points the Mag is below the Tally and secretly decide the nature of the flaws involved. There will be a number of severities of flaws equal to the difference between the Mag and Tally. For example, if the Tally is 10 and the Mag 6, there would be four severities of flaws—possibly two moderate flaws, or a light flaw and a severe flaw; or a single critical flaw, etc.

Some example flaws and their severities are listed below. The GM can use these as a benchmark when coming up with her own flaws.

Example: Wilma's program had Mag 6 and Tally 10. This means somewhere in her program are four severities worth of flaws. The GM thinks about this and secretly notes two moderate flaws: The rope attached to the grappling hook will tangle after use if a club is played, and the sound

Project	Flaw	Severity
Novel chemical compound	Produces unwanted waste gas	Light
Airship navigation charts	Charts are off by a couple degrees	Light
Novel brain surgery	Minor but noticeable personality changes	Moderate
Pneumatic mining system	Takes twice as much water as it should	Moderate
Designer firearm	Half usual damage	Severe
Winch and pulley system	Only holds one quarter intended weight	Severe
Steam-powered vehicle	Explodes at end of first day of use	Critical
Automaton	Will try to slay its creator	Critical

of the grappling gun discharging is louder than Wilma ideally wanted, allowing nearby sentries a chance to notice its use.

QUALITY CONTROL (QC)

At this point, the prototype is complete but it may have flaws. Characters with more time and money to spend on the project may want to do quality control (QC). This is an optional step, but it can get rid of the flaws.

Characters who opt to do QC must spend the time for another interval and pay the Cost rating again. The QC step can be performed up to two times—once reviewing the design and once reviewing the prototype. The character picks which she wants to perform first.

Reviewing the design and prototype uses the same skills they used before, respectively, although the QC step is usually based off Determination. QC can be a tedious process. The player makes the QC flip and this will generate more Mag towards the Tally. The GM then removes an equal number of severities in flaws or reduces the severity of the flaw in question.

Example: Wilma decides to do one round of QC, and she decides to review the design. This uses her Determination and the Thievery skill, since that was the skill from the concept stage. She makes the Det/thievery-12 flip and succeeds with Mag 3. The GM will need to remove three severities of flaws. He decides to remove the problem with the loud discharge, and reduces the rope tangling flaw to light severity. It now only gets tangled when a joker is played.



CHASES

Chases are a staple of the action and adventure genre, whether a desperate footrace through a crowded marketplace or a high-speed race by jetpack through the clouds. The GM should call for a chase when one party's primary goal is to escape from the other, rather than to engage in a physical confrontation.

RUNNING A CHASE

Mechanically, chases are a variation of the extended action rules (see page 90). The first thing a GM should evaluate is whether this is a long chase or a short chase. A short chase might involve a few quick sprints before one party either catches the other or escapes. A long chase, on the other hand, will involve a much more in-depth game of cat and mouse.

EXTENDED ACTION

A short chase will consist of up to three intervals in the extended action, whereas a long chase will consist of up to five. The length of time represented by these intervals will vary with the nature of the chase. The intervals for a foot chase through a crowded marketplace may only be 30 seconds each, whereas the intervals in an extended ship chase across the ocean may each represent days. The GM should pick an interval time that makes sense.

Each interval will contain an opposed flip between the pursuer and the quarry. The stat and skill involved will also vary depending on the nature of the chase. For an extended chase by ship these might be Per/vehicles flips, whereas a short chase by foot may call for Spd/athletics flips. The GM picks the stat and skill involved.

Each interval, the winner of the opposed flip generates some magnitudes of success towards the extended action's Tally. Unlike most extended actions, however, there is not a static Tally. Instead these totals will be compared at the end of the chase.

GETTING A LEG UP

For every interval that doesn't end the chase, the side that played the highest suit is said to "have a leg up" on the other party. Suits are evaluated in the standard order: spades (♠) is highest, followed by hearts (♥), diamonds (♦) and then clubs (♣). If both parties have the same suit, then they both have a leg up on the other one. Having a leg up allows the character to take an action that may change the nature of the chase.

If the pursuer "has a leg up" that interval, before the next interval she may make an attack on the quarry. Alternatively, she may instead try to perform some sort of trickery that might slow the quarry down, giving her a penalty on her next flip.

If the quarry "has a leg up" that interval, she may want to attack the pursuer, perform some sort of action that would slow down the pursuer, thereby penalizing her next flip, or she may attempt to give the pursuer the slip.

Attacks, from either the pursuer or quarry, are resolved as normal. Getting a leg up allows for a single attack in the middle of the chase, with no options that would increase the required AP (the rest of the character's effort is instead going to the chase itself). The quarry, likewise, has a single AP with which to make reactions (the rest going to the chase itself).

Other, more tricky actions are typically an opposed flip of some kind. The player should describe to the GM what she is attempting, and the GM should decide the stat or skill involved.

On a success, the character either gains a +2 bonus to her flip in the chase next interval or penalizes her opponent -2. On a success with 5+ Mag, this modifier increase to +4 or -4.

Giving the pursuer the slip is described below.

GIVING THE SLIP

If the quarry has a leg up during one of the intervals of the chase, she may attempt to give her pursuer the slip, getting away and thereby ending the chase early. This will be an opposed flip, with the quarry gaining a modifier based on how her total in the chase compares to the pursuer. If the quarry has a higher total she will gain the difference as a bonus; if she has a lower total, she will gain the difference as a penalty. For example, if the quarry had accumulated Mag 8 total in the chase so far, and the pursuer has accumulated Mag 5, then the quarry would enjoy a +3 bonus (because $8 - 5 = 3$).

The quarry should describe how she is trying to get away—taking a sudden turn down an alleyway, hiding in the bushes, etc. The GM should then decide the stat or skills

involved. Often this will involve Dex/stealth for the quarry and Per/awareness for the pursuer, but other stats or skills might make sense in different circumstances.

Should the quarry win this flip, she has gotten away and the chase ends. Otherwise, should the pursuer win the flip, the chase continues.

RESOLVING A CHASE

If all of the intervals of a chase have gone by—three for a short chase or five for a long chase—and the quarry has not yet gotten away, the chase will resolve one way or the other.

If at this point the pursuer has the higher total in the extended action, she catches the quarry. The game can then continue with the quarry either being captured or forced into a physical confrontation.

If instead the quarry has the higher total, she may make one final attempt to give the pursuer the slip. If this succeeds, she has escaped and the game can continue with her getaway. Otherwise, if this final attempt to give the slip fails, she has been caught.



OPTIONAL RULE: OBSTACLES

Chases rarely occur on a featureless, flat plane. Adventure stories is full of chase scenes through crowded markets, parades, dark sewers or any other number of obstacle-rich environments. GMs wanting the environment to play a greater role in a chase scene may choose to utilize the following rule.

Every interval, before the opposed flip is made, the GM should turn over the top card of her deck and look up the result on the table below.



Card	Result
Ace – 3	No Obstacle: The environment doesn't present any significant obstacle this interval. Continue the chase as normal.
4 – 5	In the Way: Some obstacle looms in the way of the chase—perhaps a fruit cart or a pane of glass. Both parties must make a TN 10 flip using a relevant stat and skill. The party with the lowest total runs into the obstacle, giving her a -2 penalty to the chase this interval.
6 – 7	Bad Terrain: The chase crosses some particularly hazardous terrain this interval. Maybe the ground is slippery, the alleyway is narrow or air current is treacherous. Both parties will need to make a TN 10 flip using a relevant stat and skill. On a failure, the character subtracts the Mag from her total for the chase.
8 – 9	Hiding Spot: If the quarry gets a leg up this interval, she notices a particularly apt hiding spot or other useful terrain feature. Any attempt to give the slip this interval enjoys a +2 bonus.
10 – Jack	Open Ground: The terrain this interval is particularly open, making it more difficult for the quarry to get away. Any attempts to give the pursuer the slip this interval are made at a -2 penalty.
Queen – King	Useful Tool: Some useful implement presents itself during the chase. Whatever party gets a leg up this interval may choose to use this tool to gain a +2 bonus to do something tricky.
Joker	Opening: The party with the highest accumulated total in the chase may gain a free immediate attack on the other party. If both parties are tied for the highest accumulated total, they may both opt to gain a free simultaneous attack.

FLASHBACKS

Flashbacks are a common narrative mechanism used to reveal a character's history or to give some insight into her personality. The system below allows a GM to call for a flashback, thereby granting a player the spotlight for a few minutes and allowing her to shed some light on her character's history.

RUNNING A FLASHBACK

The GM should call for a flashback during a long scene transition or period of downtime, such as camping for the night, time off in the city or a long voyage. Simply pick a player and ask her to tell a story from her character's past. The story should be substantial enough to last a couple minutes, but shouldn't be much longer than that. A player who has successfully narrated a flashback is awarded a Moxie when the story is over.

If the player is drawing a blank, you or the other players can offer her some prompts. A few example prompts are given below:

- What is the character's greatest accomplishment from before the campaign?
- How did the character come by one of her Weakness traits?
- If the storyteller has a secret, tell a story that drops some hints as to its nature.
- Tell a story about something the character dearly wants.
- Who was the last romantic interest the character had? How did they meet?
- What is the character's biggest regret? Where did she go wrong?
- Why did the character take up the adventuring life in the first place?

EXAMPLE

Doctor William Blake has just boarded a ship headed from Boston to Brazil. Rather than simply jump right to the ship's arrival at Rio de Janeiro, the GM calls for a flashback and chooses Blake's player.

The player thinks for a moment, then decides to tell a story about when Doctor Blake first met his nemesis, the nefarious Lord Wilburbottom. Telling the story takes a few minutes, with the other players occasionally asking a question or making a comment. Finally, the story ends with Doctor Blake swearing undying revenge on Lord Wilburbottom, for the death of his children and his beloved.

The story now concluded, the GM awards Doctor William Blake a Moxie, and the game continues with the ship's arrival in Rio.

Flashbacks as a Pacing Mechanism

Not only are flashbacks a useful tool for exploring a character's personality and history, they are useful as a pacing mechanism. Is the party about to embark on a long voyage? Rather than skipping right to the end of the voyage, break up the scene transition by calling for a flashback. This adds more weight to the transition and gives a player a moment to shine. Do you, as the GM, need a minute or two to prepare the next scene? Call for a flashback and let a player take center stage for a couple minutes as you finish your preparations.

SOCIAL CHALLENGES

So the heroes need to convince a European lord to send aid to a failing expedition, must wow the audience with a spectacular play, or must win a formal debate. These situations each call for a social challenge.

Use a social challenge for any tense social obstacle that must be overcome and which merits a greater amount of focus than a simple flip. This can include interrogating a witness, winning a criminal trial, making a good impression at a formal ball or any number of other situations.

FRAMING A SOCIAL CHALLENGE

A social challenge is essentially a variation of the extended action rules (see page 90). For the challenge, the GM will choose a skill, set a target number and then break the action up into a number of intervals—when in doubt, stick to three intervals. Rather than representing a specific amount of time, these intervals should represent some sensible breakdown of the action. Most social challenges will use Charisma, although some may conceivably use other stats in their flips.

- *Example:* Sean is arguing his case before a panel of three judges. The GM decides that this will be a Chr/persuade-12 action, as the argument is rather difficult. The intervals break down into opening arguments, calling witnesses and closing arguments.
- *Example:* Mallory is trying to impress potential patrons at a fancy ball. The GM decides that this will be a Chr/socialize-10 action. The intervals break down into her grand entrance, formal dances and then late-night mingling.

When making the flip each interval, the GM should ask the player to act out her social actions, or to otherwise explain the approach she is taking. The GM is free to assign bonuses or penalties to the player's flip, indicating a particularly effective approach, a particularly disastrous approach or otherwise rewarding good roleplaying.

MIXING THINGS UP

Some social challenges may have multiple stat or skill combinations that might be useful. In the trial example above, for instance, Sean may choose to rely on his way with words, using Chr/persuade or he might fall back on his strong knowledge of legalities and legal precedents, instead using Int/lib-arts.

Other challenges might call for different stats or different skills each interval. For example, Mallory's first impression at the ball might be Chr/socialize, but choosing the right dance partners might be Int/empathy.

Finally, some challenges may be opposed. Rather than setting a static target number, these challenges are going to resolve each flip as opposed actions. These might include formal debates, or a social event where two parties are actively trying to embarrass the other.

RESOLVING A SOCIAL CHALLENGE

Over the course of the social challenge's intervals, the player should keep track of the running total of her magnitude of success. Magnitudes of failure will subtract from this total. Instead of comparing to a Tally at the end of the social challenge, the GM instead uses this total to look up the result on the table on the next page.

Total	Result
Less than 0	Utter Failure: Not only does the character not get from the social challenge what she is hoping to achieve, there is some other repercussion that causes her problems as well.
0 – 4	Failure: The character fails to gain from the social encounter what she hoped to achieve.
5 – 9	Partial Failure: The social encounter fails to yield what the character hoped, but nevertheless something is gained from the experience.
10 – 14	Partial Success: The character mostly achieves what she was hoping from the social encounter, but there will be some sort of concession or negative side effect.
15 – 19	Success: The character achieves exactly what she was hoping from the social encounter.
20+	Overwhelming Success: Not only does the character gain what she wanted from the social encounter, she also gains some sort of bonus or extra effect that will help her out.



MALADIES

Maladies include poisons, venoms, diseases and other extended malign effects that can affront a character as she explores the world. Mechanically in *Saga Machine*, resisting a malady—whether poisons, disease or other—is an extended action with two mechanical additions. These additions are an Effect and a Vector.

The vector is the way in which the character may be subjected to the malady. For a poison, this could be anything from the character inhaling it to having it injected into her body. For a disease, this could be anything from the character being in close proximity to an infected individual to the sharing of bodily fluids.

Once the character has been subjected to the vector, she is forced to undergo the extended action. Like all extended actions, the malady has an interval, a TN and a Tally. After exposure, once a period of time equal to the interval has passed, the character must make an Endurance flip. This is repeated every subsequent interval. If the character fails one of these flips, she suffers the Effect. Some maladies may have differing effects for successive failures. If the character succeeds on one of these flips, her Mag counts towards the Tally.

If the character succeeds on the extended action, she has recovered from the malady and no longer has to make Endurance actions. If, however, she has not yet succeeded in overcoming the malady by the end of the third flip, she has failed to overcome it, and suffers any indicated effects. Regardless of success or failure, the extended action is over at the end of the third flip.

Some example maladies are below, and the GM is also free to create her own:

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is an extremely common poison taken recreationally throughout the world. It use dates back to the very foundations of civilization.

- **Vector:** Ingested
- **Action:** End-10 (10 minutes, Tally 5)
- **First Effect:** Increase Fatigue consequence a severity. It also lowers inhibitions. This gives +1 to Socialize actions and to resisting fear.
- **Second Effect:** Increase Fatigue another severity. It also inhibits coordination and communication, giving a -2 penalty to Dex, Spd and Persuade actions.
- **Third Effect:** Increase Fatigue another severity. This is the beginnings of alcohol poisoning. It causes vomiting or unconscious.
- **Notes:** This represents a mild-to-moderate alcoholic beverage—perhaps a potent beer or a wine. For harder alcohol, increase the TN of the first flip. For additional beverages, increase the Tally.

Drinking Contests

To run a drinking contest, don't worry about the Tally. Just have each side make the Endurance action each interval, keeping track of the total Mag. This interval might represent many drinks over the course of the 10 minutes. At the end of the third flip, the side with the highest accumulated Mag wins the contest, and the other vomits or passes out.

ARSENIC

Arsenic is a compound that is commonly used in industrial processes. It also is a poison that has been known for millennia. Because it is common, has legitimate uses and is quite lethal, it also sees use as an inflicted poison.

- **Vector:** Ingested
- **Action:** End-12 (1 hour, Tally 10)
- **First Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage. It also includes a headache and confusion, giving a -2 penalty to Int and Per actions.
- **Second Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage. Convulsion and vomiting begin. This gives a -2 penalty to Dex and Spd actions as well.
- **Third Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage. If the character does not die from inflicted damage, she falls unconscious for an hour as the poison passes from her system.

COBRA VENOM

Some cobras are known to be highly venomous, and the nefarious use of their venom as an underhanded means of death is a favorite of villains across the world.

- **Vector:** Parenteral
- **Action:** End-14 (10 minutes, Tally 10)
- **First Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage. Swelling and discoloration of skin. -1 penalty to use of the limb or area of body where affected.
- **Second Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage. Vomiting and diarrhea. -2 penalty to Dex and Spd.
- **Third Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage. If the character does not die from inflicted damage, she falls unconscious for an hour as the poison passes from her system.

COCAINE

Cocaine is a powdered drug that originated in South America. In the last half century its use in medicine has spread, and it sees use throughout the Western world.

- **Vector:** Inhaled
- **Action:** End-14 (10 minutes, Tally 10)
- **First Effect:** +1 bonus to all Strength-, Speed- and Endurance-based flips. -1 bonus to all Charisma- and Determination-based flips. The character may feel edgy and paranoid.
- **Second Effect:** The bonus and penalty to all flips increases to +2 or -2, respectively. The edginess of the character becomes significantly more prominent.
- **Third Effect:** The earlier bonuses and penalties continue, but the character also begins to suffer from hyperthermia, increasing her Fatigue consequence a severity.

CYANIDE

Cyanide is a family of potent poisons produced by some bacteria, fungi and algae. Cyanides are used in various industrial processes throughout the world, and if inhaled, it can cause death within seconds.

- **Vector:** Inhaled or Parenteral
- **Action:** End-16 (1 round, Tally 5)
- **First Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage and the victim falls unconscious.
- **Second Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage, then seizures and stopped breathing. This increases the Fatigue consequence a severity.
- **Third Effect:** ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2 damage and the victim suffers a heart attack, increasing her Fatigue another consequence every round. Unless she received immediate medical attention, she will die when this would increase the severity past critical.

HEMLOCK

Hemlock is a poison derived from a plant that grows a meter or two tall. It was used as a method of execution in ancient times.

- **Vector:** Ingested
- **Action:** End-16 (1 minute, Tally 5)
- **First Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage and the muscles tense up, giving a -2 penalty to all Dex- and Spd-based actions.
- **Second Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage and the victim experiences paralysis. Breathing slows, but the mind remains unimpaired.
- **Third Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage and the victim is rendered unconscious.

OPIOID

Some of the oldest known drugs, opioids include poppy-derived opiates. Opioids cause numbness and lethargy, and see common use throughout the world, both recreationally and medically.

- **Vector:** Ingested or Parenteral
- **Action:** End-14 (1 minute, Tally 10)
- **First Effect:** Ignore up to -1 in penalties from the Desire, Fear and Fixated consequences. The same amount is added as a bonus to Det actions to avoid actions forced by those consequences. There is a -1 penalty to all Dex-, Spd- and Per-based actions.
- **Second Effect:** Increase the modifier to -2.
- **Third Effect:** Increase the modifier to -4.



POISON GAS

Poisonous gas was developed in the late nineteenth century and a weapon of war. The 1899 Hague Convention has since banned its use as being a war crime.

- **Vector:** Inhaled
- **Action:** End-12 (1 round, Tally 5)
- **First Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage and the victim coughs uncontrollably. -2 penalty to Dex- and Per-based actions.
- **Second Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage and the victim's bodily control gets worse. Penalty to Dex- and Per-based actions increases to -4.
- **Third Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage and the victim experiences total blindness and vomiting.
- **Notes:** The above action largely represents recovery after leaving the poison gas cloud. A character must still make flips while in the cloud, but does not count any Mag towards the tally until she has left the gassed area.

SMOKE

Smoke is a common hazard wherever fires are found.

- **Vector:** Inhaled
- **Action:** End-10 (1 minute, Tally 3)
- **First Effect:** The victim coughs and increase her Fatigue consequence a severity.
- **Second Effect:** The coughing gets worse and her lungs burn. Increase her Fatigue consequence another severity.
- **Third Effect:** The victim collapses unconscious. Also increase her Fatigue a severity.
- **Notes:** A character doesn't simply resist smoke until she has left the actively smoky area. A character must still make flips while in the smoke, but does not count any Mag towards the tally until the character has left the area.

WOLF'S BANE

Wolf's Bane, also known as aconitum, is a common poison derived from a flowering plant that grows in scattered places throughout the world. Historically, it's been used as both a military poison and a choice poison of assassins.

- **Vector:** Ingested or Parenteral
- **Action:** End-14 (3 rounds, Tally 5)
- **First Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage. It also causes vomiting and nausea, increasing the Fatigue consequence a severity.
- **Second Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage. This is followed by a feeling of burning and numbness, increasing the Fatigue consequence another severity.
- **Third Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage. The Fatigue consequence is increased another severity and if the character is currently at negative HP she collapses unconscious for an hour as the poison passes through her system.

YELLOW FEVER

Yellow fever is a hemorrhagic illness spread by mosquitos. It is usually found in tropical regions.

- **Vector:** Contact or Inhaled
- **Action:** End-12 (1 day, Tally 10)
- **First Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage. Increase the Fatigue consequence a severity due to fever and diarrhea.
- **Second Effect:** ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1 damage. Increase the Fatigue consequence due to low blood pressure and excessive bleeding.
- **Third Effect:** ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2 damage. The whites of the eyes and much of the skin takes on a yellowish hue.

HAZARDS

Combat is not the only physical hazard faced by bold explorers and daring adventurers. Such heroes often face all manner of challenges, from great bouts of flame to perilous journeys through hostile temperatures and terrain.

AVALANCHES

Avalanches are large masses of snow or rock that loosen and tumble down the sides of mountains, threatening to bury all in their path. Noticing an avalanche in time to get out of the way is a Per/awareness or naturalist-10 action. A success on this action allows a Spd/athletics-10 action to get out of the way of the debris, although the TN of the action can vary with terrain.

If the action to notice the avalanche is failed, however, the character is caught in the rubble and can only watch as stones or snow pile around her. Avoiding damage at this point is a Dex/athletics-14 action, with the resulting damage on a failure being equal to Mag, with DR worth half its usual value. Either way, the character is buried and digging her way back out is an extended Str-10 (1 hour, Tally 10) action.

CATCHING FIRE

Characters exposed to open flame run the risk of catching fire themselves. Avoiding being lit aflame is a Dex-10 action, although the intensity of the flame may give a bonus or penalty.

A character who catches on fire takes the Bleeding consequence from the flames. This usually begins at light severity, but particularly intense or engulfing flames may give the consequence a higher initial severity. Ending this consequence may be achieved by taking a move action to stop, drop and roll.

CAVE-INS & COLLAPSES

The quintessential underground hazard, cave-ins, can mean either a slow, suffocating death or a quick, crushing death to heroes. When a cave-in occurs, a character must first determine if she is in the way of the falling debris. If a character is in the way, a Spd/athletics-10 action is necessary to get out of the way. The TN of this action should be modified for a number of factors including how far the character needs to travel to get out of the way of the debris and how much time the character has.

Characters failing this action are caught in the debris and take Mag damage. Damage may be adjusted upward for a particularly dangerous cave-in. Characters buried in debris or otherwise stuck in a sealed area after the debris has fallen may begin to suffocate. The GM should decide how much air is available before the character begins to suffocate. Fully buried characters begin to suffocate immediately. After this point, a character may also attempt to dig her way out. Doing so is an extended Str-10 (1 minute, Tally 10) action.

DROWNING & SUFFOCATION

Any number of things may cause a character to suffocate—from drowning to being strangled. Whatever the cause, a simple, unified system is used.

The first thing the GM should determine is if the character managed to take a full breath before being suffocated—essentially holding one's breath. If so, she has a window of time before the adverse effects of suffocation begin to set in, otherwise she begins to experience them immediately. Should she have managed to hold her breath, a number of rounds equal to her Endurance will pass before she begins to suffocate.

Once suffocating, a character must make an End-14 flip each round or increase her Fatigue consequence a severity. Once this has

passed critical severity, she instead takes Mag damage. Damage from suffocation will not heal until a character is once again breathing.

FALLS & COLLISIONS

Falls from cliffs, tall trees or other high locations are a classic hazard. With vehicles, flight or other modes of movement, uncontrolled collisions are also possible.

To determine the damage a character takes from a fall, find half the number of meters she fell—to a maximum of 30 (terminal velocity). On a successful Dex/athletics-10 action, however, halve the damage dealt. DR does not apply to falls. The GM should feel free to modify this base damage up or down for landing on particularly hard or soft surfaces.

Collisions work a lot like falls, only the velocities of the two colliding objects are added. To determine the damage from a collision, first determine the speed at which the two colliding objects are traveling towards each other in meters per round (10 seconds). So, for example, a horse travels at around 15 meters/round at full speed. If two horses were charging directly at each other, the effective rate would be 30 meters/round. Take this value and apply it as damage with DR not applying. A successful Dex/athletics-10 action will halve this damage. Collisions do not top out at 30 damage, as terminal velocity does not apply.

FOREST FIRES

Forests sometimes catch on fire through lightning or other sources. Such fires, given the right conditions, can move amazingly fast. Once within a forest fire, there are three hazards for characters to worry about: the heat, the smoke and catching on fire.

Being in a forest fire qualifies as a temperature extreme. Make an End-14 action every pass or suffer the Fatigue as per the temperate extreme

rules. The smoke from the fire gives moderate Concealment. Additionally, breathing in the smoke automatically deals one damage from the heat each round, and the character is considered to be suffocating. Finally, the character must make a Dex/athletics-10 action every round or catch fire. Once on fire, use the catching fire rules.

MAGMA

Volcanoes often ooze magma out of the rock. This super-heated molten stone can present quite a danger for travelers. For one, it is usually accompanied by noxious fumes. For these, use the rules for suffocation found earlier in this chapter. Magma is also usually accompanied by extreme heat. Use the extreme temperature rules to handle this, with an interval of one round. Finally, contact with the magma will force an End-16 action each round, with the character in question suffering Mag damage on a failure.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Without sleep, a person experiences fatigue, loss of cognitive function and finally hallucinations. By default, a character needs eight hours of sleep a day to function at her best. She may be able to get by with less, but her abilities will suffer.

Mechanically, once a character has gone for 16 hours without sleep, she must make an End-14 flip every 8 hours. On a failure, her Fatigue consequence increases a severity due to sleep deprivation. This fatigue will not recover until she has gotten a full night's sleep. If she still doesn't get sleep after her Fatigue consequence passes critical severity, she instead takes Mag damage every time she fails the End flip. During this time, she may experience hallucinations.

STARVATION & DEHYDRATION

The body can go for a lot longer without food than without water, but either end can

be terrible. Mechanically, both starvation and dehydration work the same way.

For every day a character goes without food or water, she must make an End-12 flip for starvation or End-16 flip for dehydration. On a failure, her Fatigue consequence increases a severity. Once this would push her past critical severity, she instead takes Mag damage every time she fails a flip. Fatigue and wounds accumulated in this way may not be recovered until the character has eaten food or drank water.

TEMPERATURE EXTREMES

Experiencing temperature extremes—both hot and cold—are a classic environmental hazard, from marching through a steamy jungle, to striking out towards a frozen mountain peak.

When characters experience extremes in temperature, the GM should decide upon an interval of time for which the characters will have to make an End-14 action. Failing this action causes the character's Fatigue consequence to increase a severity. Should this increase the consequence past critical severity, she takes Mag damage instead. This damage cannot be removed until the character finally cools down or heats up, as appropriate.

As temperatures get progressively hotter or colder, the interval should decrease. Suggested intervals range from one hour to one minute.

UNDERWATER ACTIVITY

Water hinders movement, forcing a character to swim around. Underwater movement requires a Str/athletics-10 flip to move at half the character's usual rate. This TN may increase for moving or particularly treacherous waters.

Additionally, many firearms do not function underwater. For every meter of water a ranged attack passes through, the target has an effective 5 DR.



HEROES

The heart of any role-playing game is the characters. In *Dime Adventures* heroes are daring and bold. They are larger than life—they hit hard, they feel deeply and they seize life by the unmentionables, striking out to find adventure and excitement. In this chapter, character creation is presented along with a system of character advancement.

CHARACTER CREATION

Before play can begin, each player must make a player character (PC). This section describes the steps necessary to create such a character.

OVERVIEW

Character creation in *Dime Adventures* takes place over the course of a few basic steps. These steps establish a character's concept, capabilities, stats and place in the world. Character creation is designed to be as quick or as thorough as the player desires. The different steps of character creation are described briefly below:

- **Concept:** To begin with, the player should take a bit of time to think about what sort of character she wants to play, where she wants to go with the concept and how that concept fits into the campaign pitched by the GM.
- **Pick Background:** With her concept in mind, the player either picks her background archetype from a fixed list—or with the GM's permission—creates her own. This background will provide her with equipment, experiences and possibly traits.
- **Assign Stats:** Next, the player assigns the character's stats from a given array and applies any bonuses from her background.
- **Assign Skills:** After stats have been assigned, it is time to assign the character's skills and similarly apply bonuses from her background.
- **Wealth & Equipment:** In the penultimate step of character creation, the player records her starting Wealth and may make a few purchases to supplement the equipment supplied by her background.
- **Finishing Touches:** In the final step, the player calculates a few scores for the character based off her stats. She also picks out a few traits such as creed, idiosyncrasy, languages and weaknesses.

Example: William Blake

Jimmy is creating a character for an upcoming *Dime Adventures* campaign. He starts with the concept, and decides that he wants to play a traveling scholar and adventurer who pretends to be a medical doctor, but who really has a doctorate in anthropology. He names the character Doctor William Blake. (Continued on next page...)

CHARACTER CONCEPT

The first and most important step of character creation is to begin to form a vision of the character. Who is she? What does she do for a living? What led her into a life of adventuring? What is she good at? What does she struggle with? It is from this initial vision that the rest of the steps of character creation will work.

Regardless of the character vision that begins to form, the two key questions to ponder here are “Who is the character as a person?” and “What is the character going to be doing within the context of the campaign?” If the first question is not answered adequately, the character is not really a character so much as a collection of mechanics for a role in the campaign. If the second question is not answered well, then the character may be an interesting concept but she may find herself with little to do in the actual game. When coming up with a character concept, the player should keep in mind the type of game the GM is looking to run.

Example: William Blake

Jimmy already has the beginning of a character concept, but decides that he needs to think more about how the character fits into the campaign. He knows that the GM is planning to run a game set in the Amazon jungle, so he decides that Doctor Blake is interested in studying how the tribal societies of the region differ from other societies with which he is familiar. He also decides that William Blake has a long-time nemesis with connections to this region. (Continued on page 144.)



Common Sense Items

Some of the starting equipment included in different backgrounds doesn't have explicit listings in the Equipment chapter. For example, the Artist background provides a “pretentious outfit” and references the page for clothing, but none of the items of clothing there are described as “pretentious.”

This is fine. Background starting equipment is intended to be flavorful and the equipment chapter isn't intended to be a comprehensive list of everything available in the game world. For these items, just use common sense. If all else fails, the GM can make a ruling.

In the case of the “pretentious outfit,” for example, the player might decide that this consists of an ascot, fancy cape and fancy pants (no shirt). The GM then, seeing nothing game-breaking about this choice, agrees.

PICK BACKGROUND

The second step in character creation is to pick the character's background. This background should be informed by her concept, and is indicative of her past occupation, training and experience.

Each background will give the character a number of experiences in different stats and skills. These experiences may increase the value of the character's stats or skills during the next two steps. Many backgrounds will also provide a trait or two. All backgrounds will provide both a package of starting equipment and a starting Lifestyle rating (see page 120). If two different Lifestyle values are presented, the player may choose between the two.

The different available backgrounds are listed below.

ACADEMIC

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Investigate +1, Lib-Arts +5, Naturalist +1, Occult +1, Science +1, Tactics +1
- **Traits:** Jack of All Trades [Int 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Blackboard (see page 201), Book (see page 201), Chalk (see page 201), Glasses (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

The halls of academia are filled with all manner of professors, researchers and other academic experts. These academics both travel the world in their pursuit of knowledge, and delve into the musty tomes in dusty libraries.

Applying Background Traits

All traits provided by a background will list their prerequisite in square brackets, for example: "Toughness [End 5]." If, after the "Assign Stats" step of character creation, the character doesn't meet the prerequisite for the trait, she instead gains a like number of experiences in the prerequisite stat. For example, if a background would give her Toughness [End 5] and she has only Endurance 3, she would not gain the Toughness trait, but instead gain five experiences in Endurance (bringing her up to Endurance 4, with one experience left over).

ADVENTURER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +5, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Guns +1, Lib-Arts +1, Melee +1, Socialize +1, Stealth +1
- **Traits:** Fearless [Det 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Grappling Hook (see page 202), Hat (see page 196), Leather Jacket (see page 194), Rope (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 2

Wherever there is treasure to be found and villains to be vanquished, adventurers are ready to get involved in the thick of the conflict. Some adventurers are vagabonds, wandering the world, while others hold day jobs to support their daring pastimes. Some adventurers even don masks and strike out into the night.

ARTIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +0, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Crafts +3, Empathy +1, Lib-Arts +2
- **Traits:** Intuition [Int 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Pretentious Outfit (see page 196), Stained Work Clothing (see page 196), Artist Toolkit (see page 199)
- **Lifestyle:** 3 (unsuccessful) or 7 (successful)

Deep creative visionaries, artists are masters of their craft. They are an inspiration to many, exploring the boundaries of human culture and making life more beautiful. Many artists are melancholy idealists or excitable romantics.

Example: William Blake

Jimmy looks over the available backgrounds and decides that either Academic or Adventurer fits Doctor Blake best. In the end, however, he decides on Academic, as he feels that the Jack-of-All-Trades trait it provides both matches the concept and sounds fun to play. On his character sheet he notes the choice of background, as well as the Lifestyle, equipment, trait and experiences it provides. He doesn't apply these experiences to Blake's stats or skills yet, as this will happen after the next step. He also notes that Blake must have at least Intelligence 5 in order to gain Jack-of-All-Trades.

ATHLETE

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +3, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +5, Awareness +1, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Fleet of Foot [Spd 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Athletic Medal (see page 200), Souvenir from Enthusiastic Fan (see page 200), Sports Padding (see page 194)
- **Lifestyle:** 3 (unsuccessful) or 7 (successful)

Athletes can be found competing in any number of popular (or not-so-popular) sports. These physical skills, acquired from their chosen lifestyle, also lend themselves well to other ventures, as physical adeptness is broadly applicable.

COMBAT MEDIC

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Empathy +1, Guns +1, Medicine +3, Melee +1, Socialize +1, Tactics +1
- **Traits:** Danger Sense [Per 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Laudanum (see page 198), Surgery Toolkit (see page 199), Officer's Helmet (see page 195)
- **Lifestyle:** 4

Wherever armies travel, injuries follow. And wherever these injuries occur, combat medics will be on the scene to patch their comrades back up. These individuals are trained both in medicine and in the rudimentaries of military life.

COWBOY

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +3, Athletics +1, Awareness +2, Guns +1, Naturalist +1
- **Traits:** Grit [Det 7]
- **Starting Equipment:** Gun Holster (see page 193), Stetson Hat (see page 196), Lasso (see page 189), Smith & Wesson Model 10 (see Revolver, page 187)
- **Lifestyle:** 2

Cowboys are rustic sorts who are good in the wilderness and other untamed territories. They are known for tending to cattle and other large livestock, although many cowboys also take on odd jobs.

DILETTANTE

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +3, Dex +3, Spd +3, End +3, Int +3, Per +3, Chr +3, Det +3
- **Skill Experiences:** Crafts +1, Lib-Arts +1, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Fashion Sense (Family) [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Fancy Clothing (see page 196), Personal Grooming Kit (see page 200), Liberal Arts Toolkit (see page 200)
- **Lifestyle:** 8

A dilettante is generally a wealthy individual, often born into a life of privilege, who uses her free time and money to dabble in particular areas of the arts or adventure without having a professional interest.

DOCTOR

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Empathy +3, Lib-Arts +1, Medicine +5, Science +2, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Status (Doctor) [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Cocaine (see page 198), Laudanum (see page 198), Pharmacist Toolkit (see page 199), Surgery Toolkit (see page 199), White Coat (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 6

When people get sick, fall down and break themselves, are exposed to the elements for too long or otherwise get their health into a difficult situation, doctors are there to patch them back together and make things all well. They are knowledgeable about biology and can even perform surgery.



DRIFTER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +1, Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Empathy +1, Investigate +1, Naturalist +3, Streetwise +3, Thievery +1
- **Traits:** Scrounge [Per 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Backpack (see page 202), Bandana (see page 196), Old Food (see page 197), Small But Loyal Dog (see page 203)
- **Lifestyle:** 1

The world is full of people who drift from one place to another, working odd jobs or scrounging to survive. These drifters are found in cultures across the world. They often have a nose for trouble and a knack for survival.



GANGSTER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +0, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +5, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Guns +3, Melee +1, Persuade +3, Streetwise +3
- **Traits:** Toughness [End 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Brass Knuckles (see page 190), Coat (see page 196), Hat (see page 196), Winchester M1897 (see Shotgun, page 188)
- **Lifestyle:** 5 (mid-level) or 7 (goodfella)

Gangsters are individuals who have fallen into a life of professional crime. In doing this they usually work as part of a larger criminal organization. Such organizations rarely lack for the need of basic muscle, and often take care of their own.

GENTRY

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +5, End +0, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +1, Athletics +1, Crafts +1, Deception +1, Empathy +1, Lib-Arts +1, Persuade +1, Science +1, Socialize +3, Vehicles +1
- **Traits:** Network (Wealth or Title) [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Fancy Suit or Dress (see page 196), Monocle or Parasol (see page 196), Sword Cane (see page 191)
- **Lifestyle:** 9

It's the golden age of capitalism, and every expedition or other expensive endeavor from here to Persia and back needs the money and influence of a wealthy individual to pave its way into the history books. Individuals of this social strata often try to maintain a sophisticated air about themselves.

GREASE MONKEY

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Crafts +3, Mechanics +5, Science +1, Streetwise +1, Vehicles +1
- **Traits:** Improvised Warrior [Per 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Big Wrench (see page 199), Coveralls (see page 196), Grease Rag (see page 199), Mechanical Toolkit (see page 199)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

A grease monkey is a master at maintaining and repairing the many machines that help make civilization possible. She usually is a professional in this field, with an intuitive grasp for how things work.

GRUNT

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +1, Athletics +3, Crafts +1, Empathy +1, Investigate +1, Melee +1, Socialize +1, Streetwise +1, Thievery +1, Vehicle +1
- **Traits:** Power Haul [Str 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Bottle of Liquor (see page 198), Crowbar (see page 199), Rope (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 3

Others may take all the glory, but the true backbone of most any human endeavor is the grunt—the everyman struggling to make ends meet, and doing the physical labor necessary to keep society chugging along. And when it boils right down to it that may be the thing that matters most.

GUNMAN

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +0, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Empathy +1, Guns +5, Naturalist +1, Stealth +1, Tactics +1
- **Traits:** Gunslinger [Per 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Browning Model 1903 (see Pistol, page 187), Gun Holster (see page 193), Lee-Enfield Mk I Sniper (see Sniper Rifle, page 188)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

A gunman is a professional wielder of firearms—not necessarily a soldier, but a specialist in shooting and gunplay. They run the gamut from hair-trigger gunslingers to patient snipers. Gunmen are crack shots with a firearm. They practice frequently and are masters of their skill.



INDUSTRIALIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +0, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Deception +2, Lib-Arts +1, Mechanics +1, Persuade +3, Science +1, Socialize +3, Streetwise +1
- **Traits:** Network [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Business Toolkit (see page 201), Hat (see page 196), Suit (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 9

Everyone from Calgary to Kalamazoo has heard the tales of self-made men, who have pulled themselves up by their bootstraps to become wealthy and prosperous. For a rare few this isn't just a fairytale. Industrialists have made it big, rising through the social strata to become the masters of a new age.



INVESTIGATOR

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Empathy +1, Investigate +5, Persuade +1, Stealth +1, Streetwise +1, Thievery +1
- **Traits:** Master Detective [Per 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Hat (see page 196), Magnifying Glass (see page 199), Forensic Toolkit (see page 199)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

Investigators are determined individuals. Possessed with amazing powers of perception, they leave no stone unturned in their search for clues and pursuit of mysteries. Some investigators are the rough-and-tumble sort, just as ready to advance their case with two fists, as they are with deductive reasoning.

JOURNALIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Deception +1, Empathy +1, Investigate +1, Lib-Arts +1, Persuade +1, Socialize +3, Stealth +1, Streetwise +1, Thievery +1
- **Traits:** Contact (player's choice for source of newsworthy info) [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Coffee (see page 197), Notepad (see page 201), Pencil (see page 201)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

Journalists are those nosy and determined individuals who make their living as part of the free press. They are often curious and always looking get the latest story, or to dig further into the truth.

MAD SCIENTIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +5, End +0, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Crafts +1, Lib-Arts +1, Mechanics +1, Medicine +1, Occult +1, Science +3
- **Traits:** Gadeteer [Int 7]
- **Starting Equipment:** Chemical Toolkit (see page 199), Electrical Toolkit (see page 199), White Coat (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 6

More than mere scientists, mad scientists are cackling visionaries that have the insight to see beyond the ethical limitations of most men. They are constantly working on their grand theories, visions and inventions. They possess within them the will to change the world! Oh, how the fools will rue the day they laughed!

MARTIAL ARTIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Melee +3, Occult +1
- **Traits:** Martial Arts [Dex 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Baton (see Blackjack, page 190), Belt (see page 196), Staff (see page 191)
- **Lifestyle:** 4

There exists many kinds of powerful and exotic fighting styles around the world, from the fencing styles of the West to the unarmed combatants of the East. Training in these arts sometimes also comes with a significant amount of mysticism and philosophy. Martial artists have studied these ways and have mastered them.

MYSTIC

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +5, Per +0, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Deception +1, Empathy +1, Medicine +3, Naturalist +1, Occult +5, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Intuition [Int 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Charm (see page 200), Book of Dubious Occultism (see page 201), Occult Toolkit (see page 201)
- **Lifestyle:** 4

Mystics are probing individuals who seek out forgotten magical secrets and strike out after the supernatural and unknown. Mystics come in many flavors, from those who dabble in far off foreign mysticism, to those who delve into Victorian spiritualism and tales of psychic potential.



OFFICER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Empathy +1, Guns +1, Lib-Arts +1, Melee +1, Persuade +1, Socialize +1, Tactics +3
- **Traits:** Amazing Tactician [Int 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Dress Uniform (see page 196), Flag (see page 200), Officer's Helmet (see page 195), Uniform (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

In most modern military forces the officers are a class apart from the enlisted soldiers. Many are trained at military schools or other institutions. They are taught strategy, tactics and how to be leaders on the battlefield.

PARTISAN

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Crafts +1, Deception +1, Guns +1, Mechanics +1, Melee +1, Naturalist +1, Stealth +1, Tactics +1
- **Traits:** Danger Sense [Per 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Camouflage Clothing (see page 196), Springfield M1903 (see Rifle, page 188), Mess Toolkit (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 2

Partisans are irregular soldiers or militiamen, dedicated to a cause. They engage in guerrilla fighting, harass enemy supply lines and resist occupying armies. Partisans balance survival skills with stealth and military tactics.

PILOT

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +0, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Tactics +1, Vehicles +5
- **Traits:** Stunt Driver [Dex 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Goggles (see page 196), Leather Jacket (see page 194), Navigation Map (see page 201)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

Motorized vehicles—whether on land, sea or air—are becoming an increasingly popular means of locomotion. With these new means of transport comes the need for people who have the necessary skills and expertise to maneuver these vehicles to their limit. That's exactly what pilots specialize in.

POLICE OFFICER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Awareness +1, Empathy +1, Guns +1, Investigate +1, Melee +1, Persuade +1, Streetwise +1
- **Traits:** Status (Police) [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Baton (see Blackjack, page 190), Handcuffs (see page 199), Police Uniform (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 4

The industrial revolution fueled the growth of major cities, sending their populations soaring and spurring the need for professional metropolitan police forces. Since then, police officers have come to be established across the world as the thin blue line between crime and ordered society.

POLITICIAN

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +3, End +3, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Deception +3, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Honeyed Tongue [Chr 7], Status [Chr 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Fancy Suit (see page 196), Makeup Toolkit (see page 200), Personal Grooming Kit (see page 200)
- **Lifestyle:** 8

Typically skilled orators, politicians work their way up the labyrinth of politics to become movers and shakers. Most are driven by an intense personal ambition, and have a way with people. They smile; they shake hands; they kiss babies; they lie through their teeth, and they look good doing it.

SAILOR

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Naturalist +1, Socialize +1, Streetwise +3, Vehicles +3
- **Traits:** Hardy [End 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Bandana (see page 196), Bottle of Liquor (see page 198), Spyglass (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 3

Ships are the most popular means of long-distance travel in the world, and every ship has need for a skilled crew. Sailors can be found around the globe, from the largest of cities to exotic ports. They have both worldly experience and a camaraderie from long times spent at sea.

SALESMAN

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +0, Int +3, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +3
- **Skill Experiences:** Deception +1, Empathy +1, Lib-Arts +1, Persuade +3, Socialize +1
- **Traits:** Honeyed Tongue [Chr 7]
- **Starting Equipment:** Pick one piece of equipment worth Cost 5 or less. You have four of them for sale.
- **Lifestyle:** 5

Everyone has to find a way to make a living, and salesmen do that peddling merchandise. This requires a smooth tongue, a keen observational eye for potential customers and a certain amount of business know-how.



SCIENTIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +3, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +3
- **Skill Experiences:** Investigate +1, Lib-Arts +2, Mechanics +3, Science +5
- **Traits:** Single-Minded [Det 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Lab Coat (see page 196), Notepad (see page 201), Chemical Toolkit (see page 199)
- **Lifestyle:** 5

Scientists by-in-large see the world as a rational and orderly place. They explore the unknown, theorize about the boundaries of human knowledge and create experiments to prove fundamental truths. They see themselves as the way of the future, advancing humankind.

SOLDIER

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +5, Int +0, Per +0, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Guns +3, Melee +1, Socialize +1, Streetwise +1, Tactics +1
- **Traits:** Staunch Fortitude [End 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Bayonet (see page 190), Springfield M1903 (see Rifle, page 188), Uniform (see page 196)
- **Lifestyle:** 3

Wherever wars are to be fought or peace is to be kept, soldiers are soon to be found. Professional soldiers operate across all corners of the globe, enforcing the will of their nation-state, liege-lord, tribe or mercenary ticket.

Custom Backgrounds

A GM may wish to create her own backgrounds for her campaign, focusing on the occupations most suitable to the game's concept and themes. Similarly, some players—with their GM's permission—might also want to create their own backgrounds, focusing on a particularly unique character concept.

- Backgrounds can be created by following a few simple rules:
- Every background totals to 30 experiences worth of provided stats, skills and traits.
- At least 15 of these experiences are put directly into stats, not counting those put into traits.
- No more than 10 experiences are ever put into any given stat, including the experiences from all traits associated with that stat.
- No more than 5 experiences are ever put into any given skill.
- All backgrounds provide three or four pieces of equipment, with no individual piece of equipment being worth more than Cost 5.
- Every background comes with a Lifestyle rating between 1 and 10.

SURVIVALIST

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +1, Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Crafts +1, Guns +1, Naturalist +5, Melee +1, Stealth +1
- **Traits:** Direction Sense [Per 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Snare (see page 202), Tent (see page 202), Mess Toolkit (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 2

Survivalists are experts at not only living, but thriving in the outdoors, far away from human civilization. They specialize in enduring the elements and the hardships that brings. Some are hobbyists, some are hermits, some are remote mountain men and others are members of isolated populations or tribes.

THIEF

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +0, Int +3, Per +0, Chr +3, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Deception +1, Investigate +1, Stealth +1, Streetwise +1, Thievery +5
- **Traits:** Sneak Attack [Dex 5]
- **Starting Equipment:** Crowbar (see page 199), Mask (see page 196), Rope (see page 202)
- **Lifestyle:** 1 (street) or 7 (gentleman)

Thieves are individuals who make their living by purloining the possessions of others. Some steal for necessity; some steal for greed; others are motivated by a deep sense of idealism or boredom, such as those who redistribute their stolen wealth to the poor, or gentlemen thieves who make a hobby of it.

TRIBESMAN

- **Stat Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +0
- **Skill Experiences:** Animals +2, Athletics +1, Awareness +1, Crafts +1, Medicine +1, Naturalist +3, Occult +1, Socialize +1, Stealth +1
- **Traits:** Iron Stomach [End 3]
- **Starting Equipment:** Hard Rations (see page 197), Shield (see page 191), Snare (see page 202), Spear (see page 191)
- **Lifestyle:** 3

Tribesmen come from a culture that is nomadic in a way. They are experienced in necessary life skills for this lifestyle: tracking, hunting, gathering, and knowledge of how to find and identify important natural resources.



ASSIGN STATS

Now that the character's basic concept has been decided, it is time to begin its implementation. The most basic expression of this is in the character's stats. Is the character strong and kind, albeit somewhat slow? Is she ruthless and cunning? Is she charismatic and quick? The player should take the array of values below and assign one value to each of the character's stats: Strength, Dexterity, Speed, Endurance, Intelligence, Perception, Charisma and Determination. The array is as follows:

[7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3]

Naturally, the areas in which the character excels should be assigned the highest values, whereas the areas in which she is the weakest should be assigned the lowest. A value of 4 is human average, but larger-than-life heroes aren't average! Instead, the average value for bold adventurers and their ilk is a step above, at 5! For more information on stats, see page 78-79.

Once base values have been assigned to stats, the player should next apply any experiences to stats granted by her background. The background experiences value does not directly add to the stat, but instead counts toward stat increases, just like experiences gained through character advancement (see page 158).

ASSIGN SKILLS

Whereas stats represent a character's natural inclinations and ability in certain actions, a character's skills represent her training and proficiencies. The player should think about her character concept. What are the skills in which the character would be highly trained? Which skills would she have dabbled in as either an earlier career path or as a hobby? The player should then take the array of values below and assign these values to the skills in which the character would have training:

[3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1]

Naturally, higher is better. A skill of 1 shows at least a basic familiarity, whereas a skill of 3 indicates a professional level of competence. For ease of reference, the skill list is reproduced below. For more information on the skills, see page 80.



Skill	Skill	Skill	Skill
Animals	Guns	Naturalist	Stealth
Athletics	Investigate	Occult	Streetwise
Awareness	Lib-Arts	Persuade	Tactics
Crafts	Mechanics	Science	Thievery
Deception	Medicine	Socialize	Vehicles
Empathy	Melee		

Applying Background to Stats & Skills

All backgrounds apply some number of experiences to both stats and skills. These experiences may increase the value of the stat or skill—sometimes even multiple times! Any experiences left over from this remain with the stat and count towards its next increase.

Example: Alice has Charisma 3. A background is chosen that adds +10 experiences to Charisma. Four of these experiences will increase her to Charisma 4. Another 5 of these experiences will raise her to Charisma 5. This leaves 1 experience left over, which will remain and count toward Alice's next Charisma increase.

Example: Alice has no Medicine skill and a background is chosen that gives +2 experiences to Medicine. The first experience simply increases her to Medicine 1. The next experience counts towards her next Medicine increase, and she must name to what it relates. She chooses this experience to be "First Aid."

WEALTH & EQUIPMENT

Dime Adventures is a game of action and adventure, not one of bean counting. As such, there is no need to track every individual dollar or pound the character has in her possession. Instead she is simply assigned an abstract Wealth rating (see page 116). Every starting PC begins with the following rating:

Starting Wealth = 5

By this point, the character should already have a package of starting goods supplied by her background. Between this and her Lifestyle, most of her daily equipment needs should be covered. However, if the player wants to make any additional purchases at this time, she is free to do so. Just use the rules for making purchases found on page 117. To make such a shopping spree more manageable, the GM may want to limit the number of starting purchases made in this way to five purchases.

Regardless of whether the player chooses to go on a shopping spree, all players may opt

to add the following package of genetic adventuring equipment to their inventory:

- Backpack (see page 202).
- Two spare changes of clothes (see page 196).
- National identification and travel documents (see page 201).
- One weapon of her choice with Cost 5 or less, fully-loaded with one spare set of ammunition, if applicable (see page 187).

Campaign Starting Gear

GM running a game with a particular concept may want to save the players some time and come up with a list of starting equipment that all PCs receive at the beginning of the campaign. For example, if the GM is running a game about an expedition to Antarctica, she may want to pick out a set of wilderness and survival gear that each hero automatically starts with.

FINISHING TOUCHES

By this point, the bulk of the character has been built. All that is left is to put on some finishing touches. In this step, the player will make a few calculations for scores based on the character's stats, and pick out a few traits, such as the character's creed, idiosyncrasy, native language and possible weaknesses.

PICK CREED

Creed is a statement about the character's personality and outlook on life. It is used as a hook a player can latch onto when roleplaying her character. Often it is expressed in first person and may be a catch phrase, statement, purpose or other driving motive. Think about a player character's creed as something that emphasizes her role as a larger-than-life action hero.

Mechanically, at the end of any scene where the player really played up her creed, the character is awarded by drawing a Moxie (GM's discretion, although players are encouraged to remind their GMs about this).

Several example creeds are listed below for inspiration. Players should feel free to make up their own. With the GM's permission, players may also change their creed during character advancement, as their characters grow and change.

Example Creeds
When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.
I am the law!
Creatures of the night pollute the lands of the living. It is up to me to stop them.
For truth, justice and jolly old England!
For science, I will explore the unknown.

PICK IDIOSYNCRASY

A character's idiosyncrasy is a statement about a physical or behavioral quirk that distinguishes her from others. Like creed, it can be used as a hook for players to aid in roleplaying their characters. Think about it as "one unique thing" that sets the character apart from every other hero, and which helps make her larger-than-life.

Mechanically, at the end of any scene where the player really played up her character's idiosyncrasy, she is awarded by drawing a Moxie.

A few examples are provided below. Players should feel free to make up their own.

Example Idiosyncrasies
Always leaves her signature mark at the scene of her actions: a nine of spades.
Impeccably clean and well-groomed, even when she otherwise shouldn't be.
Raised by wolves, and has adopted their habits.
Has returned from death to protect the innocent.
Always refers to the odds of success of a plan using exact numbers. ("Sir, the odds of pulling off this plan are 328 to 1!")

PICK LANGUAGES

Every character starts out knowing one native language, as well as any gained through her background. These languages should be selected now. Some common languages are shown in the table below.

Language	Language	Language
Arabic	Hindi	Portuguese
Bengali	Japanese	Punjabi
English	Javanese	Russian
French	Malay	Spanish
German	Mandarin	Wu

PICK WEAKNESSES

The most interesting characters tend to have some kind of weakness, whether it's that they struggle with some personal vice or they have some physical shortcoming of some type. In *Saga Machine*, these sort of flaws are represented by weakness traits.

All weakness traits are similar in that they are optional traits, have no experience cost and each present some kind of drawback, but in return, when that drawback negatively affects the character in some significant way, she gets to draw a Moxie. In this way, weakness traits can be a good mechanism for refilling one's hand during play.

Weakness traits are listed in the back of the traits section (see page 175). It is recommended that player characters pick up a weakness trait or two, but more than two or three may be overdoing it.

SCORE CALCULATIONS

The following scores are used by the various systems found in the *Dime Adventures* game. Determining them is a simple matter of addition. The formula for each of these scores is given below:

- **Damage Reduction (DR):** This is the ability of a character to resist damage.

It will be 0 unless the character has purchased armor or acquired a trait giving a bonus to DR. See page 96.

- **Defense:** This is the ability of a character to avoid being hit in combat. It consists of two values: the target number to hit the character ($[\text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}] \div 2$) and the target number to score a critical hit on the character ($\text{Spd} + \text{Per} + \text{Dex}$). See page 98.
- **Encumbrance:** This is the number of encumbrance slots the character has for carrying gear around (Str). See page 186.
- **Health Points (HP):** This is the measure of the character's health and ability to take a beating ($\text{Str} + \text{End}$). See page 96.
- **Moxie:** This is the number of cards drawn into the character's hand at the beginning of each session. This will be 5 unless the character has acquired a trait which alters this value. See page 92.
- **Willpower:** This is the ability of the character to remain unfazed in the face of emotional appeal, overwhelming terror and mental attack. Like Defense, it consists of two values: the target number to effect the character ($[\text{Int} + \text{Chr} + \text{Det}] \div 2$) and the target number to critically effect the character ($\text{Int} + \text{Chr} + \text{Det}$). See page 99.

Buying Traits at Character Creation

During the Finishing Touches step, characters may have a number of experiences left over in different stats. For example, a character with Charisma 7 whose background have her five Charisma experiences, will still have all five experiences as yet unspent. During character advancement these experiences could be spent to purchase new traits, and players may want to know if they can spend these leftover experiences right from the start.

Ultimately this decision is up to the GM. Personally, we recommend that GMs allow players to buy traits with their remaining experiences, unless short on time. For example, perusing the list of available traits may take extra time and be undesirable if the GM is both having players create characters and running a one-shot in the same evening.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

No one stays the same for long. People change, they grow, they advance and they learn from their experiences. Similarly, characters in *Dime Adventures* don't remain the same for long—they advance and grow.

EXPERIENCES

Over the course of a campaign, the player characters will accumulate experiences. These experiences represent the character's growth, learned skills, and progress in a particular area. Experiences are awarded by the GM at semi-regular intervals throughout the campaign—typically at the end of each session. They are used to increase the character's stats, skills to purchase traits or to give a bonus to a skill's actions.

Ultimately it is up to the GM to reward experiences, to decide how many to award and to decide on what basis to award them. Whatever the basis, it is generally recommended to award between 2 and 4 experiences each session. An example metric for awarding experiences is below:

Basis	Reward
Participated in the session	1
Showed up prepared and on time	1
Played to genre	1
Was a team player	1

ALLOCATING EXPERIENCES

When a player's character receives experiences, the player must allocate them to a particular stat or skill that saw use that session. The stat or skill can have seen use either as part of an action or as something the character

actively worked on in her downtime. No more than one experience can be allocated to any single stat or skill at the same time—that is, if the character is awarded four experiences for the session, she must allocate them to four different stats or skills; she cannot “double up,” assigning two to the same one.

Experiences assigned to stats are simply tally marks counting toward the next increase of the stat (see “Increasing Stats & Skills” below). Experiences assigned to skills, on the other hand, are given a descriptor that applies to how the skill was used that session. Examples include “tropical birds” for the Naturalist skill or “swimming” for the Athletics skill. In the future, these experiences can give a +1 bonus to related skill actions when they apply (see Skill Experiences on page 80).

INCREASING STATS & SKILLS

When the number of experiences allocated to a stat or skill increases beyond the current value, the experiences are erased and the stat or skill increases by one. For example, this means that the very first experience assigned to an untrained skill will increase it to skill 1, and it would take five experiences to increase Strength 4 to Strength 5, etc.

In the case of skill experiences, this means that the increasing frequency of +1 bonuses from experiences eventually becomes an effective unconditional +1 from the skill increase.

PURCHASING TRAITS

In addition to stats and skills, a variety of special abilities, collectively known as traits, are available for purchase. Every trait has an experiences cost, and players must spend that many experiences to acquire the trait. Unless

the trait specifies otherwise, any given trait may only be purchased once.

Each of these traits is also associated with a stat, and is purchased only using experiences assigned to that stat. For example, the Toughness trait costs 5 experiences and is associated with Endurance. It may only be purchased by spending 5 experiences that have been assigned to Endurance over the course of the game.

Since accumulating more experiences than the current value of a stat causes a stat's value to increase (spending those experiences), every trait also effectively has a stat requirement. A character may not "save up" stat experiences beyond those necessary to increase the stat. This means, for example, that since Fleet of Foot costs 5 Speed experiences, a character must have at least Speed 5 before it can be purchased. A character with Speed 3 could not purchase Fleet of Foot, since as soon as she accumulated 4 Speed experiences, her Speed would increase to 4, spending all the accumulated points.



Non-Starting Characters

Sometimes the GM wants a player to make a character with a greater than usual degree of experience, such as a replacement character being made mid-campaign. These characters are made just like the usual starting characters, but then are given some experiences that can be allocated to increasing stats, skills and buying traits.

To determine how much to give, the GM should think of it in units of sessions. If the GM has been giving out about four experiences a session, and the campaign is five sessions in, the GM should give out five sets of four experiences. These experiences can then be spent just as if the character had been there each session. This also means that the maximum number of experiences that can be assigned to any one stat or skill is equal to the number of sets (in this case 5).

Finally, the GM should think about what starting Wealth score to assign the new character. It's recommended to look at the other player characters as a benchmark when deciding this. Use the average Wealth score among other characters.

TRAITS

This section contains a list of traits available to player characters in *Dime Adventures*. Most traits are grouped under their related stat. That is, traits requiring a minimum Strength and paid for with Strength experiences are listed under "Strength Traits," etc. These traits are listed in the order of their requirements: those requiring a lower minimum stat are listed before those requiring a higher minimum stat. For more on purchasing traits, see page 158.

Of special note are Weakness traits, which don't have an experience cost nor an associated stat. These are listed in their own section, after all other traits.

Each trait is listed in a standard format, with the trait's name, followed by a number representing both its experience cost and minimum stat value. Below this is a line containing any keywords associated with the trait. Finally, this is then followed by the description and mechanics associated with the trait.

STRENGTH TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Strength, and may be purchased using Strength experiences.

CHALLENGING BELLOW

3

Strength

This character is skilled at making herself the central target in a combat. When making an attack, she may spend an extra AP to activate this trait. If the attack successfully hits, her target increases its Fixated consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical hit. The attacking character is the subject of the fixation.

THE DIRECT APPROACH

3

Strength

Sometimes the direct approach is the best approach; this character is particularly good at breaking things. Whenever dealing damage to an inanimate object, the character always deals damage as if a spade had been played. This does not apply to objects that can move about on their own (such as mystical constructs, automatons and the like), nor does it apply to attended objects than can be freely moved out of the way by an opponent (such as the clothing the enemy is currently wearing).

POWER HAUL

3

Strength

This character's back is strong and well-adjusted for carrying heavy burdens. This halves any penalties she would experience from the Encumbered consequence (rounding down, as usual).

SUNDER

3

Strength

This character is skilled at not only disarming her foes, but breaking their weapons as well. When successfully performing a disarm action, she may choose to bend or snap her foe's weapon instead of merely dropping it at her feet. This is normally automatic, although at the GM's discretion a particularly tough weapon might require a successful Strength flip.

DAZING STRIKE

5

Strength

The blows from this character's attacks can leave her foes dazed. When making an attack, she may spend an extra AP to activate this

trait. If the attack successfully hits, her target increases its Dazed consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical hit.

KNOCKDOWN

5

Strength

Knowing how to knock an enemy off her feet is something this character has mastered. When making an attack whose damage is a function of Strength, this character may spend an extra AP to invoke this trait. If the attack hits, the target's Prone consequence increases a severity, or two severities on a critical hit.

WRESTLER

5

Strength

This character is amazing when grappling, much like a skilled wrestler. When successfully hitting with a melee attack, the character may spend an AP as a reaction to establish a grapple. If she were holding anything in her hands that would prevent her from grappling, she may freely drop it when this occurs.

Additionally, she does not have to spend any additional AP when in a grapple and taking actions that do not solely target her grappling opponent.

Finally, while grappling her opponent provides her with one more severity of the Cover consequence than normal. This means, for example, that an opponent of similar size provides her with Cover (severe) rather than Cover (moderate).

RAGE

7

Strength

The character is apt at channeling her anger and recklessness into her attacks, thereby

dealing increased damage. Whenever she makes an attack whose damage is a function of Strength, she may treat the damage as if were the next highest suit. For example, if she used Rage while playing a diamond, the damage would be treated as if a heart had been dealt. If she opts to do this, she increases her Fixation consequence a severity, with the target of the attack as the subject of the Fixation. She may not opt to do this if her Fixation consequence is already at critical severity. As normal, this Fixation consequence goes away when the enemy is no longer in the scene, such as when the enemy is defeated.

In addition, while the character has the Fixation consequence, she gains a +1 bonus to Defense against the subject of her fixation.

POWERHOUSE

7

Strength

The character is exceptionally adept at leveraging her strength when swinging a weapon. Whenever she makes an attack whose damage is a function of Strength, she treats her damage as if it were one suit higher.

WEAPON MASTER

9

Strength

A master of personal combat, this character can alter her tactics and control her swings at the drop of a hat. After a flip has been made to attack and any reactions resolved, the player may retroactively choose attack options. For example, the player may want to ensure that an attack hits before choosing to spend extra AP to make the attack a Called Shot, or to invoke the Rage trait, should she possess it. In addition, the character may also retroactively take actions to aim, should she have enough AP.

DEXTERITY TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Dexterity, and may be purchased using Dexterity experiences.

AMBIDEXTERITY

3

Dexterity

This character is equally skilled at using both of her hands. She may treat either of her hands as her primary hand. This means that she never takes the -2 off-hand penalty.

CATFALL

3

Dexterity

The character is particularly adept at landing in such a way as to break her falls. Halve any falling damage this character takes before applying it to HP.

DUELIST

3

Dexterity

Known for her dueling, this character finds it easy to get into such confrontations. The first time in a session in which the character issues a challenge for a duel she does not need to ante a Moxie from her hand. Instead, her ante comes from the top of her deck. If the duel is refused, she gets to draw this card into her hand, just as she would had she anted a Moxie from her hand. Otherwise, she wins or loses the ante as normal.

STUNT DRIVER

3

Dexterity

This character is a master of maneuvering vehicles with extreme precision. When driving a vehicle that is targeted by an attack, the vehicle may use her person's

Defense and she may take a Dodge reaction for the vehicle to avoid incoming attacks, just as if her person has been targeted.

Additionally, this trait grants the character a +2 bonus to any flip to drive or pilot in a vehicular chase.

DUAL-WEAPON FIGHTING

5

Dexterity

When armed with a weapon in each hand, the character may spend an extra AP with an attack action to use both weapons at once. Any Defense bonus gained against this attack as a result of the Dodge or Parry reactions is reduced by 4 (to a minimum of 0).

Additionally, when dual-wielding and scoring a critical hit, the attacker may choose to deal damage with her off-hand weapon as a critical effect.

MARTIAL ARTS

5

Dexterity

This character is particularly skilled at fighting unarmed. When dealing damage with an unarmed attack, she now deals ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3 instead of the usual amount. Additionally, her unarmed attacks are no longer considered improvised tools when fighting an armed opponent.

SNEAK ATTACK

5

Dexterity

This character excels at making use of the shadows or misdirection to aid in her attacks. When successfully striking a foe who is unaware of her presence or who has not yet acted this combat, she may make a Called Shot at no extra AP cost.

FENCING

Dexterity

This character is particularly skilled at avoiding the attacks of nearby combatants. When fighting either unarmed or with a single-handed melee weapon and nothing in the character's other hand, she may add a +2 bonus to her Defense against attacks originating from the same zone.

RIPOSTE

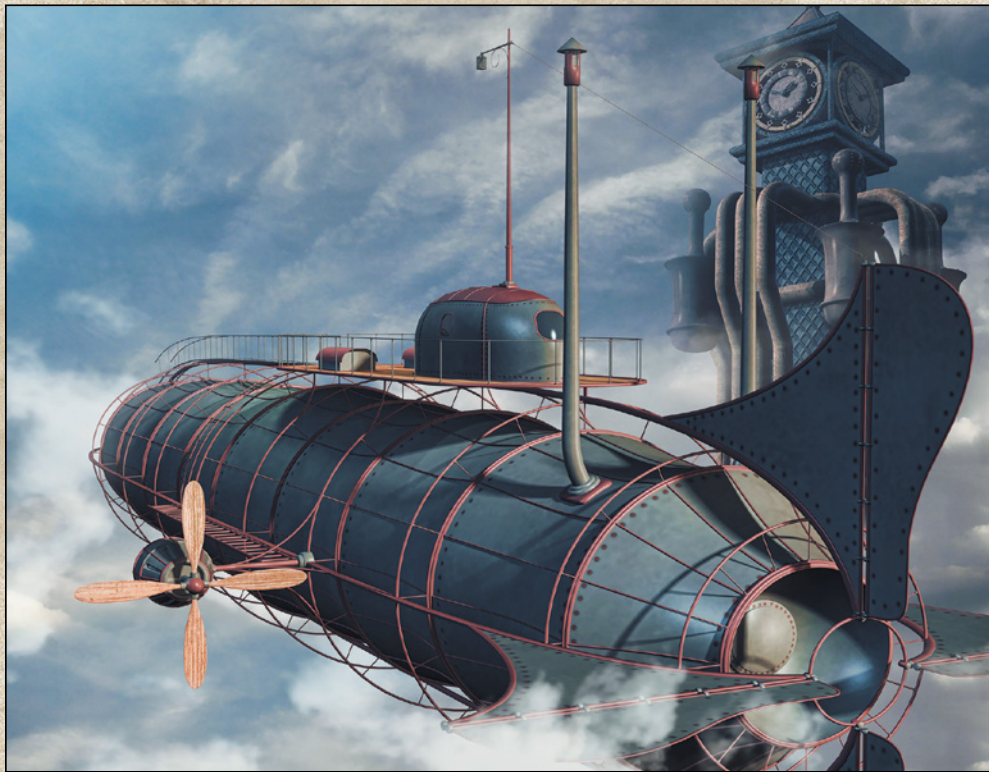
Dexterity

This character is skilled at looking for openings in the defenses of others when they attack. When this character is attacked from within the same zone and the attack misses, as a reaction she may immediately spend an AP to make a melee attack back on the original attacker.

7 TWIN STRIKE

Dexterity

Having mastered the movement of her body, this character can strike twice against different opponents in rapid succession. By spending an extra AP with an attack, this character may target two opponents in the same zone as each other with the attack. For example, she could rapidly fire her gun twice, shooting two foes near to each other. If the attack would use ammunition of some sort, two units of ammo are consumed. Make only one flip for the attack.



SPEED TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Speed, and may be purchased using Speed experiences.

CHARGE ATTACK

B

Speed

The character is able to leverage her rapid movement into a powerful attack or surprising. After she has taken a move action to change zones this turn, she gains +2 damage to any immediately subsequent attack, provided the movement brought her closer to her target.

LEG UP

B

Speed

When taking part in the Chase subsystem, this character is always considered to have “a leg up” after a flip, regardless of the outcome of the flip itself. This means that it is possible that both pursuer and quarry may have “a leg up” at the same time.

QUICK DRAW

B

Speed

The character is adept at quickly drawing her weapon from where it is holstered. Reduce the number of AP it costs to draw a weapon or to reload by one. This may reduce the necessary AP to zero.

SACRIFICIAL DODGE

B

Speed

When another character in the same zone as you is targeted with an attack against Defense, you may make a Dodge reaction to interpose yourself between them and the attack. The bonus from Dodge adds to their Defense. If this would make the difference

between the attack hitting and the attack missing, it strikes you instead, dealing damage as if you were successfully hit.

DEFT RETREAT

5

Speed

Quick on her feet, this character excels at finding openings in which to beat a speedy retreat. When she takes a move action, she may spend an extra AP to avoid provoking Zone of Control reactions.

FLEET OF FOOT

5

Speed

This character is able to move particularly quickly. She may take a free basic move action to walk or run on her turn once per round. This does not apply to vehicular movement, riding, swimming or other forms of movement.

Additionally, this trait grants the character a +2 bonus to any flip to flee or catch up with the quarry in a foot chase.

RAPID DEFENSE

5

Speed

With fast reactions, this character is able to defend herself in an effective manner. With this trait, when calculating the character's Defense score, she may treat her Speed as if it were two higher than it is. This should increase her Defense score by +1/+2, respectively.

CATLIKE REFLEXES

7

Speed

This character is apt at recovering her momentum over the course of a combat round. At the end of this character's turn she gains an additional AP. This AP may not be

spent as part of the turn, but may be held for reactions later in the round.

LUCKY DODGE

7

Speed

Something about the character's speed or luck allows her to dodge attacks, even when otherwise wouldn't. With this trait the character may play a Moxie, treating it as the card flipped in a Dodge reaction. Dodges made this way do not require an AP to be expended as usual.

LIGHTNING SPEED

9

Speed

The character is capable of moving like lightning. She gains an extra AP each round. This usually increases her to 4 AP per round.



ENDURANCE TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Endurance, and may be purchased using Endurance experiences.

ACCLIMATED

B

Endurance

The harshness of hot and cold climates matter little to this character, as she is able to endure all but the worst conditions. When making a flip to resist damage or fatigue from environmental sources of heat or cold, the character gains a +4 bonus.

FAST HEALER

B

Endurance

This character's body heals extremely quickly. When healing for the night, the character heals twice her Endurance in HP instead of the usual amount.

IRON STOMACH

B

Endurance

The character can eat just about anything short of poison without feeling ill or having an upset stomach. This makes it particularly easy to forage for her in the wilderness, giving a +4 bonus on any attempts to find sustenance. This also helps avoid ingested poison, giving a +2 bonus on any actions to resist. Other poisons are not affected.

STAINCH FORTITUDE

B

Endurance

The constitution of this character is such that she may shrug off bleeding wounds. Once on her turn every round, she may reduce her Bleeding consequence by a severity. This is considered a free Concentrate action.

HARDY

Endurance

This character is hardy and able to resist all but the most potent poisons and diseases. She gains a +4 bonus on flips made to resist poison or disease.

IRON HIDE

Endurance

This character is so tough that her very hide resists wounds. With this trait she gains a +2 bonus to her DR.

TOUGHNESS

Endurance

This character is especially resilient, staying up despite wounds that may fell a lesser individual. When calculating the character's maximum HP, add her Endurance as a bonus to the total amount.

DIEHARD

Endurance

This character is as tough as nails, and extremely difficult to kill. Instead of meeting her maker after three failed Endurance flips when dying, it instead takes six failed flips. She still stabilizes with three successful flips.

SECOND WIND

Endurance

This character has inner reserves of strength that can keep her fighting on long after others would cease. This character may discard a Moxie to pull herself together. When doing this she immediately regains a number of HP equal to her Endurance. She may not do this more than once per combat round.

UNBREAKABLE

Endurance

This character is virtually unbreakable, and can continue to fight on despite grievous injury. Normally a character who fails an Endurance flip due to being reduced to negative HP falls unconscious and begins dying. Not so for this character! Once one of these flips are failed, she still begins dying, but remains conscious during this process. At the beginning of every round she must still make the usual flip for dying, but may otherwise act on her turn. If she stabilizes, she falls unconscious while she recovers. Otherwise, if she dies... she's dead.



INTELLIGENCE TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Intelligence, and may be purchased using Intelligence experiences.

LANGUAGE

1

Intelligence

All characters get their native language free. Knowledge of additional languages can be purchased using this trait. Knowledge of a language includes both speaking and writing, unless a character has a Weakness trait that would indicate otherwise. This trait may be purchased multiple times. Each time it is purchased it applies to a different language.

A table of common languages is shown below.

Language	Language	Language
Arabic	Hindi	Portuguese
Bengali	Japanese	Punjabi
English	Javanese	Russian
French	Malay	Spanish
German	Mandarin	Wu

COMMON SENSE

3

Intelligence

The character has a very grounded sense of what's a reasonable course of action and what's a good idea. Players whose characters possess this trait may ask the GM if a proposed course of action is very stupid idea. The GM is obligated to provide a useful response.

COORDINATOR

3

Intelligence

This character excels at the tactical coordination of others. When taking the coordinate action in combat, on a success the Bolstered consequence of coordinated allies is

increased two severities, rather than the normal one severity. On a success with Mag 5+, the Bolstered consequence is increased three severities rather than the normal two.

EIDETIC MEMORY

3

Intelligence

This character possesses a keen memory and attention to detail. She may discard a Moxie to remember the minute details of any scene she has been a part of. To do this the player must specify which scene she is trying to recall, but need not specify which details she is trying to remember. If there are no important details to remember in this scene, the GM may refund the cost of invoking this trait, allowing the player to redraw the same card she just discarded.

INTUITION

3

Intelligence

The character has an uncannily accurate intuition, useful when all reason fails. When facing a blind choice—such as which of two identical pathways to follow—she may spend a Moxie to make use of this trait. When it is used, the GM should secretly flip a card and tell the player which option would be best for her. The GM should tell the truth on any card except for a club, meaning there is close to a 75% chance that the GM will be telling the truth and 25% chance that she will lie.

AMAZING TACTICIAN

5

Intelligence

Using this character's expert tactical advice, her allies are able to operate more efficiently. On her turn she may spend her AP in order to allow her allies to take actions. If one of these actions requires a flip to resolve, this counts as the one such action the tactician gets on her turn.

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Intelligence

This character has a broad base of knowledge, and knows a little about everything. When playing a Moxie from hand for a flip, this character may substitute an Intelligence flip for any Intelligence-based flip with a skill. For example, if a character were making an Int/medicine flip with a Moxie played from hand, she could substitute her full Intelligence in place of Int/medicine.

TRICKSTER

Intelligence

Over time, this character has built up a bag of deceptions she can use in combat—anything to gain an advantage in a frenzied battle. This large wellspring of tricks allows her to repeatedly gain an advantage against opponents since she can vary her tactics in surprising ways. When she succeeds with the trick action in combat, the enemy increases its Stun consequence an extra severity—meaning two severities on a success and three on a critical success.

GADGETEER

Intelligence

This character is a mad genius with inventing. She gains a +2 bonus to all flips made as part of the Invention system (see page 123).

Additionally, she may play a Moxie to retroactively have been working on an invention (see page 92). This Moxie is treated as the card played for both the concept flip and the prototype flip. Assuming this is successful, she has the prototype already on hand. She still requires access to the right components for this ability to work, and she must immediately and retroactively pay any costs associated with the prototype at this time.

5 LINGUIST

Intelligence

This character possess the ability to learn new languages extremely quickly. In any scene where she interacts with characters speaking or writing a language she does not understand, she may discard a Moxie to begin to grasp the language. Afterward she is treated as being knowledgeable in the language, even if she has a bit of an accent.

This knowledge lasts until the end of the session, after which she must either allocate an experience to the Language trait to permanently know the language, declare it as one of the languages she gets as part of this trait (see below) or it fades from her memory as she moves on.

Additionally, the character may know up to five languages for no experiences cost. These languages can either be declared when this trait is taken or chosen later as the character uses this trait to learn new tongues.

Finally, when purchasing this trait, the player may convert past purchases of the Language trait into experiences used to purchase this trait. In this case, these languages count towards the “free” languages granted by the Linguist trait. For example, if the character already had the language trait for English, French and Spanish, she may turn these into 3 experiences, meaning she only needs 4 new experiences to purchase the Linguist trait. If she does this, three of her five “free” languages granted by Linguist will be English, French and Spanish.

The character's native language may not be converted in this manner, as it is already free.

7

MASTER PLAN

Intelligence

This character is a master of coming up with complex schemes, and always has plans within plans within plans. When a flip outside of combat is failed, she may spend a Moxie to retroactively explain how she had a plan in place preparing for this eventuality. If the GM accepts this explanation, she may add the Moxie's value to the result of her flip, possibly changing the result from failure to success. GMs are encouraged to be lenient in accepting plans. They're fun, after all! If the GM does reject the explanation, the player gets to keep the Moxie.

Think of this ability along the lines of a heist movie: inevitably some aspect of the elaborate plan for the heist goes wrong... but wait! There's a brief flashback showing how the schemer had plans in place for this all along! And the situation is saved from almost certain disaster.



9 PERCEPTION TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Perception, and may be purchased using Perception experiences.

DIRECTION SENSE

B

Perception

This character has a keen sense of direction. She may discard a Moxie to immediately know true north, although she may reason this though by any number of means, such as by knowing the direction the sun sets, knowing the constellations or simply a gut feeling. This allows her to avoid being lost in any but the most extreme of conditions, and even in those situations she may add a +4 bonus on any attempts to navigate.

IMPROVISED WARRIOR

B

Perception

With the right eye and tactical know-how, anything can be used as a weapon. With this trait the character no longer takes any penalties to her attack flip from using improvised weapons.

NIGHT VISION

B

Perception

Darkness does not impede this character's perception as much as others. She halves any penalties that she would experience from darkness (rounding down as usual). This does not affect vision-based penalties from other sources.

SCROUNGE

Perception

This character is exceedingly good at scrounging up old and discarded goods. By spending a Moxie and taking some time to search the closest settlement, she may turn up a common item of her choosing with a Cost rating equal to or less than her Perception. This item won't be the best quality example of its type, and may have some minor issues, but will be functional and free.

The GM may veto goods that are rare and unusual, or veto the use of this ability in situations where it would be absurd, for example, finding an automobile in a land never before explored by humankind. In this case, the player gets the Moxie she used for this ability refunded.

Finally, if this ability is used in conjunction with the Invention subsystem, scrounging up components can save a good amount of money, halving the Cost rating of the prototype step.

DANGER SENSE

Perception

This character almost has a sixth sense when it comes to being alert for danger. When she would normally be surprised at the beginning of combat she does not suffer the usual reduced AP.

GUNSLINGER

Perception

It takes very little time for this character to accurately aim at a target on a foe. When making a called shot with a ranged weapon, this character may spend one less AP than normal. This means that Called Shots on the arms or leg require no additional AP, while Called Shots to the head require only one additional AP.

MASTER DETECTIVE

Perception

This character has an uncanny knack for finding clues—especially clues that others might have missed. Whenever this character is investigating a scene, she may discard a Moxie to automatically find a number of clues up to her rank in the Investigate skill. If there are no clues remaining to be found, the GM may refund the cost of invoking this trait, allowing the player to take back the card she just discarded.

SEIZE THE INITIATIVE

Perception

During combat, after a player or the GM chooses who gets the next turn but before that character can act, this player may spend a Moxie to “seize the initiative.” This means she gets the next turn. She may not do this if she has already had a turn this round, nor does this deny a turn to the character who was just preempted. That character will still get a turn, just later in the combat round. After the character who seized the initiative takes her turn, she picks who goes next, as per the usual rules.

SNIPER

Perception

With keen eyesight and a particularly deft aim, this character is able to increase the range at which she can effectively target foes. She may treat any weapon with the Range property as if it had double the listed range. For example, a weapon with Range 2 is treated as if it were Range 4.

BLIND WARRIOR

Perception

Vision is not a necessary sense for this character to strike out at her opponents. She may ignore any vision-based penalties to attacks, such as from darkness, concealment or fog. Additionally, she does not have to spend any extra AP due to a lack of vision, such as when fighting blind (see page 108).

What's more, if she also possesses the Night Vision trait she can use her enemies' lack of vision to her advantage! Instead of subtracting darkness or similar penalties from her attacks, she instead adds them as a bonus to her attack, as she makes the best use of the darkness to cloak her movements.



9

CHARISMA TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Charisma, and may be purchased using Charisma experiences.

CONTACT

B

Charisma

The character has a contact—a person with a particular skill (specified when taking this trait) who would be willing to give her information or perform simple tasks at her request. The contact may be generally helpful, but won't go too far out of her way or put herself in jeopardy at the character's behest. The GM is the judge of what this constitutes. A contact may be reliably called upon once per session. Calling upon a contact more frequently may result in the contact denying the character's request for aid.

This trait may be purchased multiple times, with each purchase representing a different contact.

If this trait is gained during character creation, the player should come up with a brief description of the contact. If it is gained during character advancement, the player should specify someone during the session with whom she interacted in a friendly manner and who would be inclined to continue to think well of her.

FASHION SENSE

B

Charisma

The character is highly skilled at picking clothing and adornments that complement her looks. She gains a +1 bonus to all Charisma-based flips when she is able to prepare her outfits ahead of time, tailoring them to the situation in question. Needless to say, this does not apply to actions where an outfit would not be visible, such as communication by telegraph.

NETWORK

Charisma

This character has an extensive network that she can use to acquire goods or live a luxurious lifestyle. Maybe she has rich family connections, governmental connections or the support of an expansive and exclusive club.

During downtime the character may spend a Moxie to treat either her Wealth or Lifestyle as being equal to her Charisma when making a purchase. This represents the ability to acquire the good or service for free or at a discount, using her extended network. This process may take some time, depending on the availability of her network.

The GM is free to rule that this ability will not work if she is exceptionally rushed for time in making the purchase, or is attempting to purchase a unique item to which her network would not have access. For example, calling on her network might require sending a telegraph to her family, and wouldn't apply if she only has time to walk into a storefront and slap money on the counter. Similarly, she might not be able to arrange the acquisition of a particular mystic scepter, because the scepter in question is unique and not possessed by anyone in her network.

Finally, if this trait is purchased at character creation, she may opt to begin play with a Wealth score equal to her Charisma, rather than the usual Wealth 5.

3

STATUS

Charisma

This character has some sort of reputation, fame or social status that she can call upon to be particularly impressive in a social situation. Perhaps she has been knighted, has the reputation as being the hero of some important battle or is a well-known and influential socialite.

In a social situation, the character may discard a Moxie to call upon her status to give her an advantage. This grants a +4 bonus to the action. This bonus may only be called upon in situations where the status would be relevant (GM's discretion). A group of isolated tribesmen probably aren't going to be impressed just because a character is a famous cricket player.

This trait may be purchased multiple times, with each purchase representing a different source of status.

If this trait is gained during character creation, the player should come up with a brief description of what gives her status. If it is gained during character advancement, the player should specify some event in the session which has changed her reputation or social standing in some significant way, and from which she draws this status.

COOL

Charisma

This character is good at keeping her cool when the situation gets hectic. She can use this level-headedness to her advantage, while others panic. Her starting Moxie increases by one.

3

5



CUTTING REMARK

Charisma

By making a witty remark, one-liner or other appropriate exclamation when making an attack, the character receives a +2 bonus to an attack. The player has to actually come up with this remark and say it out loud. The GM is the final judge of whether the remark qualifies. The same remark may not be reused in the same session. Because of this, GMs are encouraged to be lenient when judging remarks.

INSPIRING

Charisma

The character's words and personal charisma have an unusual ability to inspire others to do better in their work. As long as the character can speak and be heard by others, she may always roll Chr/persuade to act as secondary to that character in a Group Effort flip—regardless of the nature of the action—inspiring the primary actor to great heights.

BORN LEADER

Charisma

Through the character's words and encouragement she may spend her own Moxie to benefit those around her. To do this the character needs to show her leadership in the situation in some way. This allows her to play her own Moxie as the card flip for the actions of others, assuming she has their consent. Similarly, it also allows others to activate their abilities that require discarding a Moxie, with this character discarding a card instead.

5 HONEYED TONGUE

Charisma

This character's words are extremely persuasive and tempting, working their way into the thoughts of others. As an Interact action costing an AP, this character may use this trait to try to convince others to act as she desires. She makes a Chr/persuade vs. Willpower flip. On an effect, she increases her target's Desire consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical effect. She specifies the subject of the desire.

She may attempt this on the same character repeatedly, continuing to increase the severity of Desire consequence, but should one of these attempts end in failure, she may not use this trait on the same target again this scene.

MASTER OF WORDS

Charisma

This character has a golden tongue, and all it takes is a few words from her to dramatically sway the thoughts of others. She can turn what should be a blow to morale into a rallying point or vice versa.

By taking an Interact action and succeeding on a Chr/persuade vs. Willpower flip, the character may turn the target's Bolstered, Dazed, Fear or Fixated consequence into any other consequence on that list. Should the consequence have a subject—such as the Fear consequence being fearful of something—she may specify the subject as well. On a critical success, she may also increase or decrease the consequence a severity as well.

In addition, if the character possesses the Honeyed Tongue trait, she may add the Desire consequence to the above list.

DETERMINATION TRAITS

The following traits are associated with Determination, and may be purchased using Determination experiences.

DEDICATION

B

Determination

This character is driven to redouble her efforts, where other would simply give up. When making flips as part of an extended action, should the character fail an individual flip, she gains a +2 bonus to the subsequent flip. The flip receiving this bonus is part of the same extended action.

FEARLESS

B

Determination

This character is particularly stouthearted. Once on her turn every round, she may reduce any Fear consequences she possesses by a severity. This is considered a free Concentrate action.

FOCUSED

B

Determination

This character has a mental clarity that allows her to remain focused on her efforts, despite shock or pain. Once on her turn every round, she may reduce her Dazed consequence by a severity. This is considered a free Concentrate action.

SINGLE-MINDED

B

Determination

The character has an inner precision that keeps her targeted on the situation at hand, despite the world's many distractions. Once on her turn every round, she may reduce either her

Desire or Fixated consequences by a severity. This is considered a free Concentrate action.

IRON WILL

5

Determination

This character has a disciplined mind that is hard to break. With this trait, when calculating the character's Willpower score, she may treat her Determination as if it were two higher than it is. This should increase her Willpower score by +1/+2, respectively.

LUCKY

5

Determination

This character is particularly lucky, and furthermore, can use her great luck to her advantage. Her starting Moxie increases by one.

UNDAUNTED

5

Determination

This character's mind is akin to an impenetrable fortress. With this trait the character may play a Moxie, treating it as the card flipped in a Resist reaction. Resists made this way do not require an AP to be expended as usual.

GRIT

7

Determination

By gritting her teeth and bearing the pain, this character may fight on despite her wounds. When calculating the character's maximum HP, add her Determination as a bonus to the total amount.

TRULY SCARY

7

Determination

This character is one scary badass. When making an Intimidation action, she only needs

to spend a single AP to target any and all characters in her zone. Characters from other zones may also be included at the usual AP cost.

UNFAZEABLE

9

Determination

This character's mind is like a fortress. When taking an End Consequence action, any consequences which could be removed by this action may be removed with the expenditure of a single AP.

Additionally, when having one of these consequences imposed on her, this character may take the End Consequence action as a reaction, spending a single AP.



WEAKNESS TRAITS

Weakness traits are special traits that represent a flaw, defect or quirk which makes a hero's life more difficult. They have no associated cost, requirement or stat. They can be freely chosen at character creation or afterward, with the GM's permission (see page 141).

Whenever a Weakness trait would significantly hinder a character during play, it also provides a benefit by allowing her to immediately draw a Moxie. This can be done up to once per scene per Weakness trait. It may allow her to increase her Moxie beyond her normal starting value.

COMPLICATION

0

Weakness

This is perhaps the most abstract of the four Weakness traits. It represents a hindrance that comes up periodically at inconvenient intervals. Examples include Complication (enemy), where a character's personal enemy shows up to try to harm the character; Complication (epilepsy), where a character sometimes falls into a seizure; or Complication (wanted), where the authorities will sometimes try to arrest the character.

When taking this Weakness, the player should decide upon the nature of the complication and the type of situations in which the complication can arise. The complication arises whenever a joker is played by the player in one of these situations. For example, Complication (wanted) may result in arresting authorities showing up, and arises in situations when a character is arriving in a new city or settlement. Should the player play a joker in one of these situations, she may be arrested or at least have to deal with someone attempting to arrest her.

The player should work with the GM when taking a Complication weakness.

Some examples are provided below:

- **Allergy:** This character has an allergy to a particular common substance. If a joker comes up while the character is in a location that may contain the substance, she has been exposed and the character has an allergic reaction. This incapacitates the character until she has time to recover, away from the substance. To model a less severe allergy, take an Impairment to all actions in the presence of the substance instead.
- **Compulsive Behavior:** Experiencing a strong urge to take some behavior, the character regularly indulges. This could be compulsive gambling, drinking, sex or other behavior. When a joker comes up in the presence of this temptation she gains the Desire (indulge compulsion, severe) consequence.
- **Delusion:** The character has a strong belief that is at odds with reality. Often these beliefs form elaborate conspiracy theories. When a joker comes up in play the belief interferes with her interpretation of events in some way. This can cause her to act seemingly irrational, penalizing her social actions by -4 among witnesses.
- **Depression:** Depression can be a very serious problem. When a joker comes up, thereby causing the character to fail to achieve a goal personally significant to her, she faces a bout of depression. This gives her a -2 penalty to all actions for the next day.
- **Doomed:** The character is dying, and it is only a matter of time until she expires. This could be due to a chronic illness, slow poisoning or other medical condition. Whenever a joker comes up on an Endurance-based action, make a tally mark next to this Weakness. Once the number of tally marks exceed the character's Endurance, she finally expires from her illness.
- **Enemy:** Many people have enemies, but this character's enemy is particularly persistent. The first time in a session in which a joker comes up, the character's enemy may make an appearance and try to foil her in some way. This could be anything from telepresence interference with the character's plans, to direct physical confrontation.
- **Epilepsy:** This character suffers from epileptic fits. The first time in a scene in which a joker comes up for the character, she suffers a seizure. She takes a Stun (moderate) consequence. Certain triggers, such as rapidly flashing lighting, may set off this weakness as well.
- **Fixation:** This Weakness causes the character to fixate on her victory or failure to an irritating and hindering degree. When a joker comes up, the character fixates on the action that she just critically failed. This gives her the Fixation (subject of failure, severe) consequence. For example, if a joker came up while trying to get past an electronic lock, she would fixate on that lock for the duration of the consequence.
- **Flashbacks:** Flashbacks can be caused by traumatic experiences, mental illness or drug use. Whenever a joker comes up during a stressful event, the character experiences flashbacks. This can confuse and disorient her. She gains the Dazed (severe) consequence.
- **Insomniac:** Insomnia plagues the character, causing her to not sleep well. Anytime a joker comes up in play, the character does not sleep well later that night. This causes her not to count that night towards the purpose of natural healing.

- **Minor:** The character is a kid—a plucky sidekick or a loud-mouthed youth. As a result, she may be restricted in her legal actions or not be taken seriously in many situations. Whenever a joker comes up in a social situation, she suffers the stigma of youth with a relevant NPC.
- **Mistaken Identity:** There is someone else out there with whom the character is regularly mistaken. They probably look alike and may even have similar voices. When a joker comes up when interacting with a new social group, the character's identity has been mistaken. She may have to suffer through the enemies, debt or complications taken on by her double.
- **Multiple Personality:** Mental illness causes the character to flip between two or more identities. Whenever a joker comes up for her in play, she switches between two of these identities. At the very least this gives her a -4 penalty to social actions for those who witness the switch, and it may result in other consequences.
- **Obligation:** The character has a significant obligation that she owes to an outside party—perhaps a large debt, national loyalty or organizational membership. The first time in a session in which a joker comes up in play, some favor is called to which the character is obliged to accept.
- **Secret:** People will often go to great lengths to protect their most personal and hidden secrets. This character has one such secret. If a joker comes up while events from the character's past are under review, or subjects related to the secret are being observed, their character lets something slip, or evidence otherwise surfaces that hints at the character's secret. If the secret gets revealed, this Weakness is usually replaced with Complication (wanted), Impairment (stigmatized) or something else that is appropriate.
- **Wanted:** The character is wanted by a major nation or other sizable group. If a joker comes up when going through a new settlement, port or other area where a character's identity may be flagged, the local magistrate or other agents of the authority will come try to arrest the character.



DISABILITY



Weakness

When a character possesses this trait, she automatically fails some category of actions due to inability. For example, a character with Disability (blind) will fail actions that depend solely on eyesight. A character with Disability (illiterate) will fail actions that require reading. The player should decide upon the nature of this Weakness when it is taken.

Some examples are provided below:

- **Amnesia:** There is some period of the character's life which she simply cannot remember. She automatically fails all attempts to remember this part of her life. What was she doing? Why can she not remember this?
- **Anosmia:** The character lacks a functioning sense of smell. This also usually impairs the character's sense of taste as well. She automatically fails all actions which rely on her olfactory senses.
- **Blind:** The character is blind, perhaps as the result of an accident, illness, birth defect or injury. She automatically fails all actions which depend on sight. Gaining an implant which would restore her sense of sight removes this trait.
- **Cannot Swim:** Swimming is largely a learned skill—one which the character never picked up. This is very common among those who grew up far from large bodies of water. The character automatically fails all attempts to swim or otherwise navigate in deep water.
- **Colorblind:** The character either cannot perceive color, or cannot distinguish several different colors from one another. Attempts to do this are automatically failed.
- **Crippled:** While the character can walk, her legs do not function anywhere near a jog, let alone a run. She automatically fails all attempts to run, jump, jog or otherwise move quickly by foot.
- **Deaf:** The character does not have a functioning sense of hearing. She automatically fails actions relying on this sense.
- **Illiterate:** It's a sad fact that many children do not grow up with an adequate education. This is particularly true in poor and neglected regions. This character never learned to read and automatically fails all attempts to do so.
- **Innumerate:** Similar to being illiterate, but applying to numbers and arithmetic, this character never learned even basic math skills. She may be able to intuit basic addition using her fingers, but more than that is beyond her ability.
- **Mute:** This weakness represents a character's inability to make intelligible vocal sounds or inability to speak a language. She fails all actions that depend on verbal speech.
- **One-Armed:** Possessing only one arm, the character is completely incapable of performing actions which depend on the use of both hands, such as holding onto a rope while firing a gun. If she only possesses her off-hand she qualifies for a related Impairment weakness as well.
- **Paraplegic:** The character is either missing her legs or her legs simply do not function. She is likely bound to a wheelchair (sometimes called "rolling chairs" or "bath chairs" in this period), and automatically fails all actions which depend on the use of her legs. Somehow regaining the ability to walk removes this trait.

IMPAIRMENT



Weakness

Characters with this trait have some sort of impairment at a particular category of actions. This gives a -2 or more penalty to those actions. When this trait is chosen, the player should decide upon the actions to which this trait applies. For example, Impairment (limp) may give a -2 penalty to actions that involve running or holding something steady while walking. Impairment (dyslexia) may give a penalty to actions that involve reading quickly or writing clearly. Impairment (bad hearing) may give a -2 penalty to actions that involve hearing things.

Some examples are provided below:

- **Absent-Minded:** Always absent-minded and spacey, the character is in a world of her own most of the time. This applies a -2 penalty to actions that require remaining alert or recalling past details.
- **Bad Eyesight:** The character has a poor sense of vision. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that rely primarily on sight. This might be correctable with glasses, in which case the penalty does not apply, but neither does the character gain a Moxie for the Weakness being a significant hindrance.
- **Bothersome Habits:** Many people have some odious personal habits, and this character is one of them. This might be bad hygiene, a consistent and awful sense of humor or an aura of pure arrogance. Whatever its nature, the character takes a -2 penalty to all social actions where she might offend others.
- **Cowardice:** This character is not very brave at all, and is likely to run or freeze up when faced with danger. This gives a -2 penalty on all aggressive actions when faced with a spooky or dangerous situation. This penalty may also be applied to actions made to resist fear.
- **Dwarfism:** Dwarfism occurs as the result of a medical condition that causes slowed growth. It results in a person having an unusually short stature. This gives a -2 penalty to actions where being short would be a hindrance, and this penalty may also be applied to social actions where dwarfism would result in social stigma.
- **Dyslexia:** The character has a reading disorder, which can hinder their reading comprehension and slow down their reading speed. This applies a -2 penalty to any actions to understand what was read, convey concepts clearly in writing or to quickly comprehend what was written.
- **Fat:** Carrying around a lot of extra weight can be disadvantageous in many situations. This character is fat, and suffers a -2 penalty on actions made to run, walk lightly or squeeze herself into small spaces.
- **Gluttonous:** This character cannot control her appetite, and given the chance to overindulge, she always will. After being presented with an opportunity to overeat, she takes a -2 penalty to all actions made in the next hour due to discomfort from being overfull, and the resulting food coma.
- **Hard of Hearing:** The character has a poor sense of hearing. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that rely primarily on listening. This might be correctable with an ear horn, in which case the penalty does not apply, but neither does the character gain a Moxie for the Weakness being a significant hindrance.
- **Honesty:** Some people just aren't able to lie very well. Maybe something in their face gives them away, or maybe deep

down inside they simply feel guilty. This character takes a -2 penalty on all attempts to deceive, lie or cover up the truth.

- **Intolerance:** Arth is a more accepting world than Earth was in its comparable time period. Nevertheless, intolerance still sometimes rears its ugly head. This character is one of the intolerant ones. Perhaps she is biased against some particular ideology, group or religion. She takes a -2 penalty to all social actions made to interact with this group, and may receive this penalty in situations where her intolerant beliefs offend others.
- **Lecherous:** Distractions of a sexual nature are many and varied, and this character is particularly lured by them. She takes a -2 penalty on all actions to resist seduction or where her lecherous nature may serve as a significant distraction.



- **Limp:** This character has a limp due to an injury or medical condition. She takes a -2 penalty to all actions made to walk or run quickly.
- **Phobia:** Irrational fear can be paralyzing. This character has something of which she is uncontrollably and irrationally afraid. She takes a -2 penalty to all actions made in the presence of the subject of her phobia.
- **Scrawny:** The physique of this character is stick-thin and lacking significant bulk or muscle. She takes a -2 penalty to any action which would resist moving her around, such as actions to resist being knocked down, grappled or blown over.
- **Stigmatized:** Many social stigmas exist, and this character is subject to one of them. It could be coming from a marginalized group, a history of past criminal behavior or a bad reputation. Regardless of its nature, she takes a -2 penalty to social actions due to this stigma.
- **Stutter:** The character has a serious stutter, which gets in the way of speeches and other communication. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that require significant amounts of verbal communication.
- **Suspicion:** This character is suspicious of everyone's motives—even those of her own allies, fearing that she will suffer misfortune at the hands of another. She takes a -2 penalty to any group effort action, regardless of whether she is acting as primary or secondary.
- **Ugly:** Some people are beautiful to simply gaze upon. This character is quite the opposite. This could be a natural unattractiveness or the result of some disfiguring injury. Regardless, she takes a -2 penalty to social actions where standard of beauty would apply.

SHORTCOMING



Weakness

A character with this Weakness takes a -2 or greater penalty to a derived score, such as Defense, Moxie, Health Points, Wealth or Willpower. The player should decide upon the nature of this weakness when it is chosen. Examples include Shortcoming (frail), which applies to HP, or Shortcoming (slow reaction time), which applies to Defense.

Some examples are provided below:

- **Bad Reaction Time:** The character does not have quick reflexes when it comes time to avoid attacks. This applies a -2 penalty to Defense.
- **Combat Shock:** The character finds it difficult to bring herself to hurt others, especially when it's up close and personal. This applies a ♠-6/♥-4/♦-2/♣-1 penalty to all damage dealt by the character in melee.
- **Crippling Debt:** While the character may have a well-paying job, she may also have some pretty large debts that eat much of the income she would otherwise use to live. This reduces her Lifestyle score by -2. She must continue to make payments each month as if her Lifestyle score were its normal value, however.
- **Frail:** The character's constitution and grasp on life is more fragile than one might expect, perhaps due to a childhood illness or inborn syndrome. This applies a -4 penalty to her maximum HP.
- **Poor:** Unfortunate economic circumstances have brought the character to a point where she is vastly poorer than the average adventurer. This reduces her starting Wealth by 2 after any purchases are made. It is recommended that she cannot exceed Wealth 3 unless she voluntarily removes this trait.

- **Slow:** When the time comes that she needs to act quickly, this character just cannot muster a reasonable speed. Perhaps she has coordination issues from a medical condition or being extremely elderly. Whatever the cause, she normally gains only 2 AP each round of combat instead of 3. Note: This is not a -2 penalty as usually suggested for the Shortcoming trait; nevertheless, this penalty is very significant.
- **Unlucky:** The character's luck tends to run out before others, leaving her known for being particularly unlucky. This applies a -2 penalty to the character's starting Moxie score.
- **Weakling:** The character finds herself unable to lift as much gear as she might otherwise be expected. Perhaps she has a condition that restricts the mobility of her arms or a delicate spinal condition. Regardless of the physiological cause, this applies a -2 penalty to her Encumbrance threshold.





EQUIPMENT

No adventure would be complete without an assortment of equipment—both miraculous and mundane—at the hero's disposal. From dashing uniforms and swashbuckling sabers, to trusty horses and newfangled automobiles, a plethora of parcels and exciting equipment can be found in the following pages!

EQUIPMENT PROPERTIES

Equipment in the *Saga Machine* system is largely a matter of common sense. A lock pick can be used for picking locks but not for forensic anthropology; a cane can be used to walk with and may serve as a basic improvised weapon in a pinch. Mechanically, however, a piece of equipment often has a number of listed properties indicating how it interacts with various rules systems. This is particularly

true of weapons and armor. A property, for example, may indicate the piece of equipment is big and takes up more encumbrance than normal, or it may indicate that the weapon is capable of automatic fire, spitting out bullets in rapid succession.

The different equipment properties in *Dime Adventures* are listed below. For ease of reference, they have been divided up into general properties, weapon properties and armor properties.

GENERAL PROPERTIES

General properties can apply to any kind of equipment, from automobiles and survival gear to weapons and armor. The different general properties are listed below:

- **Big X:** This item is large enough or heavy enough that it occupies more than one encumbrance slot, where X is the number of slots occupied.

Don't Forget Lifestyle

When purchasing new equipment—particularly at character creation—remember these are not the only goods the character possesses. Her Lifestyle score will imply a variety of other goods she has at her disposal, from basic necessities to work animals and vehicles. Even the most destitute characters can start with the clothes on their back as part of their lifestyles.

What is important when buying equipment isn't to sweat the small stuff; focus on buying the most exceptional or unusual items the character needs, the stuff not normally covered by Lifestyle. To put it in the context of roleplaying games, what you're buying here is your "adventuring equipment." Lifestyle should suffice to cover most everything else.

- **Container X:** This item is designed to carry others inside of it. It can carry the indicated number of encumbrance slots of items. When these items are inside the container, they do not count towards the character's encumbrance total. Often these items will have restrictions on the items placed in them. See the container's description for details.
- **Neg:** This item has negligible weight and does not occupy any encumbrance slots. At the GM's discretion, holding mass quantities of this type of item may add up to an encumbrance slot, however.
- **Worn:** This item is designed to be worn and only occupies an encumbrance slot if it is being carried.



WEAPON PROPERTIES

Weapon properties are properties primarily aimed at how weapons interact with the combat system or other rule systems. The different weapon properties are listed below:

- **Area:** This weapon deals an area attack, targeting all characters within a specified zone rather than an individual character (see page 105-106).
- **Auto X:** Weapons with this property are capable of automatic fire and suppressive fire. The higher the rating, the more shots that can be spit out into the attack (see page 107).
- **Conceal:** This weapon is particularly easy to conceal on one's person. When undergoing a thorough search, a Dex/thievery vs. Per/awareness flip may be made to conceal the weapon. Weapons without the property are usually automatically discovered.
- **Damage ♠X/♥X/♦X/♣X:** This weapon deals the damage listed for the listed suits
- when it is used to attack. For some weapons, this will be a function of the wielder's Strength (see page 79).
- **Defense X:** This weapon gives the indicated bonus to Defense against attacks made from melee range when it is being wielded.
- **Hands X:** This property indicates the number of hands required to wield the weapon. If this property is not listed, it is assumed to be Hands 1.
- **Pierce X:** Weapons with this property ignore the indicated number of DR. Subtract this number from DR before using it to resolve damage from this weapon.
- **Range X:** This weapon can target characters at range. The indicated number is up to how many zones away this weapon can reach. If this property is not listed, the weapon is assumed to only be able to target characters in the same zone.
- **Reach:** When wielding this weapon, the character gains a +2 bonus to Dodge and

Parry reactions against melee, except those also with the Reach property.

- **Reload X:** This property indicates how many AP worth of Interact actions are necessary to reload the weapon. If this property is not listed and the weapon takes shots, it is assumed to have Reload 1.
- **Shots X:** This property indicates how many shots the weapon can hold before it needs to be reloaded.
- **Stun:** This weapon is designed primarily to stun its target. If this weapon deals damage to a foe's head by means of a Called Shot, the target's Stun consequence increases an additional severity.
- **Thrown:** This weapon is designed to be able to be thrown. Unless indicated otherwise, thrown weapons always have Range 1.

ARMOR PROPERTIES

Armor properties are intended to apply to armor. The different armor properties are described below:

- **Bulky X:** This armor is bulky when worn and hinders the character's movement. It gives the indicated penalty to all Dexterity- and Speed-based actions while worn. Unless specified otherwise, only one bulky item may be worn at a time.
- **DR X:** This item provides the amount of damage reduction indicated when worn. If this value is accompanied by one or more suit symbols, it applies only if the attacking card matches one of the listed suits.
- **Helmet:** This armor is designed to protect the head alone. Its DR applies only to Called Shots targeting the head or when the attacking card is a spade.

The Right Tool for the Job

Most actions benefit if the character has the right tool for the job. Not having the correct tool can make a task more difficult or even impossible. For example, it's a lot easier to pry open a crate if one has an appropriate tool, like a crowbar. Other tasks—such as flying a hot air balloon—are going to be impossible unless one has the right tool: the hot air balloon. Often these tools are going to be physical equipment. Other times they're going to be metaphorical tools, such as speaking the right language.

Anytime a character tries to perform an action without an appropriate tool designed for the task, the action is at a -4 penalty, or at the GM's discretion, simply impossible.

A character who manages to scrounge up an improvised tool—one not designed for the task, but still capable—the penalty might be lessened to a mere -2, or for a particularly ingenious tool, the penalty might be dropped entirely. For example, a chisel might be used in place of the crowbar mentioned above.

Having the right tool for the job confers no penalty or bonus. This is the assumed norm, and the tools are said to be “sufficient.”

Finally, some tools are of a superior quality for the task at hand. These tools provide a +2 bonus on the action in question.

ENCUMBRANCE

Characters can only carry so many things around with them before they begin to get bogged down under its sheer mass and bulk. This is represented mechanically as a number of encumbrance slots. Every piece of gear, unless a property indicates otherwise, takes up exactly one slot. This limits what the character can carry around before she begins to be impeded by its bulk. For example, a character with Encumbrance 5 can carry five items without penalty. A character has a number of encumbrance slots equal to her Strength.

Encumbrance = Strength

Characters who carry equipment over this limit gain the Encumbered consequence (see page 254). This consequence starts at light severity and increases a severity at every multiple of her limit she carries. For example, if a character has 5 encumbrance slots and is carrying around 6 items, she has Encumbered (light). If she later picks up more items and is then carrying around 11, she is at Encumbered (moderate), since that's more than double her number of encumbrance slots. This would increase to Encumbered (severe) at 16 items, and Encumbered (critical) at 21 items. A character simply cannot lift more items than five times her number of slots.

Negligible Encumbrance

Gear that has the Neg property has negligible encumbrance. These items aren't typically encumbering on their own, but their bulk can still add up if carried en masse. As a rule of thumb, assume every 100 negligible items adds up to an encumbrance slot. The GM is free to adjust this if common sense dictates otherwise.

Carrying Characters

There are times when a character might want to carry or drag around another. This can happen when one of the characters is unconscious or otherwise incapacitated. Other characters typically have the Big property for the purposes of encumbrance. As a rule of thumb, assume a character has Big X, where X equals the sum of their Strength and Endurance. So, for example, a character with Str 5 and End 4 would be Big 9. The GM may want to adjust this value for particularly large or small characters.

CONTAINERS

Containers can allow a character to carry around gear more efficiently. This allows several items and the container to all share a single encumbrance slot, whereas they might otherwise have occupied several.

Think about it this way: Imagine trying to carry twelve cans of food. It's not the weight that hinders you; it's the shape and bulk. You might be able to stack them up in your hands, leaning them against your chest, and tote them all without dropping them, but you're going to be encumbered. It's going to impede your ability to do other things while carrying them around. With a container, on the other hand, those twelve cans are easily boxed up, and can probably be grasped under an arm, unencumbered.

Containers featured in this book include the Backpack (see page 202), Briefcase (see page 201), Gun Holster (see page 193), Handbag (see page 196), Scabbard (see page 193) and Suitcase (see page 200).

WEAPONS

Weapons are common items, possessed by almost anyone expecting trouble. The most common weapons are either firearms or simple hand-to-hand weapons, such as the knife or spear. If nothing else, most everyone has the ability to fall back on their skill with fisticuffs.

GUNS

Since their advent in China around 1000 CE, guns have become some of the most popular weapons in the world. They are the go-to weapons of most heroes and villains around the globe.

AUTOMATIC RIFLE

Cost Rating: 5

Damage: ♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3

Properties: Auto 2, Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 3, Shots 5

Example (Mondragón Automatic Rifle):

Recently developed by the Mexican artillery officer, Manuel Mondragón, this automatic rifle has yet to see widespread manufacture, but orders are currently pouring into its European manufacturers.

ELEPHANT GUN

Cost Rating: 4

Damage: ♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3

Properties: Hands 2, Pierce 3, Range 3, Reload 3, Shots 2

Example (H&H Nitro Express Rifle): This is the quintessential “elephant gun,” designed to hunt large game and to make use of the largest caliber cartridges. These guns use special propellant to fire bullets at exceedingly high velocities to achieve maximum damage.

PISTOL

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2

Properties: Conceal, Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8

Example (Browning Model 1903): Manufactured by the Colt Firearms Company, the Browning Model 1903 is a pistol advertised as “hammerless,” despite having an internal hammer. Rather, its hidden nature prevents the hammer from catching on clothing, allowing the pistol to be smoothly drawn from a jacket or pants pocket.

POCKET PISTOL

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2

Properties: Conceal, Range 1, Reload 2, Shots 2

Special: The Remington Model 95 provides a +4 bonus on all attempts to conceal the weapon.

Example (Remington Model 95): This is a popular double-barrel pocket pistol, similar in design to the well-known Derringer pocket pistols. This small pistol is particularly easy to hide, making it ideal for concealed carry.

REVOLVER

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2

Properties: Conceal, Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6

Special: Revolvers have fewer moving parts than most guns and thus jam less frequently. These guns only suffer a critical failure when both jokers come up when making an attack.

Example (Smith & Wesson Model 10):

Developed in 1899, the Smith & Wesson Model 10 is one of the world's most popular revolvers. Also known as a “.38 Special,” the Model 10 hold six shots and comes with either a six-inch barrel (the original 1899 revision) or a four-inch barrel (the 1902 revision).

RIFLE

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3

Properties: Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5

Example (Springfield M1903): Designed to emulate some of the best features of the earlier 1893 Mauser, as of last year the Springfield M1903 is now the standard issue rifle used by the United States military. With a faster loading stripper clip, the Springfield M1903 is a solid modern rifle.

SHOTGUN

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠12/♥9/♦6/♣3

Properties: Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5

Special: Subtract the range of the target from damage. This weapon has the Area property for all attacks made outside of the same zone.

Example (Winchester M1897): Also known as a Trench Gun, the Winchester M1897 is a sturdy shotgun with a “take down” design, meaning the barrel can be detached for easy transport. Improving on the earlier M1893, this gun has rapidly become one of the most popular shotguns in the world.

SNIPER RIFLE

Cost Rating: 4

Damage: ♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3

Properties: Hands 2, Range 4, Reload 4, Shots 10

Special: Attacking with this weapon suffers a -2 penalty unless an Interact action is first taken to stabilize and brace the gun. This must be repeated after any attempt to move or dodge, otherwise the penalty returns.

Example (Lee-Enfield Mk I Sniper): The Lee-Enfield Mk I is a British-manufactured bolt-action rifle that has been carried to the far corners of the world by the British

Empire. It comes in a variety of models, including this sniper model, which comes with both a scope and brace.

BOWS & PRIMITIVE PROJECTILES

Primitive projectiles—such as boomerangs or bows—are still used throughout the world in regions where firearms haven't come into common use or in situations when the loud report of gunfire would be problematic.

BLOWGUN

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1

Properties: Conceal, Neg, Range 1, Shots 1

Blowguns have been used by many cultures throughout the world, but are especially well known for their use by tribal peoples throughout Southeast Asia and South America. Blowguns are essentially small tubes in which a dart is inserted. The wielder's breath is then used to propel the dart outward. Many times such a dart tip will be covered with poison intended to stun or paralyze the target.

Strength-Based Damage

Many primitive projectiles and hand-to-hand weapons list their damage as a function of the character's Strength. To determine the damage for each suit, simply do the math. For example, if damage is listed as Str-2 and the character has Strength 5, the resulting damage is 3.

If this would result in a damage total below 1, instead leave the damage total at 1. This is the minimum.

BOOMERANG

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+3/♥Str+1/♦Str-1/♣Str-3

Properties: Thrown

Special: Once thrown, a boomerang arcs and returns to the thrower. After an attack, the thrower may take a 1 AP Interact action to catch the boomerang. Boomerangs not caught in this way instead land on the ground somewhere in the same zone as the thrower, but require a move action before they can be picked up.

Essentially a flattened curved stick designed for throwing, a boomerang is a well-known weapon used by the Aborigines of Australia. Designed to return to the thrower once thrown, in recent decades use of the boomerang has spread beyond the borders of Australia.

BOW

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: Hands 2, Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 1

Independently invented the world over and dating back to prehistoric times, humans have used bows to hunt their prey. Bows consist of a taunt string attached to a flexible arc—usually made of wood.

CROSSBOW

Cost Rating: 4

Damage: ♠Str+7/♥Str+4/♦Str+1/♣Str-2

Properties: Hands 2, Range 2, Reload 3, Shots 1

Crossbows are mechanical bows, which fire special bolts at deadly velocities, surprising those of non-mechanical bows. Often they require that the string be drawn back using a specialized cocking winch.

Design Intent: Boomerang

The depiction of a boomerang to the left is not a realistic one. In real life, boomerangs do not return when they hit their target, and war boomerangs are usually too heavy to return at all! Rather, the boomerang stats above are intended to represent boomerangs as they exist in popular adventure fiction. A more realistic take on boomerangs can be achieved, simply dropping the special returning property.

LASSO

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+1/♥Str-1/♦Str-2/♣Str-4

Properties: Hands 2, Thrown

Special: A lasso that hits its target also automatically initiates a grapple.

Also known as a lariat, a lasso is a loop of rope designed to be thrown and tightened when pulled. This acts as a restraint, grappling a target from afar.



HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

For most of human history, combat has revolved around hand-to-hand weapons. These weapons still see common use, in bar fights, in bayonet charges and among the isolated tribes of the world.

BAYONET

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: —

Special: Attacking with a bayonet is treated as an improvised weapon (-2) unless it is attached to the end of a long-barrel firearm.

This is a knife-like blade that is designed to be attached to the end of a rifle or other long firearm. It can be used to jab within combat, effectively turning a rifle into a basic melee weapon.

BLACKJACK

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+3/♥Str+1/♦Str-1/♣Str-3

Properties: Stun

A blackjack consists of a lead weight, wrapped in leather and attached to the end of a short wooden stick. It is often used as a weapon intended to stun or subdue opponents.

BRASS KNUCKLES

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+3/♥Str+1/♦Str-1/♣Str-3

Properties: Conceal, Neg

This is a solid metal frame that fits over the knuckles, protecting them against damage when striking with a fist, and adding an extra “umph”

when making a punch. Some brass knuckles are also accompanied by spikes or a small knife blade.

CLUB

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+7/♥Str+4/♦Str+1/♣Str-2

Properties: —

Among the most basic of melee weapons, a club is essentially a large stick that can be swung to deal significant damage. Despite its primitive nature, clubs are nevertheless effective weapons and their use has endured through the ages due to this fact.

GARROTE

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+7/♥Str+4/♦Str+1/♣Str-2

Properties: Conceal, Hands 2, Neg

Special: For a garrote to deal damage, the attacker must first grapple the target. A garrote does not count as occupying a hand when grappling. Any attacks made with a garrote may be treated as Called Shots to the head, requiring one less AP than usual.

A garrote is a short length of wire, chain rope or silk that is used to strangle someone. Typically this involves first attacking with the element of surprise, or attacking as part of an extended grapple.

KNIFE

Cost Rating: 2

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: Conceal

Knives are short, bladed weapons that are found throughout the world. As knives serve many purposes beyond simply being weapons, they are comparatively easy to conceal or to pass off as tools.

SHIELD

Cost Rating: 4

Damage: ♠Str+3/♥Str+1/♦Str-1/♣Str-3

Properties: Defense 2

Special: The wielder of a shield may apply its Defense bonus against primitive projectiles, as well as the usual attacks at melee range.

Although it's thought of primarily as a form of defense, a shield is nevertheless held in the hand or strapped to a forearm, allowing it to be wielded much like a more traditional weapon. Shields can also be used to strike at a nearby foe.

SPEAR

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: Reach

A simple and ubiquitous weapon, the spear has been used in warfare since time immemorial. Typically the spear consists of a long wooden shaft ranging from half the height of a man to up to twice the height of a man. The best spears have a sharp metal head firmly attached at the end of the wooden shaft, although spears with heads made from bone, horn or sharpened wood are commonplace as well.

STAFF

Cost Rating: 1

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: Defense 1

Staves are basic weapons, consisting of little more than long sturdy lengths of wood. They are used by even the most primitive of cultures and can travel in many social contexts that other weapons cannot, doubling as walking or hiking sticks.

SWORD

Cost Rating: 4

Damage: ♠Str+7/♥Str+4/♦Str+1/♣Str-2

Properties: —

Swords are long knives swung or thrust to cut others. They come in a variety of lengths and styles, from the Roman-style gladius to the curved scimitar, from the shortsword to the longsword.

SWORD CANE

Cost Rating: 5

Damage: ♠Str+5/♥Str+2/♦Str/♣Str-3

Properties: Conceal

This is a thin sword blade made to be concealed inside a gentleman's cane. With one swift motion, the cane can be opened up, revealing the sword inside and allowing the wielder to launch an effective attack.

UNARMED

Cost Rating: —

Damage: ♠Str+1/♥Str-1/♦Str-2/♣Str-4

Properties: Neg (not really a piece of equipment)

Anyone can make a fist and punch someone with it, but Arth is home to many different martial traditions that include training in unarmed combat—not just in the use of fists as weapons, but also the feet, head, shoulders, elbows and knees as well.



HEAVY WEAPONS

Heavy weapons are unmistakable weapons of war or large scale destruction. Their damage is considerable, but then so is the collateral damage, if used without great care.

DYNAMITE

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠16/♥12/♦8/♣4

Properties: Area, Thrown

Special: The damage listed here represents a single stick of dynamite. Multiple sticks may be wired together, however. Each stick beyond the first gives a -1 penalty to throw the dynamite, but also gives +1 damage per additional stick, regardless of suit.

Used in both demolitions and warfare, sticks of dynamite are explosive charges that blow up once the fuse is lit and the fire reaches the main body of the dynamite. A half-century ago dynamite largely replaced nitroglycerin, as its deployment proved more stable.

FLAMETHROWER

Cost Rating: 7

Damage: ♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3

Properties: Area, Hands 2, Range 1, Reload 30, Shots 3

Special: Once fired, this weapon must be fired each round until it is out of fluid. If an action is not taken to fire this weapon, it will fire haphazardly, targeting everyone in the zone it is in, including the wielder. This weapon must be manually refilled with the appropriate compressed gas, flammable oil and a funnel. This is not typically done in the heat of combat. Replacement fluid is Cost 3.

This state-of-the-art weapon consists of a single vertical cylinder, divided in two with pressurized gas on one end and flammable oil in the other. The cylinder is strapped to the back, with a hose and nozzle coming out. By pushing a level, the gas and oil spray out over a wick, projecting a jet of flame and enormous clouds of smoke.

GRENADE

Cost Rating: 3

Damage: ♠16/♥12/♦8/♣4

Properties: Area, Thrown

For several decades the use of grenades has been waning, and they have increasingly been considered obsolete. Recently, however, their successful use in the Russo-Japanese War has led to a resurgence. Grenades are essentially small, handheld bombs that are designed to be thrown and to scatter sharp bits of shrapnel when they explode. Most grenades have a match-tip fuse that is ignited by striking a ring held in the grenadier's hand.

WEAPON ACCESSORIES & AMMUNITION

The following pieces of equipment, while not weapons themselves, are nevertheless intended for use with weapons.

ARROWS, BOLTS OR DARTS

Cost Rating: 2

Properties: —

These primitive projects are used as ammunition—arrows for bows, bolts for crossbows and darts for blowdart guns. They are cheap and comparatively easy to make. All of these projectiles come in bundles of a dozen arrows, bolts or darts each.

BULLETS

Cost Rating: 3

Properties: —

What are guns without bullets? Poorly-designed clubs! Different guns take different types and calibers of ammunition. Bullets come in sets of a dozen, and may either be loose or grouped together in either a stripper or en bloc clips, depending on the firearm in question.

GUN HOLSTER

Cost Rating: 3

Properties: Container 1, Worn

A gun holster is a handy gun-shaped pocket that straps to one's waist, back or shoulders. Many button closed for safe storage, and can also be left unbuttoned for quick access in a gunfight. Inside shoulder holsters may optionally have the Conceal 2 property, but are only sized to hold a holdout pistol or smaller firearm. Waist holsters are only sized to hold a pistol or smaller firearm. Back holsters are capable of holding rifles and shotguns.

SCABBARD

Cost Rating: 3

Properties: Container 1, Worn

A scabbard is a holster for a knife, designed to slip onto a belt, strap onto a limb or strap to the torso. It protects both the blade of the knife and makes it easy to carry. Smaller blades have scabbards that can strap to the limb or other concealable areas. They optionally have the Conceal 2 property. Larger blades, such as swords, cannot be concealed in this way. Two-handed blades must be strapped to the wearer's back.

SILENCER

Cost Rating: 4

Properties: —

Guns make loud noises when fired due to a combination of rapidly expanding gas, supersonic ammunition and mechanical noise from the moving parts of the firearm. Silencers are accessories that attach to the end of a gun barrel, and which are designed to mitigate some of the sound of the gun firing.



ARMOR

It's the dawn of the twentieth century, and personal armor is largely considered obsolete. Nevertheless, armor continues to see limited use around the globe. Below are a variety of armors that are still available.

BODY ARMOR

Body armor protects the torso and also sometimes the limbs, although most body armors these days are niche.

CUIRASSIER ARMOR

Cost Rating: 7

DR: 5 ♥♦

Properties: Bulky 2, Worn

In many regions across continental Europe the military still employs cuirassiers, heavy cavalry armed with pistols and durable breastplates—a cuirass. This armor is heavy, as it's designed for the wearer to be carted around on horseback. It leaves the limbs largely unprotected.

Donning and

Doffing Armor

Gear that has the Neg property has negligible encumbrance. These items aren't typically encumbering on their own, but their bulk can still add up if carried en masse. As a rule of thumb, assume every 100 negligible items adds up to an encumbrance slot. The GM is free to adjust this if common sense dictates otherwise.



LEATHER JACKET

Cost Rating: 4

DR: 1

Properties: Worn

Common in rough-and-tumble fields, as well as aviation and motor sports, these rugged leather coats or jackets provide a small degree of protection against many hand-to-hand weapons, as well as scrapes or small cuts.

DO ARMOR

Cost Rating: 6

DR: 3

Properties: Bulky 1, Worn

Do armor is the armor traditionally worn by the samurai caste in the Japanese empire. Although it has fallen out of popularity in the last few decades, it still sees ceremonial use, as well as regular use in the more rural and traditional provinces.

SPORTS PADDING

Cost Rating: 4

DR: 1

Properties: Worn

Many sports involve a great deal of physical impact, and thus frequently rely on simple armor or padding, such as the flattop dog-ear leather helmet ubiquitous in football.

HELMETS

While body armor may be going the way of the dodo, helmets remain in common use in both military and civilian endeavors.

AVIATOR HELMET

Cost Rating: 3

DR: 1 ♠

Properties: Helmet, Worn

This is a flexible leather helmet that's become popular with the rise of aviation and motor sports. It features a rounded top, with interior padding, long ear flaps and is often accompanied by a set of goggles.

MILITARY HELMET

Cost Rating: 4

DR: 3 ♠

Properties: Helmet, Worn

These are little more than a rounded piece of metal with a slight brim that is designed to be cheaply mass-produced, and which fits over the heads of enlisted troops.

OFFICER'S HELMET

Cost Rating: 5

DR: 5 ♠

Properties: Bulky 1, Helmet, Worn

An officer's helmet is typically a shiny metal helmet, usually worn with a dress uniform. These helmets can be quite elaborate, many featuring ornate crests or statuettes on the top.

Despite having the Bulky property, this helmet may be worn in addition to bulky body armors.

PITH HELMET

Cost Rating: 3

DR: 1 ♠

Properties: Helmet, Worn

Pith helmets are a type of light sun helmet, brimmed and ideal for tropical climates. They became popular among colonial military personnel in the 1870s, and remain popular today.



CLOTHING

Fashions come and fashions go, but always some sort of clothing remains.

Clothing	Properties	Cost
Bandana	Neg, Worn	1
Belt	Neg, Worn	1
Blouse	Worn	3
Boots, Ladies, Pointed	Worn	4
Boots, Men's	Worn	4
Cape, Fancy	Worn	5
Coat and Vest	Worn	4
Coat, Raccoon Skin	Worn	7
Coat, Rain, Mackintosh	Worn	4
Coat, Lab, White	Worn	3
Coat, Winter	Worn	5
Corset	Worn	3
Coveralls	Worn	3
Dress, Fancy	Worn	5
Dress, Plain	Worn	4
Hat, Ascot	Worn	3
Hat, Baseball	Worn	3
Hat, Bonnet	Worn	3
Hat, Bowler	Worn	3
Hat, Fedora	Worn	3
Hat, Fez	Worn	3
Hat, Pork Pie	Worn	3
Hat, Stetson	Worn	3
Hat, Top	Worn	4
Hat, Turban	Worn	3
Hat, Women's, Fancy	Worn	4
Pants, Fancy	Worn	4
Pants, Plain	Worn	3
Shirt, Fancy	Worn	4
Shirt, Plain	Worn	3
Shoes, Ladies, Heeled	Worn	4
Shoes, Ladies, Slipper	Worn	2

Clothing	Properties	Cost
Shoes, Men's	Worn	3
Skirt, Hoop	Worn	5
Skirt, Fancy	Worn	4
Skirt, Plain	Worn	3
Socks, Cotton	Neg, Worn	2
Socks, Woolen	Neg, Worn	2
Suit, Child's Ready-Made	Worn	4
Suit, Men's Ready-Made	Worn	5
Suit, Men's Custom Tailored	Worn	6
Suspenders	Neg, Worn	1
Undergarments, Men's	Worn	3
Undergarments, Women's	Worn	3
Uniform, Military, Enlisted	Worn	5
Uniform, Military, Officer	Worn	6

ACCESSORIES

Although the following items aren't technically clothing per se, they are often worn or carried as a means to convey a certain appearance or mystique.

Accessory	Properties	Cost
Fan, Hand		2
Glasses	Neg, Worn	3
Goggles	Neg, Worn	3
Handbag	Container 1	3
Jewelry, Bracelet, Silver	Neg, Worn	4
Jewelry, Necklace, Silver	Neg, Worn	5
Jewelry, Ring, Gold-Plated	Neg, Worn	5
Mask	Worn	2
Monocle	Neg, Worn	3
Neck Ruff, Ladies	Neg, Worn	3
Parasol	—	3
Pipe, Corncob	Neg	1
Pipe, Brier	Neg	1
Toupee	Neg, Worn	5
Watch, Pocket	Neg	4
Wig, Long	Worn	6

FOODSTUFFS

The presence of food is one of the few universal aspects of all human culture. After all, everyone needs to eat. Below are a variety of foodstuffs.

Foodstuff	Prop.	Cost
Apples, 1 dozen	—	1
Bacon, 1 lb.	—	1
Beef, Drief, 1 lb.	—	1
Bread, Rye, 1 lb.	—	1
Bread, White, 1 lb.	—	1
Butter, 1 lb.	—	1
Candy, Chocolate, 1 lb. Bar	—	1
Candy, Gum Drops, 1 lb. Box	—	1
Cereal, Cream of Wheat, 2 lb. Box	—	1
Cereal, Oatmeal, 2 lb. Box	—	1
Cheese, 2 lb. Wheel	—	1
Coffee, 1 lb. Tin	—	1
Eggs, 1 dozen	—	1
Fish, 1 lb.	—	1
Flour, 5 lb. Sack	—	1
Honey, ½ lb. Can	—	3
Maple Syrup, ½ Gallon Tin	—	2
Meal, Prepared, Plain	—	1
Meal, Prepared, Fancy	—	3
Milk, ½ Gallon	—	1
Nuts, Mixed, 2 lb. Box	—	2
Oranges, 1 dozen	—	2
Pasta, Macaroni, 1 lb. Box	—	1
Pork, Dried, 1 lb.	—	1
Potatoes, 10 lb.	—	1
Rations, Hard, Week	—	1
Rice, 1 lb. Box	—	1
Steak, Beef, 1 lb.	—	1
Sugar, 1 lb. Brick	—	1
Tea, 1 lb. Tin	—	1

Equipment Listings

For most equipment—other than weapons and armor—the name of the item is listed along with the Cost rating and any relevant properties. What most of these items are should be obvious, and the GM is encouraged to use common sense when making rulings about the equipment in question.

If any special description or notes are warranted for the item, this is given in the accompanying notes section. Most items do not warrant special notes, and those that do will say so in their listing in the equipment tables.

Make Stuff Up!

The world of Arth is filled with more objects and artifacts than we could possibly list in these pages. As such, players or GMs are likely to eventually want items not listed here. That's fine!

GMs should feel free to make stuff up! All an item needs is a Cost rating, maybe a property or two and a general agreement on what the item does. The items that are listed here are many, varied and should provide good benchmarks for pricing similar equipment.



DRUGS & POISONS

A variety of drugs and poisons see use for their medicinal purposes, as well as for more nefarious purposes. Some common ones are given below.

Drug or Poison	Prop.	Cost
Arsenic, 2 oz. Bottle	Neg	3
Cigarettes, Pack of 25	Neg	1
Cigars, Box of 100	—	3
Cobra Venom, 2 oz. Bottle	Neg	5
Cocaine, 2 oz. Tin	Neg	3
Cyanide, 2 oz. Bottle	Neg	3
Hemlock, 2 oz. Bottle	Neg	3
Laudanum, 2 oz. Bottle	Neg	1
Opium, 2 oz. Ball	Neg	3
Tobacco, Chewing, 1 lb. Tin	—	2
Tobacco, Plug, 1 lb.	—	1
Tobacco, Snuff, 1 lb. Jar	—	2

DRUG & POISON NOTES

The following drugs and poisons merit significant note.

- **Arsenic:** Contains two doses. For the effects of arsenic, see page 135.
- **Cobra Venom:** Contains two doses. For the effects of cobra venom, see page 135.
- **Cocaine:** Contains ten doses. For the effects of cocaine, see page 135.
- **Cyanide:** Contains two doses. For the effects of cyanide, see page 135.
- **Hemlock:** Contains two doses. For the effects of hemlock, see page 136.
- **Laudanum:** Contains ten doses. For the effects of laudanum, see “Opioid” on page 136.
- **Opium:** Contains ten doses. For the effects of opium, see “Opioid” on page 136.

BOOZE & SPIRITS

Booze and spirits are perhaps the most common drugs consumed throughout the world. For rules on ingesting alcohol, see page 134.

Booze	Properties	Cost
Beer, 1 pint	—	1
Brandy, 1 bottle	—	3
Gin, 1 bottle	—	2
Rum, 1 bottle	—	3
Vodka, 1 bottle	—	3
Wine, 1 bottle	—	2
Whiskey, 1 bottle	—	3

Toolkits

Throughout these equipment listings there are many items listed under “Toolkit.” These are sets of items—usually packaged together in a box, tin or bag—intended for a particular area of use. For example, a watchmaker’s toolkit has inside it all the common tools necessary for making and repairing watches.

Toolkits help simplify the game, in that players need not worry about the specific tools inside the kit, and can instead focus on simply having one useful for the task at hand. GMs are encouraged to make up other kits for other tasks beyond the ones listed here.



MEDICAL GEAR & SERVICES

Wherever people go, medicine is soon to follow. In recent decades, numerous medical advances have been made and new discoveries seem right around every corner.

Medical Gear or Service	Prop.	Cost
Bandages, 10 uses	Neg	1
Bone Saw	—	3
Scalpel	Neg	2
Syringe	Neg	1
Treatment, Illness	—	5
Treatment, Surgery	—	6
Toolkit, Pharmacist	—	5
Toolkit, Surgery	—	5

MEDICAL NOTES

The following medical equipment and services merit significant note.

- **Bandages:** Bandages are sufficient equipment for first aid. A roll of bandages generally contains about 10 uses.
- **Illness Treatment:** This is payment for a house visit from a doctor in order to treat illness. It may include prescribed medication or other simple treatment.
- **Surgery Treatment:** This is payment for one surgical procedure with a good quality and modern doctor.
- **Pharmacist Toolkit:** This toolkit contains a variety of tools that are useful in weighing, measuring and testing the purity of various drugs and other pharmaceuticals.
- **Surgery Toolkit:** The surgery toolkit contains various small knives, scalpels, clips, tourniquets and other tools that are necessary for surgery.

TOOLS

Tools are a broad category of equipment, including professional equipment, artistic gear and more.

Tool	Properties	Cost
Binoculars	—	3
Bolt Cutter	—	2
Brush, Paint	Neg	1
Camera, Movie	—	6
Camera, Still	—	5
Candles, Box of 8	Neg	1
Crowbar	—	2
Fire Extinguisher	—	3
Handcuffs	Neg	2
Instrument, Musical	—	4
Knife, Putty	Neg	1
Magnifying Glass	Neg	3
Paint, 1 Gallon Can	—	3
Rag	Neg	0
Scissors, Large	—	3
Toolkit, Artist	—	5
Toolkit, Chemical	—	6
Toolkit, Demolitions	—	6
Toolkit, Electrical	—	5
Toolkit, Forensic	—	5
Toolkit, Jeweler's	—	6
Toolkit, Mechanical	—	5
Toolkit, Watchmaker's	—	6
Wrench, Large	—	2

TOOL NOTES

- **Toolkits:** A variety of toolkits are available. Each of the toolkits listed here contain small tools useful for the trade in question, such as vials, tweezers, wire or powder to dust for fingerprints.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Personal items are items used in everyday life for reasons of prestige, hygiene, recreation or honor. This equipment is listed below.

Personal Item	Properties	Cost
Ball, Baseball	—	2
Ball, Football	—	2
Ball, Basketball	—	2
Cards, Playing	Neg	1
Cards, Tarot	Neg	1
Charm, Good Luck	Neg	2
Comb, Hair	Neg	1
Dice, Set of 2	Neg	1
Flag, National	—	2
Game, Board	—	2
Game, Marbles	—	1
Game, War, Miniatures	—	3
Medal, Military	Neg	5
Medal, Sports	Neg	5
Mirror, Hand	—	3
Photograph	Neg	2
Pomade, 1 Tin	Neg	1
Soap, Bar	Neg	1
Souvenir, Small	Neg	2
Suitcase	Container 5	3
Toothbrush	Neg	1
Towel	—	2
Toy, Ball and Cup	—	2
Toy, Doll	—	3
Toy, Locomotive	—	2
Toy, Prop Gun	—	2
Toolkit, Liberal Arts	—	3
Toolkit, Makeup	—	4
Toolkit, Personal Grooming	—	4
Wax, Mustache, 1 Tin	Neg	1
Wax, Shoe Polish, 1 Tin	Neg	1



PERSONAL GEAR NOTES

The following items of personal gear merit significant note.

- **Good Luck Charm:** Many different good luck charms are found throughout the world, from the traditional rabbit's foot to a pair of lucky socks. At the GM's discretion, a good luck charm may be legitimate. These allow the player to draw a single card once she is otherwise out of cards in her hand. After this, the good luck charm is spent and she may not benefit from one again.
- **Suitcase:** A suitcase can contain other objects and it helps make them more portable. A suitcase is restricted to holding objects that could reasonably fit inside. Obviously this excludes long objects such as spears or fishing poles.
- **Personal Grooming Toolkit:** This toolkit contains soap, a razor, small scissors, a toothbrush and other small items useful for personal hygiene.

BOOKS & PAPERWORK

Literacy and writing is a staple of modern life, from business to the study of ancient lore.

Book or Paperwork	Properties	Cost
Atlas	—	2
Blackboard	—	2
Book, Dime Novel	—	1
Book, Mystic Tome	—	7
Book, Professional	—	4
Briefcase	Container 3	2
Chalk	Neg	1
Inkwell	Neg	1
Map	Neg	3
National Identification	Neg	1
Notepad	Neg	1
Pencil	Neg	1
Pen, Ink-Dipping, Fancy	Neg	4
Pen, Ink-Dipping, Plain	Neg	1
Toolkit, Business	—	3
Toolkit, Forgery	—	4
Toolkit, Occult	—	4

BOOKS & PAPERWORK NOTES

The following tools merit significant note.

- **Briefcase:** A briefcase is a container primarily designed to hold papers, documents, books or other important tools of business. A briefcase cannot be used to contain objects that wouldn't reasonably fit inside.
- **Mystic Tome:** Many different mystic tomes exist around the world. Most of these are hogwash. Some, however, hold real mystic knowledge. At the GM's discretion, this might be such a tome.
- **Business Toolkit:** Inside this toolkit are a variety of business tools, such as writing utensils, ink, a notepad, a calendar and ruler.
- **Forgery Toolkit:** This toolkit has all of the tools necessary to forge documents or other paperwork, including a variety of different papers, inks, a magnifying glass, pens, pencils, sealing wax and a brush.
- **Occult Toolkit:** This toolkit contains a variety of occult diagrams, basic texts, mantras, small candles and tarot cards for divination purposes.



SURVIVAL GEAR

The wilderness is vast and perilous. Those who venture deep into it would be well advised to bring with them an assortment of survival gear.

Survival Gear	Properties	Cost
Backpack	Container 5, Wom	3
Bedroll	—	3
Canteen	—	2
Compass	Neg	1
Grappling Hook	—	2
Lantern	—	3
Matches, Box of 50	Neg	1
Oil, 1 pint.	—	1
Rope, 50 ft.	—	1
Snare	—	1
Spyglass	—	3
Tent	—	3
Toolkit, Mess	—	4
Toolkit, Search & Rescue	—	4

SURVIVAL GEAR NOTES

The following survival equipment merits significant note.

- **Backpack:** A backpack can be strapped to the back and used to hold a variety of equipment. Even long items that wouldn't fit into a suitcase or briefcase can be tied to the side of a backpack for easier transport.
- **Lantern:** This lantern requires oil to produce its light. A pint of oil will burn for 8 hours.
- **Snare:** Used to capture animals. Noticing it requires a Per/naturalist-10 flip.
- **Mess Toolkit:** This toolkit contains a variety of cooking and eating implements, including a couple nesting pots, a pan, two metal cups, two plates and several forks, knives and spoons.
- **Search & Rescue Toolkit:** Designed to make search and rescue easier, this toolkit contains a signal flare, tarp, megaphone and other useful equipment.



ANIMALS

Animals are common as livestock, pets or as work animals. These animals have not been assigned encumbrance properties, like Big or Neg, as it is not intended that players will spend much time carrying them. When animals have the Container property, this represents the animal's ability to carry goods on their own.

Animal	Properties	Cost
Cat	—	5
Chicken	—	5
Cow	Container 10	8
Dog	—	5
Donkey	Container 10	8
Goat	Container 5	7
Horse	Container 12	9
Mule	Container 11	8
Pig	—	7
Sheep	—	7

ANIMAL ACCESSORIES

The following pieces of equipment are included as accessories that are used in conjunction with some of the animals listed above.

Animal Accessory	Properties	Cost
Feed, Oats, 10 lb.	—	2
Saddle	Big 3	6

VEHICLES

The following vehicles are among those that are commonly found throughout the world. These vehicles have not been assigned equipment properties, and it is up to the GM to make rulings regarding their capacity or capabilities.

Vehicle	Properties	Cost
Airplane	—	14
Automobile	—	13
Bicycle	—	7
Blimp	—	14
Buggy	—	8
Canoe	—	7
Hot Air Balloon	—	12
Motorcycle	—	10
Paddle Steamer	—	14
Wagon	—	8
Zeppelin	—	15

Design Intent: Vehicles

We debated giving vehicles mechanical systems and properties, but ultimately decided against it. More often than not, as far as the story is concerned vehicles are basically just moving platforms on which to have adventures! So don't overburden yourself worrying about the specifics. Go with what's fun!





GAME MASTERING

Dime Adventures is designed to be a fast-moving and easy-to-run game for the GM. At the same time, it is designed to be a thrilling and action-packed game for the players. Even being a breeze to run, however, there are a number of factors that GMs should keep in mind to create the best possible game experience. This chapter contains a variety of tips, tricks and options for game masters looking to run a *Dime Adventures* campaign.

GENRE

Arth is an alternate history world with many secrets, and where adventure is lurking in every shadow. It's a world where the strange, sinister and miraculous meet, and where the murky superstitions of the past meet the fledgling worries and fevered dreams of the future.

DIME NOVELS & THE PULPS

Dime Adventures—true to its name—takes a great deal of inspiration from dime novels, and from the pulps. Dime novels were a form of cheap adventure fiction that became popular in the latter half of the 1800s, and remained popular into the first couple decades of the twentieth century. They often featured tales of high adventure, mysteries, melodramatic romance and horror.

As time went on, the dime novel format began to die out in favor of pulp magazines,

named so because of the cheap wood pulp on which the magazines were printed. The pulps were at the height of their popularity from the 1890s, through the 1940s. Their content ranged from early science fiction, to thrilling adventure, from occult horror to early fantasy. The pulps best known today include *Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *John Carter of Mars*, *Zoro* and *Solomon Kane*.

ALTERNATE HISTORY

Alternate history is a genre that imagines worlds that could have been if history had happened differently. This genre is one of the primary inspirations for *Dime Adventures*, which posits many differences in the historical timeline. Examples of this genre go back to antiquity, but it was at a height in popularity during the pulp era, with publications including Sir John Squire's *If It Had Happened Otherwise*, H. G. Wells' *Men Like Gods*, Murray Leinster's *Sideways in Time* and Robert A. Heinlein's *Elsewhen*.

WEIRDNESS

Finally, *Dime Adventures* draws inspiration from a variety of weird fiction. This genre includes mystic rites, ghosts, paranormal abilities, supernatural horror and other fantastic elements that begin to blend into slipstream fiction. Works of weird fiction include those by H. P. Lovecraft, William Hope Hodgson and Clark Ashton Smith.

RUNNING A SESSION

All games of *Dime Adventures* are made up of some number of sessions. Each session is like a story told about the exploits of the player characters. When planning the events of a session, it is good to always keep in mind two guiding principles:

- Try to take whatever elements are in the current scene and distill them down to what makes them exciting and awesome.
- If the pace of the adventure ever slows to a crawl, have a couple minions with guns (or appropriate equivalent) kick down the door and start shooting at the PCs; you can retroactively figure out why afterward.

REVEALING OR CONCEALING TARGET NUMBERS

When the GM calls for a player to make an action, she sets a target number (TN) that has to be met for the action to be a success. This number can be either declared to players beforehand or kept secret as the GM sees fit. Usually whether the GM should publicly declare the TN or not is obvious—if the character has a good idea how difficult the action is, the player should know the TN. On the other hand, if the character is shooting in the dark, she shouldn't know.

Take, for example, the case of scaling a wall. A character skilled at scaling walls ought to know just how difficult it is and thus should know the TN. On the other hand, take the case of a character asking around a bar for rumors or current events. The character doesn't know what rumors there are to be found; she's just

asking around and seeing what she gets. In this case, the GM shouldn't reveal the TN; the player simply makes her action and then gets something useful (or not) back as a result.

PLANNING CHALLENGES

When planning challenges, it is good to keep in mind the abilities of the player characters. This is particularly true with combat challenges or when PCs have access to paranormal abilities that can potentially circumvent some types of challenges. As a GM, challenge planning is something of a balance between wanting to make the players work for their victories and giving them opportunities to achieve their moment of cool.

When brainstorming challenges for a *Dime Adventures* game it's good to think about the tropes of the genre. Heroes and villains are both larger-than-life figures, with elaborate plans and deeply-felt passions. Danger lurks around every corner. Thugs with guns bust in the door whenever the pacing begins to slow. Villains may not want to just defeat the heroes, but humiliate them as well. They may employ an army of faceless henchmen, have a large and stoic right-hand man and create complicated death traps. When in doubt, go big!

GM HANDS

The GM gets a hand of cards she can play for NPC actions throughout the session, with the number of cards being equal to the number of PCs. This hand can be easy to forget, so here is how to keep it simple and make the best use of it in a session:

When planning a session, there are often a small handful of NPC actions that the GM wants to make sure are successful, either for

the sake of the plot or for the sake of best heightening the tension. The GM hand can be set aside during play and brought out for just these sorts of actions. When the GM encounters this sort of critical action, she plays the best card she has from her hand. If she doesn't have any good cards in hand, she can always play a card from the deck, and if that's not good enough, discard cards from hand to redraw until it is (the "luck" use for Moxie). Sure, this blows most of the GM's hand on one action, but there are rarely more than one or two NPC actions like this per session that need this level of attention.

GIVING OUT MOXIE

The Moxie system is not just a means of modifying the result of actions, it is a mechanism to reinforce the heroic themes of the genre, and a means to incentivize players to take heroic plot hooks, investigate, or put themselves in danger. When the PCs go out of their way to save an onlooker, rescue a love interest in distress, investigate something puzzling or otherwise do something entertainingly in-genre, reward them by having them each draw a Moxie.

FACING DEFEAT

Whenever it looks like the player characters are going to lose, it's beneficial for the GM to take a moment and think things through. Go to the bathroom, get a drink and give the players a few minutes to sweat as they look defeat in the eye. Meanwhile, the GM can be figuring out ways to deal with the situation.

It's often good for a game to have a sense of real danger and consequence. This builds tension and player investment in the

outcome of the game's events. At the same time, however, campaigns suffer when players frequently lose characters. This can be a challenging balance to strike.

GMs taking a moment to think should ask themselves: How can I make this failure interesting? How can I use it to heighten the tension or drama? How can I make a loss meaningful to the players without killing them or ruining their fun? Finally, the GM should consider what her players will and will not accept. Different players have different tolerances for loss, defeat and negative outcomes. Keeping this in mind is paramount.

There are many options for defeat beyond the early deaths of the PCs. Characters could be wounded and left for dead. They could be arrested by police, forcibly detained, taken as captives or taken as hostages. Their friends could be kidnapped while they're unconscious. The player characters could be robbed, put in a death trap, tied to railroad tracks or to explosives. Know your group, and try to pick something that players will find interesting.



PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

Envisioning a *Dime Adventures* campaign is a lot like envisioning a series of stories told about the exploits of the player characters. Each session is a new dime novel or pulp serial told about the heroes, and the sessions taken as a whole make up their continuing series.

INSPIRATION

There are many possible sources of inspiration for *Dime Adventures* campaigns. One need simply look no further than Netflix, Wikipedia or a supermarket tabloid.

Real world history is full of strange happenings, unexplained phenomena and hard-to-believe coincidences. Just browsing the history articles on Wikipedia may be enough to come up with a dozen possible plots. Just pick something that the players may find interesting, then put a strange adventure twist on the happening. Cast the heroes in place of one or more real world historical individuals, or let them react to a sort-of historical event as it develops.

Of course, adventure fiction is also full of exciting stories with familiar tropes. There is no shame in ripping off a classic novel, movie or other piece of media, especially if a personal twist is put on it to tailor it to the player characters.

SERIALS

Pulp stories were largely published in a serial format, with each publication including the next stand-alone adventure of the readers'

favorite heroes. This is the same sort of format used by many modern television series.

One possible way to structure a campaign is to think of each session as a short story that might have been published in a dime novel or in the pulps. It contains a self-contained story about the heroes and the perils that they faced. This format allows for a variety of adventure topics, and allows the GM to skip around the world to different venues, as each session is a cold opening, with the characters at a new place, with a new adventure before them.

When planning a campaign in this format, it is often good to start just a little bit into the action, with the heroes having already accepted and started on their way to the next plot hook. This keeps the action of the adventure flowing, and allows more of the "fun parts" to be crammed into the time allotted for the session.

FORESHADOWING

Running a campaign using the serial format described above can be fun and full of action, but it can also leave a campaign feeling somewhat disjointed. One possible solution to this is to foreshadow upcoming adventures in the sessions leading up to them. This helps build both a sense of continuity between adventures and can help clue players in on where the campaign is going.

GMs are advised to plan ahead and to drop occasional clues as to upcoming plot points. For example, if the GM knows that the next adventure will involve fighting sky pirates over Indonesia, in the current adventure the heroes might meet a pilot in a bar who complains about his blimp being hijacked by air pirates while he was traveling from the Khmer Empire. This is not only a colorful bit of detail, but it lets the players

know that air pirates are an ongoing problem. The pilot might even mention a friend from the area who players might remember to look up during their next adventure.

The trick to foreshadowing in a campaign is to make sure the hints are useful, but aren't so pressing that the players stop what they're doing to immediately pursue that plot hook.

CLIFFHANGER ENDINGS

A classic trope of the genre is to end each session with a cliffhanger—some big dramatic reveal or imminently perilous situation that has yet to be resolved. This not only leaves the players wanting to know what happens

next, but it also allows the following session to begin right with the action, forcing players into character and keeping the pacing of the game fast and furious.

Resolving the post-cliffhanger action at the beginning of a session can be either a full combat or adventure scene in itself, or if a GM wishes to quickly establish how the players got out of the dire situation, she can simply ask them how they did so, then accept whatever story they come up with (within reason). This allows the players a great deal of agency regarding their escape from the situation, and at the same time allows the story to quickly move forward.

Axes of Advancement

GMs can think of player characters as having two axes of character advancement in *Dime Adventures*: experiences and equipment. It is important to take both of these into consideration when planning a campaign.

The experience system is designed to develop well-rounded characters with a fairly organic pattern of growth. It's also meant to tie the character's actions in a session directly to their advancement. It should be fairly self-balancing.

Equipment, on the other hand, is a more tricky consideration. Characters with the correct equipment can steam-roll over certain types of scenarios, significantly reducing their dramatic impact. Luckily, GMs have at their disposal a mechanism for keeping the equipment of the PCs balanced against the scenario.

This mechanism is the characters' Wealth scores. Since a given Wealth score always results in a predictable maximum cost rating that can be purchased, GMs should ensure that PCs' Wealth scores don't get out of hand, resulting in them being able to purchase equipment that would break the scenario. For example, if Cost 11 equipment would break the scenario, and it takes Wealth 7 to purchase this equipment, the GM can ensure that the rewards being offered to the PCs don't exceed Wealth 6. Managing Wealth means managing challenges.

RUNNING COMBAT

Combat has long been a focus of role-playing games, and is featured regularly in the pulp genre, in particular. The *Dime Adventures* combat system makes a number of design choices intended to provide a sense of freewheeling action and excitement.

TRACKING ACTION POINTS

Action points (AP) are spent over the course of a round, some being spent on actions and some held back for reactions. As such, it may be useful to use physical tokens to represent AP at the table. Glass beads work well, as do poker chips.

A SENSE OF MYSTERY

When describing a combat scene, or the foes that the characters face, try not to use game mechanic descriptions—at least at first. Don't just name the creature that the heroes face, describe it some. For example, don't just say “a tiger rushes in to attack,” say “you spot a blur of orange and black stripes dart through the jungle floor, and in a flash, a snarling beast—all teeth and claws and feline grace—launches itself out of the undergrowth onto your helpless guide.” Sure, this is more words and requires a bit more thought, but the players' imaginations will fill in the remaining details, and this sort of description will give life in the combat scene beyond the rote mechanical actions.



DECLARING ACTIONS

The system of initiative in combat is meant to be fast and simple. Often the players are going to want to pick other player characters to take turns adjacent to themselves, thus getting in attacks before the NPCs have a chance to act. Let them. Have your villain take her turn at the end of the round, if possible, then pick herself to go first the next round. Double up those actions against the same character. Then pass play along to one of the players. Make the players think twice about letting the villain have two actions in a row.

TRACKING NPCs

Tracking large numbers of non-player characters (NPCs) in a combat can be a daunting task for GMs. However, there are a few tricks to make it easier:

- When in doubt, make a group of NPCs into a group of minions (see page 221). The minion rules have a number of options designed to make tracking them easier—such as shared turns, less tracking of AP between turns and fewer HP.
- Having the NPCs go all out, spending all their AP during their turn, means less tracking during the rest of the round. When using large numbers of NPCs and in doubt, use all AP on actions.
- It helps to track a foe's HP loss and consequences on a card or small piece of paper. This can speed up combat greatly. Tab Creations also produces *Dime Adventures: Consequence Cards* with this purpose in mind. Both players and GMs may find them useful.

USING MINIONS

Minions are a great way to pad out a combat and to make a fight feel truly epic. Player characters can lay waste to groups of minions single-handedly, and a group of player characters ought to be able to potentially handle dozens.

Minions can also be used to occupy a couple of different roles in the game. An individual minion or two can be used as something like thematic window-dressing, especially if they don't spend every turn attacking. A single minion could spend three rounds cutting through a large rope to crush part of the battlefield, or a single minion might be operating a slow-moving death trap. These individual minions aren't meant to be dangerous combat threats on their own, but they force player characters to deal with them at some point before the dangerous task they're working on is complete. This adds variety to the combat, as well as a little pulp drama.

Larger groups of minions, on the other hand, can become dangerous due to their ability to dish out a lot of damage in a single round. This makes them a threat that heroes can't simply sit back and ignore. In these cases, it's often a good idea for the players to mop up the minions before launching their offensive against an accompanying villain. This sort of thing can also conveniently buy the villain time to use non-damaging abilities to aid herself or hinder the PCs before the real fight with her begins.



CREATING VILLAINS MONOLOGUES

Most successful adventures need a successfully executed villain. Villains are some of the most important non-player characters a GM is going to create. As such, they merit particular attention.

VILLAIN BEHIND THE SCENES

Many classic villains of the mastermind variety hide behind some sort of alias, leading a normal life on the surface, but working their sinister plans behind the scenes. This classic trope allows heroes to even interact with the villain in normal ways, establishing the character before the scene of inevitable betrayal.

One good way to introduce such a villain is to have her first appear as an apparent victim of the “real villain.” Once introduced, the GM can insert inconsistencies into her story or behavior that hint as to her real nature.

CAPTURE

Ending a session with the apparent capture of the player characters by a villain makes for a classic cliffhanger ending. For this to happen, there doesn't need to be a lengthy fight scene; just end the session with the heroes being surrounded by an unreasonable number of armed minions, suddenly locked in an “escape-proof” room or some similar dire situation. When this happens, maybe even the villain shows up with an evil laugh before the session ends, only to pick up the next session with a villainous monologue and the heroes' escape.

Speaking of which, villainous monologues are a well-established trope of the genre. Many villains love to gloat, revealing why their plan is so genius or diabolical. For many it is not enough to simply defeat the heroes, they need to humiliate them as well.

When running such a monologue, many players will happily roll with the genre trope, listening to the villain as she delivers her monologue, others may try to disrupt the trope, however, cutting the villain off mid-gloat. Some amount of disruption can be fun, but when this happens too frequently, it can interfere with the scene and whatever information is being delivered in the form of the monologue. When all else fails, the GM can have the villain spend a Moxie for the serendipity effect (see page 93): the effect being that the villain somehow has enough time to finish her monologue before being disrupted.

INNOCENTS AS COVER

Another classic trope is for a villain to attempt to use an innocent as cover—particularly a love interest or family member of the heroes—when threatened with a gun. The intent of the villain in this situation is to dissuade the hero from shooting her, as the shot may accidentally hit the innocent.

An easy way to handle this mechanically is to treat the innocent as Cover (see page 253). A helpless innocent should probably be severe or critical Cover. This provides a bonus to the villain's Defense. If this bonus would make a difference between hitting or missing the villain, the attack instead hits the innocent.

GMs really wanting to make this situation dangerous can allow the villain to parry a shot using the innocent. If the villain tries this and the Parry bonus is the difference between the attack hitting and missing, then the victim is hit instead. Victims who aren't fully helpless may subtract their own melee skill from the villain's melee skill, should the villain try to parry with them.

REOCCURRING VILLAINS

Often a GM will want the heroes to face the same villain multiple times, as they defeat sinister plot after sinister plot. This is a trope that is common in the pulps, TV shows and other media, but which can be surprisingly difficult to pull off in a roleplaying game. Thankfully, a prepared GM can have some tricks up her sleeve for making this easier:

- One trick is to always give the villain an escape mechanism that is unknown to the players. For example, the villain might stand next to a secret door that locks behind her, might be wearing a secret jet pack or might have a mystic artifact that allows her to disappear in a puff of smoke. It's often important for this escape mechanism to catch the players by surprise, as prepared players may try to prevent such an escape if they are aware of the mechanism.
- It's also best if the villain runs at the first threat of personal injury or when first wounded, rather than waiting until she is already at risk of going unconscious. This means that lucky players who put a parting shot in the villain are unlikely to bring her down before she makes good on her escape.
- Always couple the villain's escape with a renewed push by the villain's minions or another complication that the heroes must immediately deal with. This both keeps the players busy as the villain escapes, and gives them some sense of accomplishment, as at least they thwarted the villain's evil plans and minions.
- Finally, if all else fails, the GM can spend a Moxie for serendipity effect to declare that the villain's body couldn't be found (see page 93). And everyone knows what that means...



WEIRDNESS

The world of Arth is filled with all manner of mystic and mysterious weirdness, from unexplained paranormal powers to creatures that stalk the night. A lot of this weirdness has been hinted at or mentioned in passing in the setting material earlier in this book. Here, however, is some insight for potential GMs. This has been kept separated from the bulk of the setting information, as it falls within GM provenance whether and how much of this should feature in the campaign.

PARANORMAL POWERS

The world has at least as many mystic traditions as it has cultures, if not many more. These traditions run the gamut from the secretive practices of Hermetic lore to the spirit magics of tribal peoples, from disciplines that involve manipulating the esoteric energies of the body to rites that require blood sacrifice. Each of these traditions has a different method and a different set of truths for wielding paranormal abilities.

However, not all paranormal abilities are steeped in centuries of tradition. Many are quite modern in origin. In recent decades, an interest in spiritualism and the study of psychic potential has given rise to a whole way of seeing the paranormal. These new age practitioners seek to strip off many of the cultural trappings that have accompanied paranormal ability, and distill the practice down to a set of purely mental powers. Thus far, attempts to do so have been met with mixed success.

As fringe scientists have started to study the paranormal, many have started looking for the common magical underpinnings

that underlay all paranormal ability, if such underpinnings even exist—sort of a magical Grand Unification Theory. If such a theory were found, this would be the Holy Grail of the paranormal world. With it a practitioner could rewrite the laws of the universe, working the very energy of the cosmos to suit her whims. This has been the dream of many mages, and countless shadowy cabals. Mystic conspiracies have formed over the centuries in this pursuit, but to date no such unification theory has ever proven successful.

THE HITCH'NYV

There's an invasion coming, waiting out there in the void. The Hitch'nyv—an alien race from a distant star—have come to Arth to colonize the planet, but so far they have been surprised by what they've found.

When they set off from their destroyed homeworld some 15,000 years ago, Arth showed promise as an open and habitable world, with no signs of advanced intelligent life. It was to be a new homeworld for the Hitch'nyv species. But several decades ago, when the Hitch'nyv scouts started to arise from their millennial slumber, new scans indicated that during their long voyage in stasis an entire civilization of intelligent beings had spread across the planet.

With the new data collected, a new colonization strategy was required. In the 1840s the Hitch'nyv made a deal. Making twin landings in North America and Australia, they signed treaties with the local tribes. Those tribes traded Europe, Asia and Africa to the Hitch'nyv in return for a few shiny toys—mostly particle guns and advanced weaponry. As part of this treaty, the Hitch'nyv agreed to leave both North America and Australia to

the natives. These new arms and armaments allowed the natives to push back the steady advance of European settlers, defending their homelands. But over the years wear-and-tear on these exceptional arms have caused their functioning numbers to dwindle, leaving the natives in a quandary.

Meanwhile, Hitch'Nyv agents have begun a subtle invasion. They have infiltrated European and Asian societies using both human pawns and personal cloaking devices, and they have started carefully preparing for the day when the colonization fleet arrives.

The Hitch'nyv are technologically superior to humans. A fully-equipped Hitch'nyv war fleet could wipe out human civilization with relative ease. But the Hitch'nyv didn't come with a war fleet. They came prepared to build a new home colony, so now they have an invasion to plan using what is essentially technologically-advanced construction and farm equipment. They've got their work cut out for them; but for the Hitch'nyv it's either invade or die.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

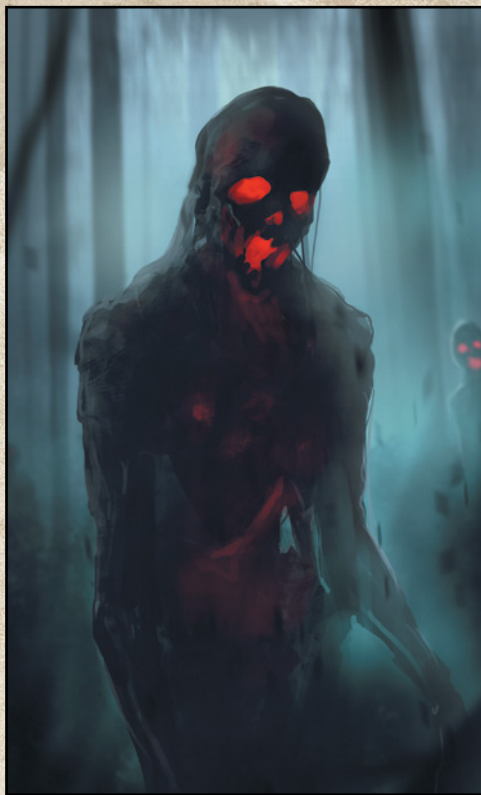
Humanity may be the dominant species on Arth, but the world is home to countless cryptids and creatures of the night, both mysterious and sinister. Most of these creatures are loners, stalking the wilderness or urban streets alone. Others have entire societies hidden from human view. They are all dangerous, however, and no corner of the globe is entirely safe.

Many of the most mysterious cryptids are relics of a bygone era. The Mokèlé-mbèmbé of the Congo, for example, is the last of a once prominent species of sauropod that in ages past spread across Africa. The sasquatches once had a Bronze Age civilization in North America, and are now found only in scattered bands. The

tikbalang lurks alone in the forests of the Philippines, preying on travelers. They say that even few scattered dragons remain alive in the present day, sleeping away the ages in their hidden lairs, waiting to one day wake up and rise again.

Other creatures are numerous enough to have their own society. Vampires, for example, have been living in the shadows and stalking the night since the days of Homo erectus. They are a curse that has passed down through the ages to modern humanity, from its forbearers. Since each vampire can spread the curse, they form networks of bloodlines, each with elaborate rules.

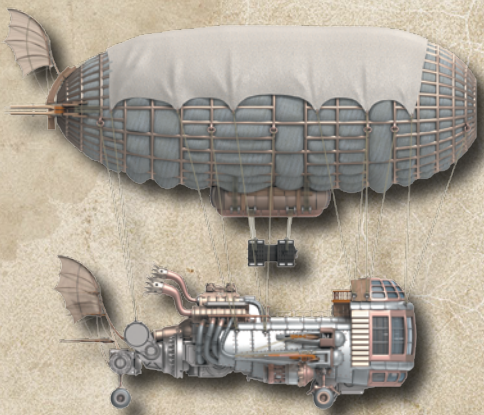
Wherever the heroes travel, they might encounter creatures of the night, from the living mummies of ancient tombs to the wily chupacabra.



PLOT HOOKS

The following are a variety of plot hooks that GMs can use in their own *Dime Adventures* campaigns. These hooks are chosen to highlight some of the possibilities and themes of the game. They supplement the many implied hooks found in the Arth setting chapter.

- While traveling in the wilderness the heroes come across a wounded Hitch'nyv scout that's been separated from its people. Do they help this lone, wounded alien, do they kill it or do they leave it to die? If they help it out, they will have trouble getting others to understand, which might pose a danger. If they kill it or leave it for dead, the alien's vengeful kin will be out for blood.
- Somehow the heroes get their hands on an ancient artifact that eats away at the barrier between worlds, occasionally summoning horrible monsters to its vicinity. If they let the monsters get ahold of the artifact, they will likely use it to cause untold slaughter and chaos. However, the artifact can't be destroyed through conventional means. The heroes will have to find a way to rid the world of this ancient relic, while at the same time dealing with the havoc that the relic can cause.
- A reoccurring villain captures one of the heroes' love interests and ties her to a railroad track. The heroes can go rescue her, but the twist is that the villain is in love with the hero and is just acting out to gain her attention.
- An expedition to an unexplored area of the world brings back a living dinosaur. However, shortly after the ship carrying the dinosaur arrives in the city, the creature gets loose. Now the heroes must track down the creature, investigating rumors of dinosaur sightings. It appears they aren't the only ones tracking down the dinosaur, however. The local mob wants to capture the dinosaur themselves for some nefarious purpose.
- A group of radical prohibitionists has been contaminating the local liquor supply chain with a magic potion that turns the imbiber into an animal. Now the heroes must track down numerous innocent drinkers from accidents of an animal-related nature, and track down the source of the contamination. They may even need to find a way to break the potion's magical effect.
- A dragon has awoken from its millenium slumber, and now it must both feed and orient itself in the modern world. The first signs of this are livestock disappearances, which the heroes are called in to investigate. Soon they will be the only ones standing in the way of the dragon destroying a nearby city.
- While testing a new experimental aircraft, the heroes are caught in the Bermuda Triangle, or some similar area of paranormal phenomena. Now they are caught in a time loop where they relive the day of the disappearance over and over. Each day



the events unfold a little bit differently. The heroes must figure out how they should unfold if they are to ever escape.

- One of the heroes' friends is on trial for teaching evolution, and now the heroes must go on an expedition to find a living specimen of the missing link in order to prove the friend correct and clear her name.
- In their adventures the heroes come across an abandoned sasquatch baby. Now they must save the baby from the dangers that are following them, as well as decide what to do with the child once they make it back to civilization.
- A freak phenomena, such as a mystically-empowered storm, is giving a handful of people superpowers as it rolls across the land. In its wake, these powered individuals are turning to crime, and no one seems to be able to stop them. Can the heroes stand up against an honest to goodness super-human? And what happens when the side effects of being supernaturally powered begin to make themselves terribly clear?
- A mad scientist has created an automation that seems to take on a life of its own. When the mad scientist later disappears under mysterious circumstances, the automation begins to go on a killing spree. Can the heroes stop the automation, and is its weird behavior related to the mysterious disappearance of the mad scientist? Are other forces at work here?
- Foreign organized crime is making a push into the city and this is upsetting the balance of power in the criminal underworld. To make matters more complicated, these new gangs seems to be able to call upon mystic forces. Will the heroes be able to keep innocent bystanders from being caught in the crossfire? Will they side with one of the organized crime rings to make the situation stable again, or will they try to use this gang war as leverage to drive them all out of town?
- Two families in a remote community have a longstanding feud that goes back generations. One of them, however, has delved into calling upon dark forces to gain an edge in the feud. When the heroes first arrive in the community they will quickly realize that something is not right. When they spend the night, the nature of the dark forces will be revealed. Now they must get involved to prevent the feud from destroying the entire town.
- One of the heroes' friends gets possessed by a spirit that won't let him go until some task from the spirit's life is accomplished. The heroes must either help the spirit find peace with its past life by completing the task, or find a means to exorcise the spirit from the body of their friend.
- Two local anarchists are accused of bombing a building. The heroes, however, know that the anarchists are innocent of this crime, as they were with them when the bombing occurred. Is there a sinister conspiracy using the anarchists as scapegoats to cover up the real motive behind the bombing?
- While in unexplored lands, the heroes find an ancient tomb. The pictographic writing above the door to the tomb reads that all who enter are cursed. Once the heroes have explored this tomb they begin to experience weird happenings. It's almost like anything that can go wrong will go wrong.



FRIENDS & FOES

This chapter contains a variety of ready-made non-player characters, both human and inhuman. These characters can be used to populate the world of Arth, representing everything from bumbling police officers, plucky sidekicks and swooning love interests, to rampaging monsters, nefarious villains and their minions.

NPC STAT BLOCKS

The stat blocks presented in this chapter are all listed in a standard format. An example stat block in this format is shown below.



Non-Player Character

A Creed or Idiosyncrasy for the character may be included here.

Str X, Dex X, Spd X, End X, Int X, Per X, Chr X, Det X

Defense XX/XX, Willpower XX/XX, DR X, HP X, Wealth X, Lifestyle X

Skills: Skill-A X, Skill-B X, Skill-C X

Action: +X♥ (Damage). Most NPCs will have special actions they can take in combat listed here. It will include the name of the action, the full modifier to perform it, the trump suit and the damage, followed by any properties.

♠♣♥♦ **Effect:** This may be followed by one or more card suits listed with extra effects. For a full description of how these work, see “NPC Actions” below.

Trait: The names of any traits are listed in this section, followed by their explanations. Traits that are also available to player characters may simply list the name and contain a reference to the appropriate page number.

Equipment: Item-A (Properties), Item-B

Finally, a brief description of the non-player character is presented below.

NPC ACTIONS

Most non-player characters will have several common actions listed that they may take in combat. These action descriptions will list the name of the action, followed by the total bonus to perform the action, the damage listed in parentheses and a short summary.

Some actions may have additional or modified effects, depending on the suit of the card being played. These effects will be described in an indented section below the action, beginning with the relevant suit, and followed by a description of the effect the suit adds.

Actions are designed this way so that on the character's turn, the GM can simply pick an action, play a card and use its suit to determine the extra effects. This makes combat varied and interesting, as the party's foes will show differing outcomes and abilities, rather than simply spamming the best effect.

The listed actions may also be taken outside of combat, but their described effects are designed with combat in mind.

NPC TRAITS

Most characters listed in this chapter possess one or more traits. These traits represent exceptional abilities that the character possesses. Many of these are traits that player characters can also possess. In these cases, a page reference is given to the trait's full descrip-

tion. Other times listed traits will be unique or wholly inhuman. For example, a hawk has the ability of flight. Traits are listed in the NPC's stat block and a brief mechanical description is given. For the sake of brevity, these descriptions do not make explicit every possible edge case. GMs should use common sense when adjudicating the effects of these abilities.

SIZE

One particularly common trait that deserves special mention is Size. The Size trait is given a numeric value. An adult human is considered to be roughly Size 0, with smaller creatures having a lower (negative) value and larger creatures possessing a larger (positive) value. Each increment of the Size trait represents a doubling of size in the game world. Size applies a modifier to a character's Defense and HP scores. This modification is already figured into the scores given in each stat block.

Size subtracts from a character's Defense value—so being smaller increases Defense, whereas being larger lowers it. Similarly, Size multiplies a character's max HP—meaning that being smaller lowers one's HP maximum, whereas being larger increases it. Refer to the table below for the amount HP is multiplied by.

The GM should keep these modifiers in mind if coming up with differently sized alternate versions of the non-player characters presented here.

Size	Def. Mod	HP Mult.	Size	Def. Mod	HP Mult.
-4	+4	×1/4	+1	-1	×1.5
-3	+3	×1/3	+2	-2	×2
-2	+2	×1/2	+3	-3	×2.5
-1	+1	×2/3	+4	-4	×3

MINIONS

Literature is filled with stories in which daring heroes single-handedly defeat numerous villainous minions, and the same is true in *Dime Adventures*. Handling a dozen menacing opponents using the same mechanics as player characters, however, not only fails to represent the trope, it also quickly gets quite cumbersome. Thankfully, then, there are minion rules.

MINION GROUPS

Most minions will act in groups of one or more identical, or nearly identical, characters. This can be easily accomplished by simply taking a stat block and using that stat block for all of the characters in the minion group. These groupings are informal, and the GM can simply declare that minions are in a group. For example, if the heroes are charged by a gang of five pirates, the GM can declare that all five pirates are a group of minions.

MINION TURNS

All minions in a group share the same turn during each round of combat. On this turn each minion gets a chance to perform actions, and then the turn is over. The GM then picks which character acts next, as per the usual rules for combat rounds.

MINION ACTIONS

Every minion in a group has its own AP. These AP are spent just like any other character's AP. However, the GM shouldn't bother to track unspent AP after the minion's turn. This AP is simply lost.

MINION REACTIONS

Because AP not spent during a minion's turn is lost, minions usually won't be able to make reactions, such as Dodge, Parry or Zone of Control. The exception to this is when, on a minion's turn, she declares that she is "being reactive." When a minion does this, she takes no action on her turn, but keeps all of her AP for use in reactions.

If playing on a table with figurines, this can be easily modeled by placing a marker for each AP next to the minion's figure, and then removing one each time she uses a reaction.

DAMAGE TO MINIONS

When a minion reaches 0 Health Points she simply drops—either unconscious or dead. This means that the GM never needs to make Endurance flips versus unconsciousness, nor does the GM need to make Endurance flips for dying.

If the GM ever needs to know whether a minion is merely unconscious or dead, she can have the minion make an End-10 flip. On a success, the minion is alive. On a failure, the minion expired from her wounds.

Minion Listings

The NPC entries in this chapter do not distinguish between minions and non-minions. To make any listing a minion, the GM can use the exact same stats, but simply apply the minion rules.

VILLAINS

Pulp tales are filled with scheming masterminds, sinister actors and nefarious villains. As the focal point of plot arcs and conflicts, these characters merit special attention.

Below are four special rules that when applied to a villain character, allow her to not only be a named menace, but also function as a “boss encounter”—a challenge for an entire group of heroes! The GM may choose to apply one, any or all of these rules to a villain, depending on how difficult she wants her to be in combat. These abilities are listed in the suggested order of application.

DOUBLE HEALTH POINTS

For a villain, double the character's total maximum Health Points (HP). This means it will take twice as many successful hits to drop her, thereby giving her more active time in the battle to monologue, attack and work her sinister abilities.

INCREASED ACTION POINTS

Increase the number of Action Points (AP) the villain gets each round from three to four, or even five. This lets her spend more AP each round to aim, call in special options or take defensive reactions. At the same time, she is still limited to one action requiring a flip each turn.

MOXIE

Giving a villain character her own hand of Moxie allows her to boost her own actions, reducing her chances of failure and making her more threatening. Give her a number of Moxie equal to the number of players. Since, once combat begins, a villain's lifespan is usually measured in rounds, she should probably do her best to use a Moxie each and every meaningful action.

INCREASED FLIP LIMIT

Most characters can make only one action requiring a flip each round of combat. For a villain, this limit can be lifted to two or even three flips. This allows the villain to attack multiple times each round. This makes her dramatically more threatening. To avoid overwhelming players, consider making each attack in a round on a different target.

Villain Listings

Unless specified otherwise, the NPC entries in this chapter do not assume any character is treated as a villain. To make any listing a villain, the GM can use the listed stat block, but apply the villain options above.



CITIZENS & SCOUNDRELS

Globetrotters are likely to encounter all sorts of people in their travels, from skilled assassins, to cackling mad scientists, from inept guards, to the average joe.

ASSASSIN

"Don't worry, it's not personal – just business."

Str 5, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 7, **End** 4, **Int** 6, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 6

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 9/18, **DR** 0, **HP** 9, **Wealth** 6, **Lifestyle** 6

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Deception 4, Guns 3, Melee 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 4

Pistol: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

♣ **Head Shot:** Treat this attack as a called shot to the head, dealing damage one suit higher than normal.

Grapple: +5♠ vs. Defense. Establishes a grapple.

Garrote: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠12/♥9/♦6/♣3). Must first grapple target, all attacks treated as called shots to the head requiring 2 AP total.

♦ **Bleeding:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two severities with a critical hit.

♣ **Dazing Strike:** On a successful hit the target's Dazed consequence increases a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Equipment: Garrote (Conceal, Hands 2), Overcoat, Pistol (Conceal)

Where there are people who want other people dead, there will be those who try to make a living off of dealing that death.

CITIZEN

"I like my job and I like it fine."

Str 4, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 4, **Int** 4, **Per** 4, **Chr** 4, **Det** 4

Defense 6/12, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 0, **HP** 8, **Wealth** 4, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Athletics 1, Melee 1, Naturalist 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1

Fists: +3♥ vs. Defense (♠5/♥3/♦2/♣1).

♦ **Grapple:** On a successful hit, the citizen establishes a grapple on the target.

♣ **Trip:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical hit.

Equipment: Clothes, Wallet

This stat block represents the average joe—probably a blue collar worker just doing her job. These people are found throughout the world, in many different societies.

CULTIST

"I, for one, am not afraid to kill us all!"

Str 5, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 5, **Int** 4, **Per** 4, **Chr** 5, **Det** 7

Defense 6/12, **Willpower** 8/16, **DR** 0, **HP** 10, **Wealth** 2, **Lifestyle** 3

Skills: Awareness 1, Deception 2, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 1, Melee 3, Occult 3

Revolver: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6.

♣ **Intimidating Fervor:** If the cultist and her allies outnumber the target's side, on a successful hit, the sheer fervor of the attack increases the target's Fear consequence a severity.

Knife: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2).

♦ **Charge Attack:** If possible, the cultist takes a free action to move zones to a new target and then makes an attack with her knife for +2 damage.

♣ **Dazing Strike:** On a successful hit, the target's Dazed consequence increases a severity, or two with a critical hit (see page 111).

Fearless: On her turn every round, the cultist may reduce her Fear consequence a severity.

Equipment: Knife (Conceal), Revolver (Conceal), Robes, Rope

A cultist is an individual with a fanatical belief in her chosen sect. She may appear as a slaving madwoman or she may be more subtle, wearing suits by day and donning robes by night.

DOCTOR

"Primum non nocere. First, do no harm."

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 5, **End** 5, **Int** 7, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 6

Defense 8/17, **Willpower** 9/18, **DR** 0, **HP** 10, **Wealth** 6, **Lifestyle** 6

Skills: Empathy 2, Investigate 2, Mechanics 1, Medicine 4, Science 3, Socialize 2

Revolver: +3♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6.

♣ **Anatomical Knowledge:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two severities with a critical hit.

Equipment: Doctor's Bag, Drugs, Revolver (Conceal), Surgery Kit

Wherever humans go—whatever lands they choose to colonize—they will need doctors: to check their health, to patch them up and to make them well again.



GUARD

"I will watch this place like a hawk! ...Bored now."

Str 5, Dex 5, Spd 6, End 5, Int 4, Per 5, Chr 3, Det 3

Defense 8/16, Willpower 5/10, DR 0, HP 10, Wealth 4, Lifestyle 4

Skills: Awareness 3, Empathy 2, Guns 2, Melee 2, Socialize 2

Pistol: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

♣ **Dazing Strike:** On a successful hit, the target's Dazed consequence increases a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Sacrificial Dodge: When an ally in the same zone is attacked, the guard may take a dodge reaction. The bonus from dodge adds to the target's Defense. If this would make the difference between the attack hitting or not, the guard is hit instead.

Equipment: Pistol (Conceal)

Wherever there are facilities to watch or goods to protect from theft, guards will be in demand. The primary duty of a guard is to keep an eye out for trouble, alerting the high-ups if necessary.

MAD SCIENTIST

"They called me crazy, but I'll show them all!"

Str 4, Dex 5, Spd 5, End 4, Int 8, Per 5, Chr 4, Det 5

Defense 7/15, Willpower 8/17, DR 0, HP 8, Wealth 7, Lifestyle 8

Skills: Crafts 2, Guns 2, Mechanics 4, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Science 4, Tactics 2, Vehicles 2

Blaster Gismo: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 12.

♥ **Fire!** The target increases her Bleeding consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

♦ **Paralytic Blast:** The target increases her Disabled consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

♣ **Set to Stun:** The target increases her Stun consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

Final Gambit: Right before a mad scientist would be rendered unconscious, she may active the self-destruct protocol on one of her devices. This device explodes at the end of the current round, dealing all targets in her zone and all adjacent zones 12 damage. Before it explodes, a character may disable the self-destruct by picking up the device and succeeding on an Int/mechanics-12 flip.

Equipment: Blaster Gismo, Lab Coat, Spare Wire

Mad scientists are frequently rogue geniuses with more brains than ethics. They are a crazed lot, and dangerous in a "builds things that explode" sort of way.



MASTERMIND

"Go forth, my minions!"

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 6, **End** 5, **Int** 9, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 6

Defense 8/17, **Willpower** 10/21, **DR** 0, **HP** 10, **Wealth** 9, **Lifestyle** 9

Skills: Awareness 2, Deception 3, Empathy 2, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 4, Melee 2, Occult 2, Persuade 2, Science 2, Socialize 2, Tactics 5

Monologue: +6♦ vs. Willpower. May only be performed immediately before or on the first round of combat. Make a speech.

On a success, all enemies increase their Stun consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical success.

Pistol: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

♠♥ **Bolster Minions:** All allies of the mastermind increase their Bolstered consequence two severities.

I've Been Waiting: A mastermind is never surprised at the beginning of combat.

Sacrifice Minion: As a reaction, the mastermind may spend an AP to redirect an attack targeting her to an ally in the same zone.

Equipment: Concealed Switch, Pistol (Conceal), Smoke Powder



Behind countless nefarious schemes are sinister masterminds, who weave elaborate plots, creating wheels within wheels of sinister design.

MYSTIC

Always adorned with occult trappings and mystic symbolism.

Str 4, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 4, **End** 4, **Int** 7, **Per** 5, **Chr** 6, **Det** 5

Defense 7/15, **Willpower** 9/18, **DR** 0, **HP** 8, **Wealth** 4, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Deception 3, Lib-Arts 2, Medicine 1, Occult 3, Socialize 2, Thievery 1

Knife: +3♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥6/♦4/♣1).

♣ **Cursed Blade:** Increase the target's Fatigue consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Mesmerize: +6♦ vs. Willpower. Through either mysticism or psychological tricks, the mystic mesmerizes her target. Increase the target's Disabled consequence a severity, or two severities with a critical success.

Equipment: Candles, Knife (Conceal), Occult Necklace, Ouija Board

Mystics are specialists in the occult and paranormal. Some claim psychic powers; some claim sorcerous abilities; others are mere charlatans using an occult persona to fool the less clever.

PIRATE

"We will seize your loot and sink your vessel!"

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 4, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 4

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 0, **HP** 11, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 3

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Guns 2, Mechanics 1, Melee 2, Streetwise 3, Vehicles 3

Cutlass: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠12/♥9/♦6/♣3).

♣ **Dirty Fighting:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

If the target already has Prone (critical), she is instead disarmed.

Revolver: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6.

♦♣ **Fast Draw:** The pirate may opt to switch weapons as a free interact action.

Rigging Adept: On her turn, a pirate may take a free move action to climb over ropes, chains or a ship's rigging.

Equipment: Cutlass, Head Bandana, Revolver (Conceal), Rope

Pirates are the bandits of the high seas. They prey upon trading ships and other vessels that are typically rich with goods, and lacking in proper defense.

SOCIALITE

Whenever possible, is constantly talking to people.

Str 5, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 5, **Int** 5, **Per** 6, **Chr** 8, **Det** 4

Defense 8/16, **Willpower** 8/17, **DR** 0, **HP** 10, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 6

Skills: Awareness 1, Deception 4, Empathy 3, Lib-Arts 1, Persuade 3, Socialize 4

Distraction: +7♦ vs. Willpower. Increases target's Fixated (the socialite) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success. Targets all other characters in the socialite's zone and all adjacent zones.

Pocket Pistol: +2♥ vs. Defense (♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2). Range 1, Reload 2, Shots 2.

♣ **Taunt:** Increase the target's Fixated (the socialite) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Equipment: Fancy Clothes, Fashion Accessories, Pocket Pistol (Conceal), Wallet

Socialites are well-known individuals, fond of social activities and entertainment. Some are vapid wastrels, while others make their way through fashionable society and other well-to-do circles the way a shark makes its way through water.



SOLDIER

"I have my duty to my unit to consider."

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 4, **Per** 5, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 8/17, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 0, **HP** 12, **Wealth** 4, **Lifestyle** 3

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Guns 3, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1

Bayonet: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥8/♦6/♣3).

♣ **Knockdown:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Rifle: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3). Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5.

♦♣ **Hold the Line:** Increase the target's Fixated (the soldier) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Seasoned: If a soldier is not surprised, on the first round of combat she may be chosen to act next, even if the last two characters to act were also on her side.

Equipment: Bayonet, Pack, Personal Memento, Rifle

Common soldiers make up the bulk of the standing armies around the world, being stationed at important monuments, distant colonies and everywhere in-between. Others soldiers work for hire in a mercenary company.

THIEF

"Whatever I can take belongs to me."

Str 5, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 7, **End** 4, **Int** 5, **Per** 5, **Chr** 6, **Det** 4

Defense 10/20, **Willpower** 7/15, **DR** 0, **HP** 9, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Awareness 2, Guns 2, Investigate 2, Melee 2, Stealth 3, Streetwise 3, Thievery 4

Knife: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2).

♣ **Vital Bits:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Slippery: When taking a move action to change zones, a thief does not trigger Zone of Control reactions.

Equipment: Cards, Knife (Conceal), Lockpicks

Thieves make their livings by stealing the personal possessions of others. They are usually nimble cutpurses or cat burglars, prowling the alleyways and rooftops, looking for the next big score.



THUG

"Don't mess with me! I am one tough thug, buddy."

Str 7, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 4, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 4

Defense 7/15, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 1, **HP** 13, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Guns 3, Melee 3, Persuade 2, Streetwise 3

Intimidate: +6♠ vs. Willpower. Increases target's Fear consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Club: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥11/♦8/♣5).

♣ **Ringing Ears:** Increase the target's Dazed consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Now I'm Mad: Whenever a thug takes damage, increase her Bolstered consequence a severity.

Equipment: Club, Leather Jacket (Worn), Lucky Coin

Many thugs are violent criminals who prowl the streets looking for easy targets. Others are cheap muscle hired by any number of interests to intimidate, threaten or commence violence.

TRIBESMAN

"The ways of my people are mysterious to you."

Str 6, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 4, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 8/16, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 0, **HP** 12, **Wealth** 2, **Lifestyle** 2

Skills: Animals 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Guns 2, Melee 3, Naturalist 3, Occult 1

Blowgun: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1). Range 1, Shots 1.

♣ **Poison:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Spear: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥8/♦6/♣3). Reach.

♣ **Trip:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Survivalist: A tribesman is adept at moving through difficult terrain and does not need to spend extra AP to move across difficult zone borders (see page 106).

Equipment: Blowgun (Conceal, Neg), Food, Snare, Spear



Tribesmen come from a culture that is nomadic in a way. They are experienced in the necessary life skills for this lifestyle: tracking, hunting, gathering and knowledge of how to find and identify important natural resources.

WISEMAN

"Listen, as I bestow upon you words of wisdom."

Str 4, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 4, **End** 4, **Int** 8, **Per** 5, **Chr** 6, **Det** 6

Defense 6/13, **Willpower** 10/20, **DR** 0, **HP** 8, **Wealth** 4, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Deception 2, Empathy 2, Lib-Arts 3, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Persuade 2, Socialize 2

Perplex: +6 ♦ vs. Willpower. Increases target's Dazed consequence a severity, or two with a critical success. Targets all other characters in the wiseman's zone.

Staff: +2 ♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥6/♦4/♣1). Defense 1.

♣ **Trip:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Befuddle: As a reaction to an attack against Defense, a wiseman may spend an AP to use Willpower instead of Defense against the attack.

Equipment: Occult Token, Robe, Staff

Some individuals have a reputation for great wisdom or the ability to dispense esoteric knowledge that few possess. Many of these wisemen live up to their reputation, while others are simply skilled at spouting cryptic bullshit.



WILD BEASTS

Wild beasts prowl the wildernesses across the globe, looking for their next prey. Explorers are likely to run up against many of these as they push back the blank spots on the map.

APE

Str 9, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 2, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 8/16, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 0, **HP** 15

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 2, Naturalist 4

Slam: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥8/♦7/♣5).

♠ **Bite:** This unarmed attack includes a bite. If the ape is in a grapple with the target, use the following damage instead: ♠12.

♦♣ **Grapple:** On a successful hit, the ape establishes a grapple on the target. If a grapple has already been established, she instead attempts a choke (see page 108).

These large, hairy primates live in jungle communities and display a keen animal intelligence. The stats here represent one of the great apes, such as a gorilla.



BEAR

Str 9, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 7, **Int** 1, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 4

Defense 8/16, **Willpower** 5/10, **DR** 1, **HP** 16

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Naturalist 4

Claw: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥8/♦7/♣5).

♠ **Bite:** This unarmed attack includes a bite. If the bear is in a grapple with the target, use the following damage instead: ♠12.

♦♣ **Grapple:** On a successful hit, the bear establishes a grapple on the target. If a grapple has already been established, she instead attempts a bite (see above).

Charge: Once per round a bear may take a free move action, as if it had spent 1 AP.

Bears are large omnivorous animals that scavenge for food. They may attack if starving or if they feel threatened. Before they attack they often rear up on their hind legs.

CAT

Str 1, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 6, **End** 4, **Int** 1, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 11/21, **Willpower** 5/11, **DR** 0, **HP** 2

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 4, Naturalist 4

Claw: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠4/♥2/♦1/♣1).

♠ **Bite:** This unarmed attack includes a bite. If the cat is in a grapple with the target, use the following damage instead: ♠5.

♥♦♣ **Pounce:** On a successful hit, the cat establishes a grapple on the target.

Catfall: Halve the damage a cat takes from a fall.

Size -2: Cats are small and nimble. This has been factored into the cat's Defense and HP.

Cats are small, furry predators that have been domesticated at least as far back as ancient Egypt. The stats above represent a domestic house cat or similar animal.

DOG

Str 3, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 5, **End** 5, **Int** 1, **Per** 7, **Chr** 6, **Det** 5

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 0, **HP** 5

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Melee 3, Naturalist 4

Bite: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠6/♥4/♦2/♣1).

♠ **Lock:** The dog holds on with its teeth, establishing a grapple on the target. If a grapple has already been established, the dog instead jerks its head back and forth while holding on; this uses the following damage instead: ♠8.

Keen Smell: Dogs have a keen sense of smell and don't have to spend additional AP when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to recognize scents.

Size -1: Dogs tend to be smaller than a human. This has been factored into the dog's Defense and HP.

Humanity domesticated dogs long before any other animal. They're known for their loyalty, and they can be quite protective. The above stats represent a medium domestic breed.

HAWK

Str 2, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 4, **Int** 1, **Per** 8, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 12/22, **Willpower** 5/11, **DR** 0, **HP** 3

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Melee 3, Naturalist 4

Talon: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠5/♥3/♦1/♣1).

♠ **Deep Gash:** Talons can cut deeply. Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity.

Flight: When flying in combat, Hawks may move two zones when taking a move action.

Size -2: Hawks are small and quick. This has been factored into the hawk's Defense and HP.

Hawks are birds of prey that are swift and have an impressive sense of vision. They are used for sport in some societies, being trained to seek out and retrieve small rodents or other prey.

HORSE

Str 8, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 1, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 9/17, **Willpower** 8/16, **DR** 1, **HP** 21

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 2, Naturalist 4

Kick: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥9/♦7/♣5).

♦♣ **Knockback:** The horse's kick knocks the target off balance. Increase her prone consequence a severity.

Mount: Trained horses are able to carry a rider on their backs without significant difficulty. This allows for faster overland travel than walking. In combat, characters riding a horse may move two zones per move action.

Size +1: Horses are large and powerful. This has been factored into the horse's Defense and HP.

Horses have long been a beast of burden and important staple of many societies around the globe. In recent years the automobile has slowly begun to replace transport by horse in many developed cities.

SHARK

Str 11, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 6, **End** 5, **Int** 1, **Per** 7, **Chr** 5, **Det** 6

Defense 8/18, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 2, **HP** 32

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Melee 3, Naturalist 4

Bite: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥12/♦10/♣8).

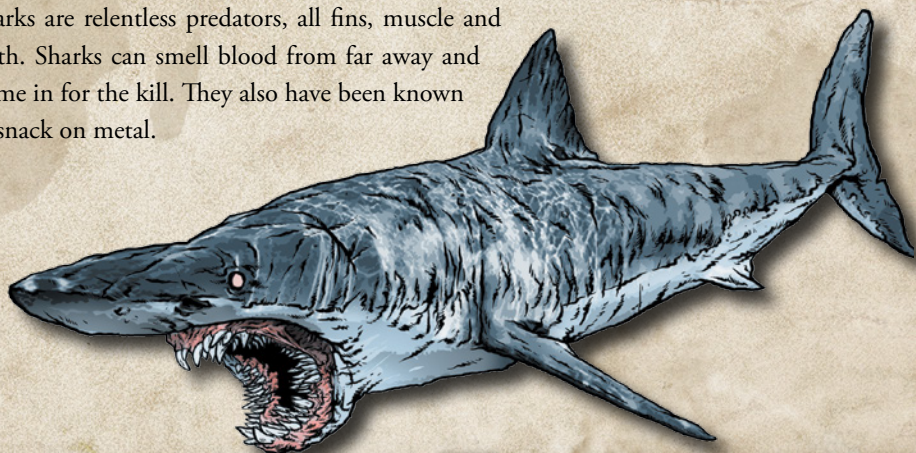
♣ **Feeding Frenzy:** If the shark has any AP left, she may make another attack this turn on the same target.

Ampullae of Lorenzini: Sharks can sense the minute amount of electricity given off by living creatures or metallic objects. They don't have to spend additional AP when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to track their prey.

Aquatic: Sharks are at home in the water. When swimming in combat, they may move two zones when taking a move action.

Size +2: Sharks are large and powerful. This has been factored into the shark's Defense and HP.

Sharks are relentless predators, all fins, muscle and teeth. Sharks can smell blood from far away and home in for the kill. They also have been known to snack on metal.



TIGER

Str 11, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 6, **End** 7, **Int** 1, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 5

Defense 9/19, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 0, **HP** 27

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 4, Naturalist 4

Claw: +8♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥12/♦10/♣8).

♠ **Bite:** This unarmed attack includes a bite. If the tiger is in a grapple with the target, use the following damage instead: ♠16.

♥♦♣ **Pounce:** On a successful hit, the tiger establishes a grapple on the target.

Catfall: Halve the damage a tiger takes from a fall.

Size +1: Tigers are large and powerful. This has been factored into the tiger's Defense and HP.

Tigers are large cats which patrol massive areas of land looking for fresh game to hunt and eat. They are usually striped, with sharp claws and teeth. An eccentric mastermind might keep one as a pet, or the heroes might encounter one in the wilderness.

WOLF

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 5, **End** 6, **Int** 1, **Per** 7, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 5/10, **DR** 0, **HP** 11

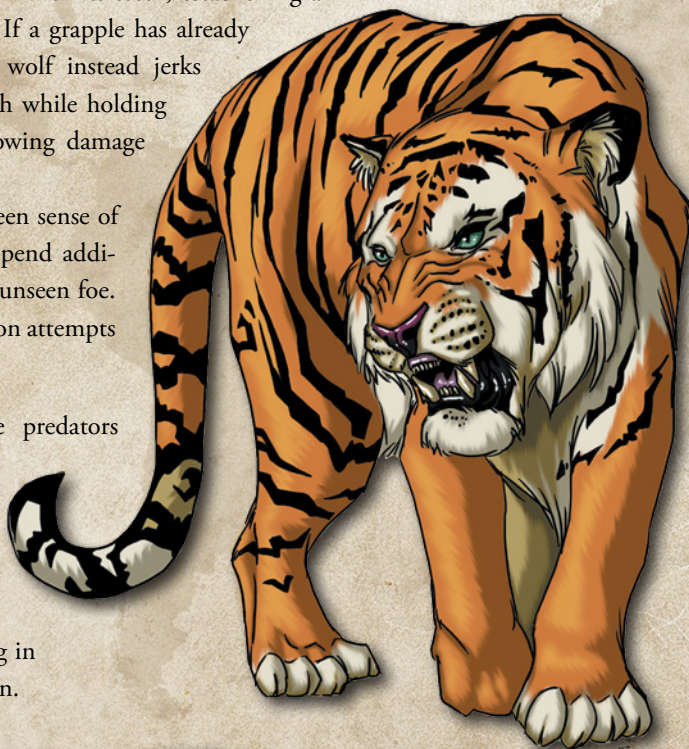
Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Melee 4, Naturalist 4

Bite: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠8/♥6/♦3/♣2).

♠ **Lock:** The wolf holds on with its teeth, establishing a grapple on the target. If a grapple has already been established, the wolf instead jerks its head back and forth while holding on; this uses the following damage instead: ♠10.

Keen Smell: Wolves have a keen sense of smell and don't have to spend additional AP when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to recognize scents.

Wolves are powerful canine predators found throughout most of the world. They vary in color from pale white to pure black, although most are a tawny brown color. Wolves are known for hunting in packs and howling at the moon.



MONSTERS & THE PARANORMAL

The world is full of odd beasts and mysterious denizens. The paranormal is stranger and far more common than most people imagine. Often these cryptids lurk at the edges of civilization, other times they walk among us.

ANGEL

"I serve the almighty, and woe unto any who would oppose me."

Str 12, Dex 8, Spd 8, End 10, Int 7, Per 9, Chr 12, Det 12

Defense 13/27, Willpower 15/31, DR 3, HP 22

Skills: Athletics +4, Awareness +3, Lib-Arts +4, Melee +4, Occult +5, Persuade +4

Flaming Sword: +8♥ vs. Defense (♠19/♥16/♦13/♣10).

♦♣ **Catch Fire:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Flight: When flying in combat, angels may move two zones when taking a move action.

Halo: As a reaction to an attack, an angel may spend an AP to emit a bright halo that blocks most damage. This increases the angel's DR against the attack to 12 (the angel's Charisma).

Healing Touch: With a touch an angel may heal the sick or wounded. This cures any mundane poisons or diseases from which the target suffers and heals 12 HP (the angel's Charisma). This healing may only be received once per set of wounds.

Project Light: As a free concentrate action an angel may project a bright light which illuminates the darkness.

Angels are the messengers and servants of a higher power. They are mysterious in their actions, and feel the need to explain little to mere mortals.

AUTOMATON

Walks with a clumsy gait and jerky motions.

Str 6, Dex 3, Spd 3, End 6, Int 1, Per 4, Chr 3, Det 8

Defense 5/10, Willpower 6/12, DR 2, HP 12

Skills: Athletics 2, Mechanics 1, Melee 3

Smash: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠7/♥5/♦4/♣2).

♣ **Double Blow:** On a success, if the automaton has enough AP, it may immediately make another attack against the same target.

Machine: As a machine, an automaton is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotion-based consequences.

Automatons are clockwork humanoid machines. Typically, they do not have much in the way of decision-making abilities of their own, and need constant direction. They are frequently created by mad scientists and have the tendency to go haywire.

BATBOY

Shrieks loudly before flying in for the attack.

Str 3, Dex 6, Spd 6, End 5, Int 3, Per 7, Chr 5, Det 4

Defense 10/20, Willpower 6/12, DR 0, HP 5

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Melee 3, Naturalist 2, Stealth 2

Bite: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠4/♥2/♦1/♣1). Anyone bitten by a batboy risks being turned into a batboy.

That night the character should make an End-12 flip. On a failure, over the next two weeks she begins to shrink and lose intelligence, gradually taking on the features of a bat and shrieking uncontrollably. If this curse is not cured by the end of this time, the transformation is complete.

Sonic Shriek: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Area, Range 1.

♣ **Deafening:** Increase the target's Dazed consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Flight: When flying in combat, batboys may move two zones when taking a move action.

Size -1: Batboys are small and quick. This has been factored into the batboy's Defense and HP.

Sonar Sense: By shrieking, a batboy may use its sonar sense to locate prey. This grants a +4 bonus to locate hidden characters.

A batboy is a small creature that is part bat and part boy. Batboys can fly with a surprising deftness. They can also emit sonic blasts from their mouths, accompanied by a loud shriek. The bite of a batboy can turn its victim into another batboy.

BIGFOOT

Stays out of sight whenever possible.

Str 6, Dex 6, Spd 5, End 5, Int 3, Per 6, Chr 5, Det 5

Defense 8/17, Willpower 6/13, DR 1, HP 11

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Crafts 1, Melee 2, Naturalist 3, Stealth 4

Smash: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠7/♥5/♦4/♣2).

♣ **Knockdown:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Woods Adept: Bigfoots are surprisingly adept at hiding in the woods, despite their size. On its turn, a bigfoot in the woods may make a Dex/stealth vs. Per/awareness action to hide, even if the bigfoot took an action earlier in the turn requiring a flip.

The bigfoots once had a thriving stone age civilization, but today it is little more than an ancestral memory. Bigfoots live deep in the woods where they hide from human civilization and largely keep to themselves. However, sometimes a bigfoot will snap and seek to carry off human prey.

BRAIN SLUG

Tries to convince others to put brain slugs on their heads.

Str 1, **Dex** 3, **Spd** 1, **End** 4, **Int** 8, **Per** 8, **Chr** 5, **Det** 8

Defense 9/15, **Willpower** 20/21, **DR** 0, **HP** 1

Skills: Awareness +3, Deception +3, Mechanics +2, Persuade +2, Socialize +2

Brain Blast: +8♠ vs. **Willpower** (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Ignores DR.

♥♦ **Suggest:** The target is also affected by Suggestion (see below).

Suggestion: +8♠ vs. Willpower. Increase the target's Desire (place a brain slug on head) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

♠♥ **Force:** The target is forced to immediately do one of the following: move closer to a brain slug of the invoker's choice, pick up a brain slug within reach (dropping anything as necessary) or, if a brain slug is already within the target's grasp, place the brain slug on her head.

Control: If a brain slug is placed on a character's head, it may make an Int vs. Det action each round to assume control of the host. This control lasts until the brain slug is forcibly removed.

Mucus-Coated: A brain slug is coated in mucus. This allows it to crawl on walls and ceilings.

It also makes the slug difficult to grapple. A brain slug gains a +4 bonus to Defense to avoid being grappled.

Size -3: Brain slugs are quite small. This has been factored into the slug's Defense and HP.

Brain slugs can control their victims once they leech onto the victim's head. They appear to be green fist-sized slugs. In addition to their brain control powers, they have the ability to telekinetically defend themselves.

DEINONYCHUS

Likes to hunt as part of a pack.

Str 7, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 8, **End** 7, **Int** 1, **Per** 6, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 11/22, **Willpower** 5/11, **DR** 1, **HP** 14

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Melee 3, Naturalist 4

Claw: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠12/♥9/♦7/♣4).

♠ **Bite:** This unarmed attack includes a bite. Use the following damage: ♠14.

♣ **Dazing Strike:** On a successful hit, the target's Dazed consequence increases a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Charge: Once per round, the deinonychus may take a free move action, as if it had spent 1 AP.

Deinonychuses are theropod dinosaurs that are thought to have originated in the late Cretaceous era. They are similar to the depiction of the velociraptor in popular media. They are some 9 feet (3m) long and have a sharp sickle claw on each foot, which they use to slice up prey during a pounce.

DOPPLEGANGER

Likes to dress in its target's clothing.

Str 5, Dex 5, Spd 5, End 5, Int 5, Per 5, Chr 10, Det 5

Defense 7/15, Willpower 10/20, DR 0, HP 10

Skills: Awareness 3, Deception 5, Lib-Arts 2, Melee 3, Persuade 3, Socialize 4

Grapple: +5♠ vs. Defense. Establishes a grapple.

Choke: +5♥ vs. End. On a success, increase the target's Fatigue consequence a severity. If she's already at Fatigue (critical), it instead renders her unconscious.

Amorphous Form: In its natural form, a doppelganger is a human-sized blob. While in this form it heals 1 HP every round. Additionally, this form can flow through small cracks, such as under doors or down drain pipes. It can also stick to walls or ceilings.

Shapeshift: A doppelganger may assume the shape of any creature which is in the range of Size -2 to Size 2. Doing this is a Concentrate action requiring 3 AP. While in this form, the doppelganger is a "picture perfect" duplicate, including voice and mannerisms. The doppelganger gains none of the victim's memories, however.

Doppelgangers are malevolent predators that prey on their intended victims by taking their form and pretending to be them in their day-to-day lives. Sometimes this is preceded by killing the victims, other times this is just the lead up to that deed. While in their victim's shoes, doppelgangers will subtly sabotage the victim's life, manipulating those around the victim for material gain or to size up the next possible target. They feed off the psychic anguish surrounding or caused by their victim's loss.

GIANT KILLER PRAIRIE DOG

Bursts forth from the earth before attacking.

Str 12, Dex 7, Spd 6, End 8, Int 1, Per 6, Chr 5, Det 6

Defense 7/17, Willpower 6/12, DR 1, HP 40

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Melee 3, Naturalist 3, Stealth 3

Bite: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠15/♥13/♦11/♣9).

♠ **Trample:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

♣ **Pounce:** On a successful hit, the prairie dog establishes a grapple on the target.

Burrow: These prairie dogs can burrow through the ground with surprising speed. A prairie dog may take move actions to move underground, just as it would to move on the surface.

Size +2: These critters are the size of an elephant. This has been factored into the prairie dog's Defense and HP.

Giant killer prairie dogs are carnivorous, elephant-sized versions of their smaller cousins. Unlike normal prairie dogs, they are either solitary or live as mated pairs. They are ambush predators, waiting patiently underground to suddenly emerge from the earth, spraying dirt everywhere and surprising their prey.

HITCH'NYV

"Honor your deals, but do not make them lightly."

Str 7, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 8, **Int** 7, **Per** 7, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 9/19, **Willpower** 8/16, **DR** 3, **HP** 15

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Crafts 2, Guns 3, Investigate 2, Mechanics 4, Melee 3, Science 4, Stealth 1

Raygun: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 3, Reload 1, Shots 12.

♠♥ **Disintegration:** On a miss, the target loses the Cover consequence, as any cover it formerly had is destroyed. If this cover is another creature, treat this as an attack against the Defense of that creature and deal damage as normal.

Spur: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥8/♦6/♣4).

♠ **Bloodied:** The Hitch'nyv gains the Bolstered (moderate) consequence.

Frenzy: As a reaction to being wounded, a hitch'nyv may spend an AP to immediately declare and execute an attack.

Infravision: Hitch'nyv can see into the infrared, allowing them to ignore penalties for darkness.

Equipment: Radio, Raygun (Conceal), Translator Device

The Hitch'nyv are an imposing sight, standing over 6 feet (2m) tall, and covered with rough, scaly skin. They have multifaceted eyes, and several joints on each of their four limbs. Each joint is backed by a wicked-looking spur.

MOTHMAN

Fond of uttering cryptic prophecies.

Str 6, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 7, **End** 5, **Int** 3, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 9/19, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 0, **HP** 11

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Naturalist 2, Stealth 3

Claw: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥7/♦5/♣3).

♠ **Stunning Attack:** Electricity surges through the target, increasing her Stun consequence a severity.

Prophecy: +5♦ vs. Willpower. The mothman whispers a terrifying prophecy to the target. On a success, increase the target's Fear consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Wing Blast: +6♠ vs. Defense (♠7/♥5/♦4/♣2). Area, Range 1, excludes self from attack.

♦♣ **Knockback:** The target is knocked back a zone and increases her Prone consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

Electric Aura: Any electronics in the vicinity of the mothman automatically short out and stop working. This includes any radio communication.

Flight: While flying, the mothman may move two zones when taking a move action.

Vibration Sense: The mothman may sense vibrations in the air and through the ground. This negates any penalties from darkness or concealment, and provides a +2 bonus to sense any moving target.

The mothman is an enigmatic creature. It is active at night, where it flies about pursuing its mysterious aims. It also has a curious effect on technology, damaging or disabling anything electronic within a radius around it.

SEA MONSTER

Likes to toy with sailors before sinking ships.

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 5, **End** 9, **Int** 2, **Per** 5, **Chr** 5, **Det** 5

Defense 6/15, **Willpower** 6/12, **DR** 3, **HP** 67

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Naturalist 3

Bite: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠21/♥19/♦17/♣15). Range 2.

♠ **Swallow Whole:** The sea monster swallows the target (if Size +1 or less). If the target survives this attack, she is now in the creature's gullet. Increase her Bleeding consequence a severity due to the acidic environment. Treat her as grappled, except she cannot escape until the creature is dead.

♥♦ **Smash:** This attack represents a mighty smash that increases the Prone consequence of all characters in the targeted zone by a severity.

♣ **Grab:** The sea monster has the target in its coils. Establishes a grapple with the target. If the target is already grappled, the sea monster constricts, dealing 17 damage instead of the usual 15.

Aquatic: Sea monsters are at home in the water. When swimming in combat, they may move two zones when taking a move action.

Size +3: Sea monsters are whale-sized. This has been factored into the sea monster's Defense and HP.

Sea monsters are huge snake-like beasts that live far out at sea. They like to attack passing ships, first tormenting the crew, then capsizing the boat and dragging it down into the murky depths.

TEMPLE GUARDIAN

"I have guarded this temple for eons untold."

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 5, **Int** 4, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 5

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 2, **HP** 11

Skills: Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Melee 3, Occult 3, Persuade 3, Stealth 1

Draining Touch: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥7/♦5/♣3). Ignores DR. The temple guardian heals damage equal to the amount dealt.

♦ **Fatiguing:** Increase the target's Fatigue consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

♣ **Curse:** The target is unable to use Moxie until the temple guardian is destroyed or until the next dawn, whichever comes first.

Drive Away: +5♦ vs. Willpower. Targets all enemies who can see the temple guardian. May only be performed once per encounter. On a success, increase the target's Fear consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Undead: As one of the undead, a temple guardian is immune to most metabolic hazards, is susceptible to effects targeting supernatural evil and doesn't naturally heal (although the Draining Touch ability still heals it).

Temple Guardians are undead whose bodies have been specially prepared and left in ancient tombs and temple ruins. These undead awaken if the site they guard is violated, such as by damage or the entry of a trespasser.

THUNDERBIRD

"I am the wind, I am the storm, personified!"

Str 8, Dex 7, Spd 8, End 8, Int 4, Per 10, Chr 8, Det 7

Defense 12/25, Willpower 9/19, DR 1, HP 16

Skills: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Guns 2, Melee 3, Occult 3, Persuade 3

Claws: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥9/♦7/♣5).

♣ **Wind Burst:** This attack is accompanied by a burst of wind. Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Lightning Blast: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3). Range 4. May only be used every other round.

♥ **Dazing:** Increase the target's Dazed consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

♦ **Stunning:** Increase the target's Stun consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

♣ **On Fire!:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Flight: When flying a thunderbird may move two zones when taking a move action.

Weather Control: Thunderbirds have the ability to control the weather, summoning rain, wind and hail. They can turn a clear sky dark with clouds in roughly a minute, or vice versa. In combat this allows a Thunderbird to take an action to create or destroy the Concealment consequence due to rain, wind and shadows.

The thunderbird is a supernatural creature of great power and strength. It has the ability to control the weather, sending rain, lightning and hail down on those who anger it. Some say the thunderbird is the archenemy of the great horned snakes, or other underwater denizens, that seek to overwhelm the surface world.



VAMPIRE

"I want to drink your blood!"

Str 7, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 7, **End** 7, **Int** 5, **Per** 7, **Chr** 7, **Det** 7

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 9/19, **DR** 0, **HP** 14

Skills: Animals 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Deception 3, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 2, Melee 3, Occult 2, Persuade 3, Socialize 2

Claws: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥8/♦6/♣4).

♥ **Bite:** This attack contains a bite. After the attack, the vampire heals a number of HP equal to the damage dealt. Those who die from the vampire's bite rise from the grave the next night as a vampire themselves.

♣ **Grab:** The vampire initiates a grapple with the target. If the target is already grappled, the vampire performs a bite instead (see above).

Mesmerize: +7♦ vs. Willpower. Increase the target's Disabled consequence a severity, or two severities with a critical success.

♠ **Desire:** The vampire's mental suggestion creates a longing in the target. Increase the target's Desire (allow vampire to drink blood) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

♣ **Fixation:** The target becomes fixated by the vampire. Increase the target's Fixated (the vampire) consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Burned by Sunlight: Vampires burn up in the sun. Every round the vampire remains in direct sunlight, increase its Bleeding consequence a severity.

Difficult to Kill: A vampire is not truly killed unless it "dies" in one of three ways: it's burned to death by sunlight, it is decapitated or a stake is driven into its heart after it is downed.

Fear of Holy Symbols: A vampire viewing a holy symbol held aloft by a believer automatically gains the Fear (moderate) consequence. This consequence cannot be removed until the holy symbol is no longer in its sight.

Shapeshift: A vampire may assume the shape of a wolf or a large bat. Changing shape is a Concentrate action requiring 3 AP. While in the other shape use the stats for a Wolf (see

page 234), or for a large bat, use the Hawk stats (minus the Talons, see page 232). In either case, the vampire's Intelligence remains the same.

Undead: As one of the undead, a vampire is immune to most metabolic hazards, is susceptible to effects targeting supernatural evil and doesn't naturally heal, except on nights during which the vampire drank the blood of the living.

Vampires have been living in the shadows and stalking the night since the days when humanity was just emerging from the Stone Age. They are creatures of the night. They are undead predators that stalk the streets in search of human blood.



WEREWOLF

Howls at the moon menacingly.

Str 11, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 7, **End** 9, **Int** 3, **Per** 8, **Chr** 6, **Det** 7

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 8/16, **DR** 3, **HP** 20

Skills: Animals 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Melee 4, Naturalist 4, Occult 2, Tactics 2

Claws: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥12/♦10/♣8).

♠ **Lock:** The werewolf holds on with its teeth, establishing a grapple on the target. If a grapple has already been established, the werewolf instead jerks its head back and forth while holding on; it uses the following damage instead: ♠16.

♦ **Pounce:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit. The werewolf also initiates a grapple with the target.

♣ **Gash:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Frenzy: As a reaction to being wounded, a werewolf may spend an AP to immediately declare and execute an attack.

Terrifying Howl: +6♦ vs. Willpower. Increases the Fear consequence of all foes who hear the howl a severity, or two with a critical success. May be used once per encounter.

Healed by Moonlight: While the full moon's light touches a werewolf, it heals 1 HP at the end of every round.

Keen Smell: Werewolves have a keen sense of smell and don't have to spend additional AP when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to recognize scents.

Susceptible to Silver: Damage from silver ignores a werewolf's DR and the werewolf cannot heal damage dealt this way using its Healed by Moonlight trait.

They say the moon has a great influence over the minds of mortals. When the moon is at its fullest, that say a cursed few lose control, changing into hybrid man-beasts and rampaging across the countryside. These are werewolves. They hunt, they kill, and a few—when they change back—regret what they've done.

Note: This stat block represents the werewolf in its hybrid full-moon form. A werewolf in its usual human form uses any of the human stat blocks (beginning on page 223).



INDIVIDUAL MENACES

Across the world, a few individuals stand out head-and-shoulders above the rest. These are the heroes and villains about which countless stories are told. A few such people are detailed below.

ILYRIA SINISTER

"As Lord Wilburbottom wishes, and as I wish."

Str 5, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 8, **Per** 9, **Chr** 8, **Det** 7

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 11/23, **DR** 1, **HP** 22, **Wealth** 7, **Lifestyle** 8

Skills: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Deception 1, Empathy 1, Guns 1, Lib-Arts 4, Medicine 3, Melee 5, Occult 3, Science 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 3

Saber: +8♥ vs. Defense (♠12/♥9/♦6/♣3)

♦ **Knockdown:** The target's Prone consequence increases a severity, or two on a critical hit.

♣ **Sunder:** On a hit, the target's weapon bends or snaps, rendering it penalized or useless until repaired.

Rifle: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3).

Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5.

Danger Sense: Ilyria does not suffer reduced AP due to surprise (see page 170).

Fencing: When wielding her saber, Ilyria adds +2 to her Defense on attacks originating from the same zone (see page 163).

Villain: As a villain, Ilyria's HP is doubled, she gains 5 AP per round and she may take up to two actions requiring a flip each round (see page 222).

Equipment: Leather Coat (Worn), Rifle(Hands 2), Saber

Ilyria Sinister is a mysterious traveler from another world. As deadly as she is beautiful, she stepped through a mystical portal some years ago and made contact with Lord Wilburbottom. The two struck it off and they now travel the world, hatching devious schemes. Ilyria doesn't quite understand this world, but she is a master of many fields, including saber fighting.



LORD WILBURBOTTOM

"You cretins cannot fully comprehend my schemes."

Str 5, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 6, **Int** 8, **Per** 6, **Chr** 6, **Det** 8

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 11/22, **DR** 1, **HP** 22, **Wealth** 10, **Lifestyle** 10

Skills: Animals 1, Athletics 2, Deception 3, Empathy 3, Guns 3, Lib-Arts 5, Mechanics 4, Persuade 3, Occult 5, Stealth 3, Tactics 3

Monologue: +6♦ vs. Willpower. May only be performed immediately before or on the first round of combat. Make a speech. On a success, all enemies increase their Stun consequence a severity, or two severities on a critical success.

Revolver: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6.

♦ **Called Shot:** On a successful hit, Wilburbottom may make this a called shot to the arms, legs or head (see page 108).

♣ **Stunning Attack:** On a successful hit, the target increases her Stun consequence a severity.

Deft Retreat: Wilburbottom may spend an extra AP to avoid provoking Zone of Control reactions (see page 164).

Sacrificing Dodge: As a free reaction, Wilburbottom may dodge behind any ally in the same zone to redirect the attack to that ally instead of to himself.

Villain: As a villain, Wilburbottom's HP is doubled, he gains 4 AP per round and he may take up to three actions requiring a flip each round (see page 222).

Equipment: Leather Coat (Worn), Revolver (Conceal)

Lord Nigel Clancy Wilburbottom III grew up in England. He was the heir to an old fortune, but his interests soon led him to the occult. This brought him to become associated with the Fraternal Order of the Right. In the employ of FOR he made contact with the mysterious Ilyria Sinister, a traveler from a different world. Since then the two have been inseparable, and they have hatched many devious plans. Lord Wilburbottom wears an archaic suit with a top hat and has an impressive mustache that he twirls.

Lair of the Dastardly Duo

Ilyria Sinister and Lord Wilburbottom travel the world furthering their sinister schemes. When not traveling, they operate out of an abandoned Civil War-era fortress located along the banks of the Mississippi River. This fortress has thick stone walls, an extensive dungeon complex beneath it and is still defended by a number of cannons. Lord Wilburbottom keeps a staff of minions on hand, manning the fortress at all times. These minions keep watch, upkeep the fortress' facilities and can operate the cannons if the site is attacked.

In the subterranean spaces beneath the fortress, the dastardly duo possess a chamber for working occult rituals. This includes an elaborate summoning circle, as well as numerous paranormal instruments.

MR. X

"I'm probably going to die on this damned rock, but no sooner than I can abide."

Str 4, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 4, **Int** 5, **Per** 7, **Chr** 5, **Det** 3

Defense 9/19, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 0, **HP** 8, **Wealth** 5, **Lifestyle** 3

Skills: Awareness 3, Deception 3, Guns 2, Mechanics 1, Melee 2, Persuade 1, Science 2, Socialize 1, Vehicles 3

Bite: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠5/♥3/♦2/♣1).

♠ **Lost Dentures:** Mr X's dentures fall out, revealing his actual monstrous teeth! On this attack and future bite attacks, use the following damage:

♠7/♥5/♦3/♣1.

Raygun: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 3, Reload 1, Shots 12.

♠♥ **Disintegration:** On a miss, the target loses the Cover consequence, as any cover it formerly had is destroyed. If this cover is another creature, treat this as an attack against that creature's Defense and deal damage as normal.

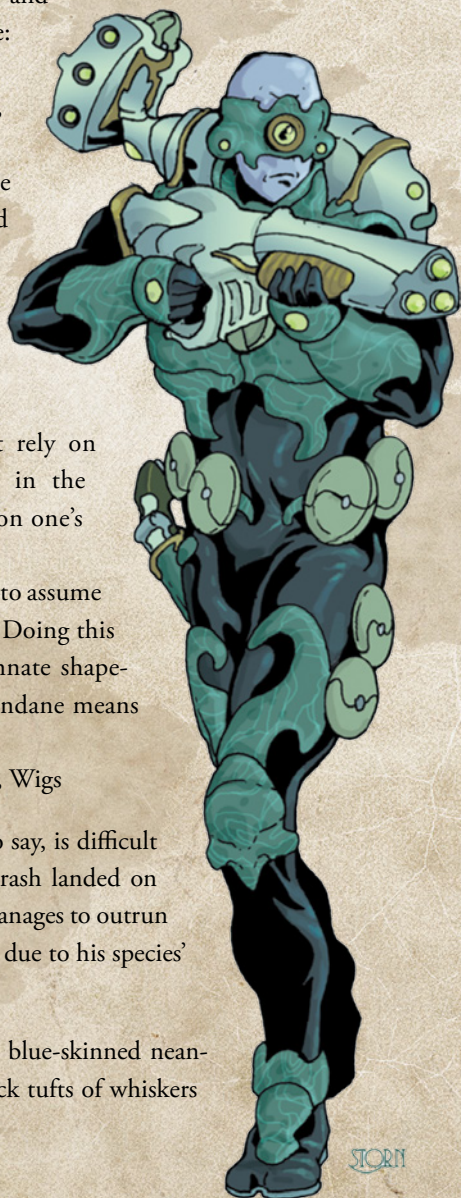
Alien Anatomy: Mr. X is an alien and has a number of physiological differences from humans. At the GM's discretion, effects that rely on human anatomy (such as one's heart being in the standard spot, or not having sensory whiskers on one's face) may fail to have their intended effect.

Shapeshift: Mr. X may alter his shape in minor ways to assume one that resembles another humanoid of Size 0. Doing this is a Concentrate action requiring 3 AP. This innate shape-shifting ability is often augmented by more mundane means of disguise, such as by donning a suiting wig.

Equipment: Raygun (Conceal), Universal Translator, Wigs

Mr. X's real name is Xz'Ra Dax!k, which, needless to say, is difficult to pronounce. He is an alien from Planet X who crash landed on Earth in 1762, surviving incognito ever since. If he manages to outrun a premature death, he likely has another 50 years left due to his species' longer lifespan.

In his natural form Mr. X appears something like a blue-skinned neanderthal, with eyes too big and lips like a catfish. Thick tufts of whiskers



STORM

protrude from his cheeks and brow. He naturally has rows of sharp teeth. When he smiles, intentional or not, it's like a shark grinning at his next meal.

In practice, however, Mr. X usually wears a human disguise. His alien anatomy provides him with a minor ability to shapeshift, allowing him to look like a gangly bald man with a mustache. He supplements this with dentures to hide his teeth, and a wig for fashion.

Originally, Mr. X was sent to Earth as an advance scout ahead of a potential invasion. While approaching the planet, his ship collided with cosmic debris. Most of the crew escaped in emergency pods, but only two landed safely. His pod crashed along the border of China and Mongolia.

At first he continued working toward his mission of planetary invasion. He scoured the planet for scattered ship debris, and triangulated other pod locations. Fortunately, he never found the necessary parts to build a beacon able to reach home, and has yet to find another living crew member. As the decades came and went, his desire to fulfill his orders dissipated, and eventually he deserted his duties.

More recently however, while on a trade route in America, he discovered an abandoned pod, hidden by a mixture of old growth and old-fashioned disguise. With more money than he knows what to do, and more aliases than Benjamin Franklin, his objective became clear: "Hope it's a girl!"

Mr. X may appear in front of players at any time under a number of names. He may accompany them, or he may send them on a mission. However, everything he does has an ulterior motive. For better or worse, he does whatever it takes to achieve his own ends and abandons the party when the objective is complete, or if it becomes impossible. His demeanor is friendly at all times, even when ditching fellow adventurers. He is first and foremost a coward, and if confronted later by abandoned allies, he will lie through his teeth until he can run away again.

Planet X

Astronomers have been looking for Planet X—the fabled ninth planet—ever since the discovery of Neptune in the 1840's. Numerous "Trans-Neptunian Planets" have been proposed. Jacques Babinet named the planet Hyperion. Thomas See named it Oceanus. Venkatesh Ketakar suggested the existence of a pair of planets, which he named Brahma and Vishnu. There is indeed a ninth planet out there, and it is from this planet that Mr. X hails.

The X-ians have an advanced, if rather haphazard society. Thus far their excursions into space travel have been limited, but they are slowing beginning to exploit resources further afield. They are a long-lived species, and their true policy toward Arth has yet to be decided.

ROPATA TUA

"Look upon Tāwhiri. Can you not see my storm consume your horizon?"

Str 4, **Dex** 8, **Spd** 3, **End** 6, **Int** 10, **Per** 9, **Chr** 5, **Det** 9

Defense 10/20, **Willpower** 12/24, **DR** 0, **HP** 20, **Wealth** 10, **Lifestyle** 4

Skills: Crafts 1, Deception 2, Guns 5, Lib-Arts 1, Mechanics 1, Melee 2, Naturalist 1, Persuade 2, Tactics 5, Vehicles 5

Terrify: +5♦ vs. Willpower. Area. Even without knowing who he is or without an army of pirates behind him, Ropata's tattoos and his intimidating look are more than enough to give his enemies second thoughts. On a success, all enemies in the targeted zone increase their Fear consequence a severity, or two with a critical success.

Sniper Rifle: +9♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3). Hands 2, Range 4, Reload 4, Shots 10

♣ **Stunning Hit:** Increase the target's Stun consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Taiaha: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥8/♦5/♣2).

♣ **Haka Lead:** Increase the target's Fear consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

Crippled: Ropata's peg leg makes it difficult to run or move about very quickly. All move actions to change zone cost an additional AP.

Villain: Ropata's HP is doubled (already figured above).

Equipment: Shark tooth peg leg (Worn), Taiaha

Ropata is a resourceful, ambitious and ruthless pirate king who has long been a terror of the seas and skies. As a young adult, he gained a small amount of fame as he survived a shark attack while fishing alone one evening. Though he fought the shark off, he lost his lower right leg and has since been supported by a wooden peg leg below the knee. His career in piracy started the evening he killed his brothers, taking each of their ships and crews for his own.

Ropata has acquired a fearsome reputation around the Pacific, mainly by raiding the less protected regions of the Khmer Empire. Over the course of his career, he has gained an entire fleet of ships, and even airships! It is from one of these that he oversees his operation.

In recent years, he's taken bribes from colonial powers to attack specific, often quite strong, regions of Khmer territory. Although he figured out quickly that this was intended to be a check on Khmer expansion, he has only recently realized the full significance of his actions. He may have unwittingly placed himself in the center of a battle that he won't be able to avoid. In the past few months he's sprung into action, making deals with distant powers, calling in favors with the other Pacific Islanders and conscripting other pirates.

But even in this he has unwittingly set himself up for something more than he realizes, becoming one of the larger forces in the area and certainly the largest airborne islander force. Many have started to call him the Pirate King, a title which fills him with pride. Many more are calling him "Tāwhiri," filling him with relentless zeal.

Ropata is a large man, just beyond the end of his prime, but he still has the physical size to intimidate his way out of most issues. He lumbers when carrying his weight, adjusting long ago to the peg leg. Tattoos of the ocean and sea life stretch across his body, reaching up to his face to shape it like a shark's. Aboard his airship, he and his crew wear many layers, including their tatua/tu on their waists and re-purposed, thicker kahu kiwi, a black feather cloak.

The Rehua, Ropata's personal airship, is a surprisingly small vessel with a black and white orca-esque pattern design, immediately recognizable from the rest of the single-colored ships. The design creates a "dazzle camouflage" effect which makes range, speed and heading harder to pinpoint. It's high speed, maneuverability and particularly loud swivel cannons is what set it apart and allows it to dart around the battlefield, forcing enemy action and causing distress rather than a direct confrontation.

Ropata himself is calm and intelligent, even when under duress. In motion and style he is slow but unwavering, each strike coordinated and hard. Although there is an air of morbidity about him, his sheer focus and drive usually overpowers any sense of it.

Every ship in his fleet has been confiscated from a variety of sources, and thus varies wildly in style. But Ropata has found an easy and cheap way for the ships to have at least one consistent similarity: use the bones of the ship's previous captain for it's wheel.

Ropata and his crew have made their own distinctive adjustments to common tools, such as by attaching stingray barbs to nets to drop onto ship wheels from above, heavier and sharper boarding Patu's, and rifle attachments for the Taiaha.

In his personal cabin there is a surprising amount of books across the walls on all sorts of topics, all of which surround the center table with piles of opiates and various other drugs to subside the pain from his stump. The burning sensation in his phantom limb persists to this day, and he calls it "the weight of the shark."

Pacific Politics

The Khmer have plans to establish a great empire across the Pacific. Using their fleet, they have slowly been expanding their hold on neighboring islands, annexing one after another.

This, however, has not gone unnoticed by the other powers in the region. Qing China, in particular, wants to hold the Khmer in check, as they may have their own plans for the Pacific, if they can ever resolve China's current fractured state of affairs. While the Qing do not have the power to spare at the moment with direct intervention, they may be more than willing to supply weapons or aid to proxies that would keep the Khmer occupied with troubles. Many of these proxies are willing to accept this aid, but they have their own motives and loyalties.

ZANE WANDLER

"Of course the ends justify the means! Was that ever in doubt!?"

Str 4, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 6, **End** 5, **Int** 9, **Per** 5, **Chr** 7, **Det** 7

Defense 8/17, **Willpower** 11/23, **DR** 3, **HP** 18, **Wealth** 9, **Lifestyle** 7

Skills: Crafts 3, Deception 3, Guns 3, Lib-Arts 3, Mechanics 5, Medicine 3, Melee 3, Persuade 3, Science 5, Socialize 3, Stealth 3, Tactics 3, Vehicles 3

Confusion Ray: +6♥ vs. Willpower. Area. The target's Dazed, Fear, Fixated (Zane) and Stun consequences increase a severity, or two with a critical success.

Experimental Pistol: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠8/♥6/♦4/♣2). Autofire 2, Conceal, Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

♥ **Flaming Shot:** The target increases her Bleeding consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

♦ **Paralytic Shot:** The target increases her Disabled consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

♣ **Stun Shot:** The target increases her Stun consequence a severity, or two on a critical hit.

Connections: Zane has numerous connections among the wealthy and aristocratic. When he is able to call on these connections he gains a +4 bonus to social actions where his influence and status would apply.

Gadgets: Three times per session Zane may pull out a gadget perfectly suited to the occasion, retroactively declaring that he has had it in his possession all along! Wha ha ha! The gadget is one of his own inventions, but must be small enough to fit inside his hat, under his jacket, inside a lockbox or be similarly concealed.

Villain: As a villain, Zane has twice the usual number of HP (already figured) and gains 4 AP every round.

Equipment: Exosuit (DR 3), Experimental Pistol, Gadgets (assorted).

Zane Wandler is the last child of a long line of Austrian nobility. Armed with a genius intellect, an unending credit line and a willingness to burn any bridge necessary, he travels the world to fulfill his grandiose aims and to feel the thrill adventure!

Growing up, Zane endured the squabbles of nobility in Europe, heard the rumblings of the working class and saw the birthing cries of the latest industrial revolution. Through all this he became incensed with the idiocy around him. The world could not be trusted to run itself, as no single form of government was without fault. Democracies were run by charismatic idiots; monarchies were a role of the dice; dictatorships only respected power, not intellect; and the rumblings of communism stank of idealistic fools wanting a better life. True utopia could only be found with technology! And he would bring it to the world, whether the world appreciated it or not!

Zane left his family shortly after graduating from university at age 17. His goal: to search out new and ancient mysteries and technologies in the world, which he could use to end world hunger and bring about world peace.

While his aims aren't inherently evil, Zane is insanely egocentric, and cares not for the means with which these goals are achieved. To him, mind control is a perfectly suitable solution for ending war, industrialized cannibalism is the perfect cure for world hunger, and if only 1 million people are left to experience true prosperity... wonderful! (So long as he is one of them.) Zane also wants it to be known that he is solely responsible for these deeds, so any do-gooder adventurer is competition who must be manipulated, corrupted and ultimately destroyed.

Zane carries with him a large number of gadgets and other useful accouterments. Many of these are his own inventions, others are beneficial accessories that he's picked up along the way. At any one time he might be carrying a robotic hand, jetpack, mechanical suit, alien injection, esoteric alchemical solution, explosive device, etc.

In the pursuit of his goals, Zane makes use of a variety of automatons and henchmen. He has a large bankroll and connections among many of the aristocratic circles in Europe. He is skilled at reading and manipulating people, but his overriding arrogance can sometimes get in the way of his longterm social schemes.

Note: Zane Wandler is pictured on the next page (see page 252).

Zane's Gadgets

Below are a number of example gadgets that might be found in Zane's possession.

- **Jetpack:** This is a large pack that is strapped to the back and can be used to fly a short distance. In combat, this allows Zane to fly two zones with a single move action.
- **Alien Injection:** This is a potent serum derived from alien fluids. If injected into the bloodstream, it gives Zane a boost of strength and speed. Any Strength-based or Speed-based actions in the next hour gain a +4 bonus.
- **Robotic Hand:** This is essentially a robotic hand and arm that attaches to a frame that's fitted on the torso. Using a combination of thought and subtle muscle movements, the hand can be controlled and used as if Zane had a third arm. This might, for example, provide a +2 bonus to climb, lift things, repair complex mechanical devices or perform surgery.



CONSEQUENCES

The following is a list of common consequences used by the various subsystems in *Dime Adventures*. These consequences also can be used as benchmarks when assigning one's own consequences.

BLEEDING

Physical ■ Health ■ Lasting

Effect: The character loses HP equal to the severity of this consequence squared at the beginning of each round—so, 1, 4, 9, 16 HP. This damage ignores DR.

Duration: Bleeding lasts until the character successfully receives first aid or dies.

The character is suffering from an ongoing source of damage. This is usually literal bleeding from open wounds, but it may also represent ongoing damage from maladies or environmental conditions.

BOLSTERED

Mental

Effect: +1 per severity bonus to the next flip.

Duration: This lasts until an action is taken that benefits from the consequence or until the end of the scene.

The character's actions are bolstered usually through either expertly directed tactics, improved morale, paranormal guidance or any other number of factors.

CONCEALMENT

Physical ■ Circumstantial

Effect: +1 per severity to Defense against attacks targeting the concealed character.

Duration: Concealment lasts until an action is taken that negates the Concealment. For example, turning on a light to get around darkness or moving to get around concealing foliage.

The character is obscured by smoke, darkness or some other effect that the character can exploit to make targeting her difficult.

COVER

Physical ■ Circumstantial

Effect: +1 per severity to Defense against attacks targeting a character through Cover. If the Cover bonus would make the difference between success or failure on an attack, the object providing cover is struck instead and takes the damage.

Duration: This lasts until an action is taken that negates the Cover, such as moving to where the obstructing object does not provide cover or destroying the cover in an attack.

There is some physical object the character can get behind and use as cover against incoming attacks.

DAZED

Mental ■ AP

Effect: -1 per severity to all actions. At the beginning of a round, a character may opt to take one fewer AP to ignore this penalty for the round.

Duration: This lasts until an End Consequence action is taken for the character to clear her head and remove this consequence.

The character's mind is cloudy and dazed. She is spacey and easily-distracted and finds it difficult to focus on the task at hand.

DESIRE

Mental ■ Subject

Effect: Every time the severity of this consequence increases, the character must succeed at a Det-12 flip or perform the desired action at the next opportunity. This action is at a +2 bonus if it is against the character's nature, such as harming an ally, or a +4 bonus if it involves almost certain harm to oneself.

Duration: This lasts until the desired action is indulged, a new desire is imposed (see the description under "Subject" below) or until the end of the scene.

Subject: When this consequence is gained, it always specifies some action the character desires to perform. A character may not have more than one Desire consequence at a time. Effects that would impose a new desire first remove the old Desire consequence. Every severity of Desire that would be imposed removes a severity of the old consequence. Then, once the old consequence is gone, the remaining severities of the new consequence apply as normal.

The character has a strong, deep-seated urge to undertake some action. This might be indulging in alcohol or other drug, making a move on an attractive dancer or dropping a hot iron that is scalding one's hands.

DISABLED

Mental ■ Physical ■ AP

Effect: The character gains one fewer AP per severity per round.

Duration: This lasts until an End Consequence action is taken for the character to clear her head and remove this consequence. If this consequence would reduce a character to receiving no AP in a round, every turn skipped in this way reduces this consequence a severity.

The character begins to lose control of her body. At first it begins to slow down, but gradually she becomes paralyzed.

ENCUMBERED

Physical ■ Circumstantial ■ Lasting

Effect: -1 per severity to all Speed- and Dexterity-based actions. When critically failing one of these actions, the character may accidentally drop whatever she is holding.

Duration: This lasts until the character puts down enough equipment that she isn't encumbered anymore (see page 186).

The character is burdened down by carting around more gear than she can easily carry.

FATIGUE

Physical ■ Lasting

Effect: -1 per severity to all Strength-, Dexterity-, Speed- and Endurance-based actions.

Duration: This lasts until the character gets a good night's rest and some relaxation, unaffected by the source of the fatigue.

The character has become fatigued and physically exhausted. This can be caused by stress, physical activity, starvation or any number of reasons.

FEAR

Mental ■ AP ■ Subject

Effect: The character cannot take an action that directly affects the subject of her fear or which moves her closer to the subject of her fear. At the beginning of a round, she may opt to take one fewer AP in order to ignore this restriction for the round.

Duration: This lasts until an End Consequence action is taken for the character to clear her head and remove this consequence.

Subject: When this consequence is gained, the character always has something of which she is afraid.

Something is making the character scared. Her fearful reaction could run the gamut from solidly intimidated to sheer, mind-boggling terror.

FIXATED

Mental ■ Subject

Effect: This causes a -1 per severity penalty to all actions not involving the subject of the fixation while the subject is in the same scene.

Duration: This lasts until an End Consequence action is taken for the character to clear her head and remove this consequence.

Subject: When this consequence is gained, the consequence always has some subject with which the character is fixated. A character may not have more than one Fixated conse-

quence at a time. Effects that would impose a new fixation first remove the old Fixated consequence. Every severity of Fixated that would be imposed instead removes a severity of the old consequence. Then, once the old consequence is gone, the remaining severities of the new consequence apply as normal.

The character has something with which she is fixated, and she finds it difficult to focus on anything else. This might include obsession with a failure, a new infatuation or personal issues lingering in the back of her mind.

PRONE

Physical ■ Circumstantial

Effect: While Prone, all move actions cost an additional AP, excluding those taken to end the Prone consequence itself. Additionally, the effect of all Dodge, Parry and Zone of Control reactions are at a -1 per severity penalty.

Duration: This lasts until a move action is taken for the character to regain control of her position and posture.

The character's body is not oriented in such a way as to give it easy mobility. She might be sitting, lying down or otherwise off-balance.

STUN

Mental

Effect: The character cannot take actions other than to end this consequence. This includes an inability to take reactions.

Duration: Lasts until an End Consequence action is taken for the character to clear her head.

The character is stunned due to some effect—perhaps a sudden blow to the head, the concussive blast of an explosion or sudden shock and pain.



APPENDIX: DICE

Dime Adventures typically uses a deck of poker cards to resolve actions in the game. Using cards to play roleplaying games has a long and proud tradition. Nevertheless, there are some gamers out there who prefer to eschew cards and instead use dice.

For gamers with these preferences, we present an alternate action mechanic for *Dime Adventures* that makes use of two ten-sided dice (d10's). These dice should be differently-colored or otherwise easy to distinguish from each other. For game effects that would otherwise rely on suits, the system also makes use of one four-sided die (d4).

RESOLVING ACTIONS

Use this system to resolve an action in the game whenever a player would otherwise play a card: Roll two ten-sided dice. One of these dice will be designated as the result die and the other as the trump die. As with most roleplaying games that use ten-sided dice, a "0" on a die counts as a "10" rather than as "0." To resolve the action, simply add the value result die to the usual stat, skill and any other modifiers for the action. Then compare this total to the target number as usual.

Something interesting happens, however, if the value on the result die matches the value on the trump die. If both dice come up as 1's, then the result of the action is a critical failure regardless of any other bonuses. The player

may then refresh her Moxie. This works exactly as if a joker has been played using the usual card-based rules.

If both the result die and the trump die match and the results are not 1's, then the results are trump. In this case, add the dice together when determining the result of the action rather than simply using the result die. So, for example, rolling two 7's would mean a total dice value of 14.

Example: Alice is desperately shooting a gun. As usual, this is a Dex/guns vs. Defense action. Her total bonus is +8. She rolls two ten-sided dice and gets a 7 (result die) and a 6 (trump die). She adds the result die to her bonus for a total of 15.

Example: Bob is attempting to find a place to hide from the great beast that didn't die when he shot it. This is a Per/investigate action. His total bonus is +7. He rolls two ten-sided dice and gets a 6 (result die) and a 6 (trump die). Since these values match, he adds both of them to his bonus, for a total of 19.

Example: Charlie wants to leap across the gap between moving train cars to get away from as assailant. The GM decides this is a Str/athletics-12 action. Charlie's total bonus is +9. He rolls and gets a 1 (result die) and a 1 (trump die). Since the dice both came up 1's, the total doesn't matter. The action is a critical failure and Charlie falls perilously between the train cars. The silver lining is that Charlie gets to refresh his Moxie.

RANDOM NUMBER FLIPS

Random number flips are used to determine a random number between 1 and 10, usually weighted towards the lower end of the spectrum. They are used in the Dodge and Resist mechanics, as well as a few other places throughout the system.

Using dice, if a player ever needs to make a random number flip, simply roll a ten-sided die (1d10) and use the result.

Example: Eve is trying to avoid a gunshot. The attacker has a total of 10 to hit her, but her Defense is only 8/16. She decides to use the Dodge reaction and rolls 1d10, getting a 4. This adds to her Defense, giving her an effective Defense of 12/20 against the attack. The shot misses and Eve fights on.

RANDOM SUITS

Whenever a player needs to determine the suit of an action—such as when dealing damage—she should roll a four-sided die (1d4). The number on the die determines the effective suit of the action using the table below.

1d4	Suit
4	Spades
3	Hearts
2	Diamonds
1	Clubs

Note that spades is generally the “highest” suit in regards to damage and other effects. It corresponds with the highest value on the die. Similarly, clubs is generally the “lowest” suit and corresponds to the lowest value on the die.

OTHER EFFECTS

- Any game effect that would automatically make the result of an action trump instead treats the action as if a Moxie were

spent after the roll (see the “Moxie” section below). This means that the higher value of the two dice is used when determining the result of the action.

- Any effect that would normally occur when a joker is played—such as with the Complication weakness—instead takes effect when a matching pair of 1s is rolled.

MOXIE

When playing with dice, cards are no longer necessary for representing a character's Moxie. Instead, find some sort of counters or tokens to use—even tally marks on a piece of paper will suffice.

Every character still has the same number of Moxie. Moxie has the same effects, behaves in the same way and is still earned in all the same ways. On the other hand, Moxie effects dice differently than cards when spent.

SPENDING MOXIE

When using the dice mechanic, Moxie may still be spent in four different ways.

- **Activate Trait:** Some traits cost a Moxie to use. To activate such a trait, the player simply discards one of the tokens representing her Moxie.
- **Before a Roll:** Before a roll has been made, a Moxie can be spent to affect the results. To do this, simply announce the expenditure. When the roll is made, the values of the result die and trump die are totaled, just as if matching results had been rolled. This happens regardless of the actual values. So, for example, if a player spent a Moxie and then rolled an 8 and a 3, the total die value would be 11.
- **After a Roll:** Immediately after a roll has been made, but before the consequences of

the action have been announced, a player may decide to spend a Moxie to take the higher of either the result or trump die as the value of the roll. For example, if a player rolled a 1 on her result die and a 9 on her trump die, she could spend a Moxie to take the 9 instead of the 1. This cannot be done after rolling double 1s.

- **Serendipity:** Similar to the card system, a player may spend a Moxie to announce the existence of some small, convenient coincidence. A use in this manner must be accepted by the GM and may not derail or be detrimental to the game. Examples include declaring that the character remembered to bring some rope or declaring that a vehicle's engine takes a couple tries to start at a particularly convenient moment.

GM MOXIE

Using this system, the GM still has a pool of NPC Moxie. At the beginning of each session, this is set equal to the number of players present. She may spend the Moxie for any of her NPCs.

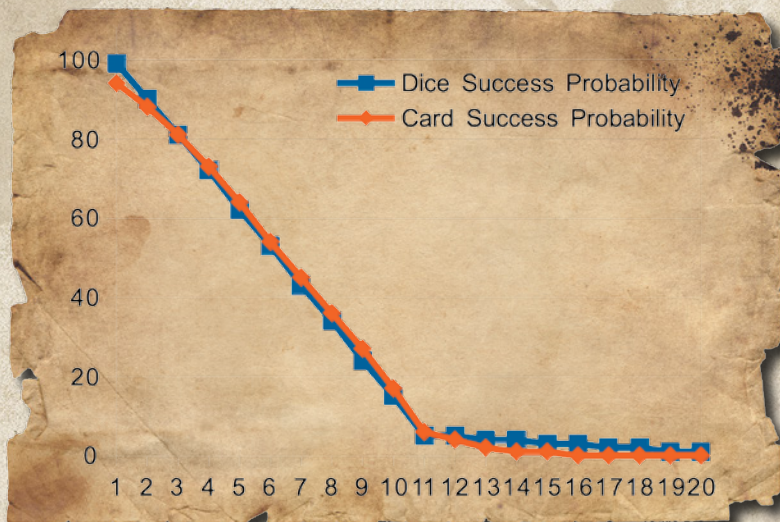
PROBABILITIES

Anyone with a curiosity for the math behind different game mechanics may be asking themselves how this system of using dice compares statistically to the default card system. Below is a graph indicating the probability of getting at least a given value with dice, versus the probability of getting at least that value with cards.

As you can see, in general, the dice mechanic is a rather good approximation of the results of the card mechanic. Probabilistically, the two systems differ the most at the extremes, and even then, they never differ by more than a 5% chance of success or failure.

However, before going any further, a few assumptions in the above graph should be noted. Because of the nature of cards, in practice the exact probabilities will vary a bit depending on which cards are being held as Moxie and which have already been played (and are thus sitting in the discard pile). To simplify matters, the above graph assumes that the cards are being drawn from a fresh deck with no other cards being held as Moxie or in the discard pile.

Despite these nuances, we have found that the dice system more-than-suffices statistically.



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Strength:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Dexterity:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Speed:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Endurance:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

**Dime
ADVENTURES**

Intelligence:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Perception:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Charisma:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

Determination:

$\frac{1}{2}$
Exp

STATS

Name:

Background:

Creed:

Idiosyncrasy:

Equipment

Trails

Attacks

Arm	Attack	Damage
	+	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
Properties:	+	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
Properties:	+	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣
Properties:	+	♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Defense

Armor DR Properties

Combat & Scores

Moxie: ____ Wealth: ____ Lifestyle: ____

Defense: ____ / ____ Willpower: ____ / ____

DR

Current HP

Max HP

Consequences

SKILLS

Animals

Rank

Empathy

Rank

Athletics

Rank

Guns

Rank

Awareness

Rank

Investigate

Rank

Crafts

Rank

Lib-Arts

Rank

Deception

Rank

Mechanics

Rank

Medicine

Rank

Science

Rank

Melee

Rank

Socialize

Rank

Naturalist

Rank

Stealth

Rank

Occult

Rank

Streetwise

Rank

Persuade

Rank

Tactics

Rank

Thievery

Rank

Vehicles

Rank

Rank

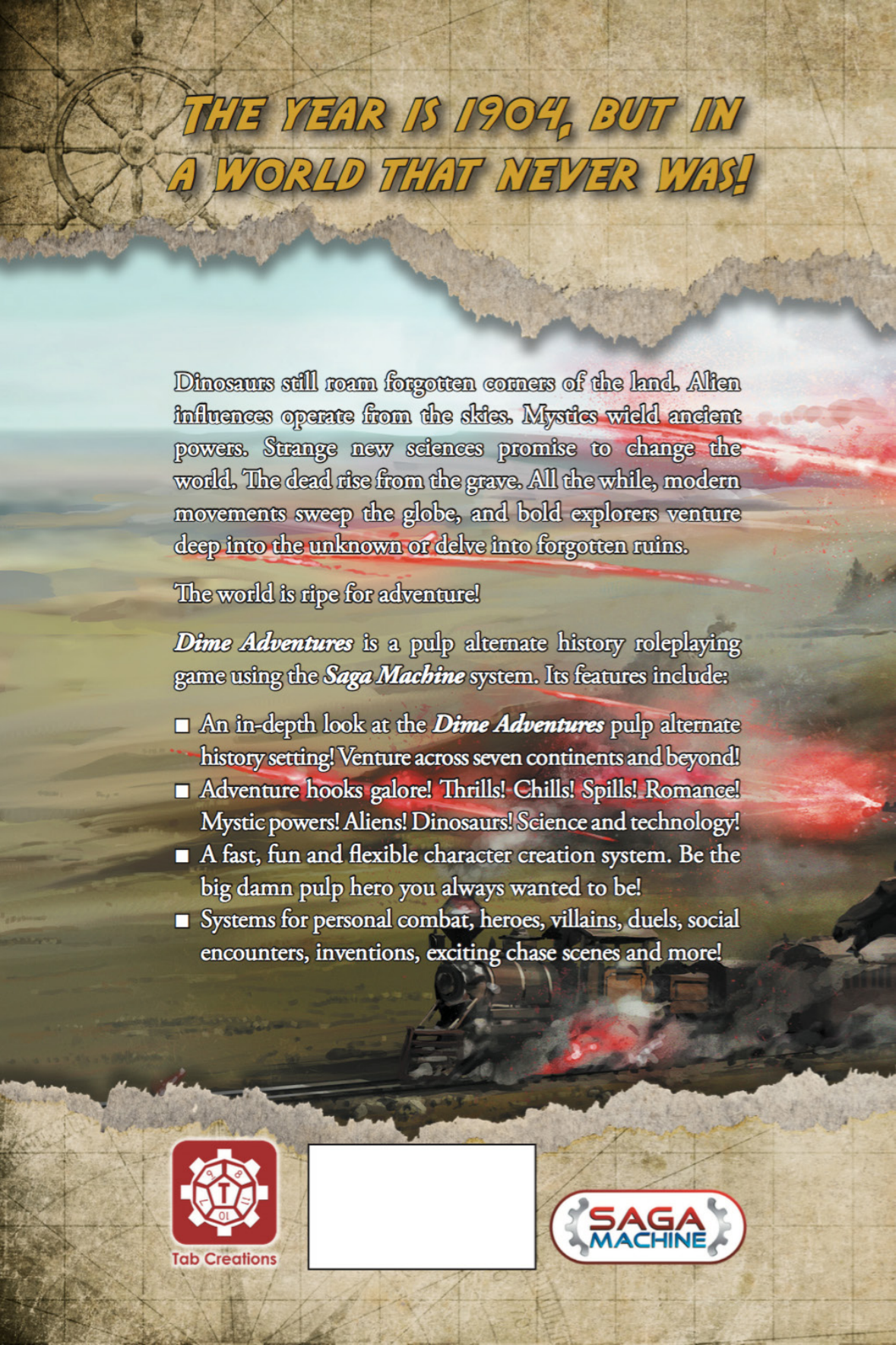
Rank

Rank

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