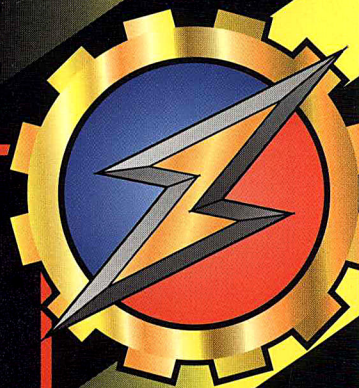


GAME ACCESSORY ONE

DP9-103

HEAVY GEAR GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE



MASTERING THE GAME



SUPPLEMENT

THE SCIENCE FICTION ROLEPLAYING & TACTICAL GAME

TOOLS OF THE TRADE • THE CHARACTERS • THE GAME • THE GAMEMASTER • REFEREE, OPPONENT OR GOD? • GAME BALANCE • RECORDKEEPING • THE PLAYERS • FINDING PLAYERS • WHAT ARE PLAYERS LOOKING FOR? • NOVICE PLAYERS • PROBLEM PLAYERS • THE CHARACTERS • HEROES AND VILLAINS • LEAD CHARACTER • SUPPORTING CAST • EXTRA • THE PLAYER CHARACTERS • THE GM'S ROLE IN CHARACTER CREATION • CHARACTER STEREOTYPES • FITTING CHARACTERS INTO GROUPS • MOTIVATING CHARACTERS • CHARACTER NAMES • CHARACTER PERKS AND FLAWS • EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT • CHARACTER STORY • THE NPCs • LOOKS • EQUIPMENT PACKAGES • THE GAME • THE PLAY IS THE THING • THE RULES • BREAKING THE RULES • IMPROVISING • PLOT MOVERS • FUMBLES • COMBAT • COMBAT SENSE • MOVEMENT • THE ENVIRONMENT • BURST FIRE • INJURIES • THE OPPONENTS • TOOLS OF THE TRADE • BASIC TACTICS • CREATING LIVELY PEOPLE AND PLACES • STANDARD PLOTS AND SUBPLOTS • COMING UP WITH IDEAS



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corporations, etc. (without satirical intent) are strictly coincidental.

The use of the male gender throughout this manual should in no way imply
the exclusion of the female gender or suggest that the game is intended
exclusively for a male audience. It is our hope that female gamers will
find this product just as interesting as their male counterparts.

Dream Pod 9 can be reached through the internet. Check out our web site
at www.dp9.com. We can also be reached through the newsgroups
rec.games.mechwarrior.dp9 and alt.games.dp9. Your feedback is welcome.

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1.1 - TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We've tried to make this book different from our other **Heavy Gear** supplements. It is not meant to be read from cover to cover (although you may want to do that anyway), but rather to be consulted as the need arises. More than a "how-to" guide to Gamemastering, it nonetheless goes over many of the basics involved in setting up and directing an adventure or a campaign. It also includes a series of tools and forms which we hope will be of use to Gamemasters in organizing and running their campaigns. With minimal bookkeeping and preparation, this booklet can help even the most inexperienced or unorganized Gamemaster run an exciting and consistent campaign. You'll also notice that this booklet is by far friendlier than most of our supplements, which tend to follow a more encyclopedic style. We figured a no-nonsense attitude would be more appropriate for this guide.

While this booklet gives numerous hints on how to be a good Gamemaster and how to properly prepare a campaign, it can't do the work for you. You have to sit down, plan out scenarios, write up stats, and do all those other things that make a good campaign. The one thing this booklet can't help you with is to come to a game unprepared and hope to survive it unscathed. As a general rule, you have to spend one to two hours of preparation time for every hour of game time. Fortunately, using archetypes such as the ones provided in this book and several other **Heavy Gear** supplements can help you drastically reduce that amount. You still have to come up with plot ideas and milestone events to help advance the story during the game sessions, but if all your Non-Player Characters and vehicles are already designed, that can amount to only an hour or two of preparatory work. As your campaign progresses, you may even find that you have designed enough material to last more than one session and thus take it easy for a few weeks. Your ability to improvise will also improve, but try not to rely on that too much. You may forget vital elements in the long run (unless you record everything carefully) and may end up with an inconsistent campaign.

1.1.1 - The Basics

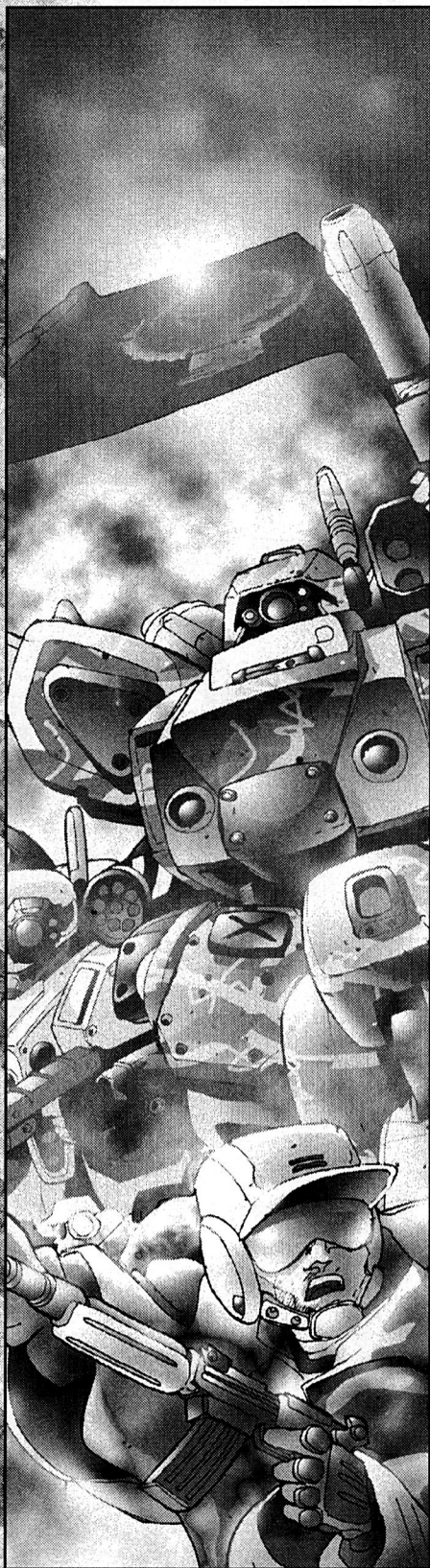
The first chapter of this Gamemastering booklet focuses on the various individuals involved in the game: the Gamemaster (who runs the show) and the Players (the actors and the audience at the same time). This first section explains the role of the Gamemaster, his expectations and responsibilities, and prepares novice GMs for the task that lies ahead. We also included a section on Players to help Gamemasters find Players and keep them interested in the campaign. While the material within may be of some use to a Player, it is really meant for use by Gamemasters, who often don't understand the needs and expectations of their Players, and fail to salvage their campaigns when they realize no one is having fun anymore. As the legendary soldiers used to say, you'll know what you're getting into, and "knowing is half the battle."

1.1.2 - The Characters

Characters, whether controlled by the Players or Gamemaster, represent the driving force behind any form of storytelling. This is particularly true in roleplaying, where Players become active participant by assuming the role of one of the characters. As a result, it is important to have interesting and believable heroes and villains. This section provides a few suggestions to help create interesting personalities for the game. It also expands on how many experience points to award at the end of an adventure session. It further covers Non-Player Characters, their personalities, their motivations, their personal belongings, etc. This section can give a solid boost to a Gamemaster who needs to create an NPC on the fly.

1.1.3 - The Game

Even experienced Gamemasters sometimes have a hard time running an entertaining game session. There are evenings when Players just can't seem to get moving in the right direction, or there are combat scenes that are just bland and uninspired. There are also those "off" nights when the Gamemaster simply should have stayed home and taken the evening off. For just those days (or nights), this chapter offers a variety of creative tools to help boost the GM's imagination and turn him into a raving, enthusiastic maniac once more. From plot movers to street talk to dramatic settings to valuable combat tactics, the GM can find almost everything he needs to spontaneously turn his few ideas into a dynamic scenario.





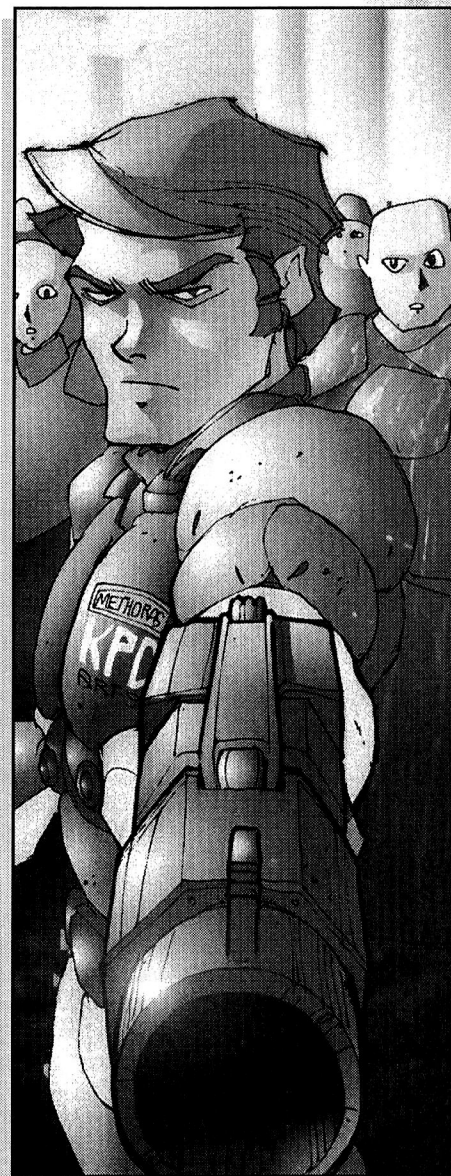
THE GAMEMASTER - 1.2

The Gamemaster (or GM for short) is analogous to the director of a movie, except that he is a director who does not know what lines the actors will come up with next. Taking on the mantle of the GM means preparing a lot of material for every game sessions and requires some level of dedication. In addition to designing the setting of an adventure, the Gamemaster is responsible for stocking the sets with an interesting cast of villains, allies and extras. These additional characters are called Non-Player Characters, or NPCs. During a game, one of the Gamemaster's primary tasks is to slip into the role of any NPCs who interact with the Players. The Gamemaster's other most important task is to guide the game's progress and arbitrate any conflicts, either between Player Characters (PCs) and NPCs, or between the PCs themselves.

Few gamers readily jump at the task of Gamemastering, despite all the rewards of the job. If you happen to be a Player reading this, you should consider giving it a try. For one thing, being on the "other" side of the fence will give you a new perspective on the role of Gamemastering and will make you a better (or at least a more understanding) Player. The reverse is also true — Gamemasters should go back to the role of Player once in a while, just so they don't forget what it feels like. One of the biggest cause of GM-Player conflict is the lack of understanding of their respective responsibilities and expectations. It is not uncommon for Players to be irritated at their Gamemasters' vindictiveness, nor is it rare for Gamemasters to be frustrated by their Players' disregard for the scenario they have lovingly created. Switching seats may help remind one and all that this is a game, and everyone is there to have fun.

This being said, the job of Gamemaster often requires a great deal of preparatory work, on average more than what most Players put in before a gaming session. The GM has to come up with a scenario, write up NPCs (at the very least those which may be used in combat situations), prepare some opposition for the PCs and link important events together in a coherent and consistent sequence. The Players, however, have little more to do than bring their character sheet, sit down and play. (In all fairness, however, some Players spend a great deal of time writing up their character backgrounds, drawing them up and developing their personalities — GMs should encourage that as much as possible.) Be that as it may, there are great rewards to being a Gamemaster. Nothing compares to the feeling of seeing a story unfold according to plan, except perhaps the feeling of a story taking a sudden twist for the better because a Player did something unexpected. So there's the real deal about being a GM: more work, better rewards.

Later on in this book, we focus on several hints and tips which you may want to apply as you gain experience. Use them for what they are: suggestions, not expectations. It is a poor Gamemaster who tries to do everything at once. Learn the basics first, get comfortable with them, then move on to the more advanced Gamemastering techniques. Only use what works for you, at a reasonable pace. If you have never been a Gamemaster before, you may find the task daunting, perhaps even impossible. You may even think you're not suited for the job and shy away from it. It's also possible that you've tried it before and weren't very successful. Don't let that stop you. As with many other activities, practice makes perfect. No one expects you to know all the tricks of the trade right away (or they're being very unfair if they do), so give yourself a break and jump in. Do it wholeheartedly and with enthusiasm. Have fun being a GM and be playful. Don't expect any results and you're certain to have a good time. Gamemasters who try too hard often fail because they focus on technicalities.



Referee, Opponent or God? - 1.2.1

The Gamemaster's job is really a little bit of these three elements. Among other things, the Gamemaster settles disputes and handles all rules-related matters. The GM is encouraged to be reasonable and to listen to his Players' opinions, but he's the one making the final call. He's also the opponent. He breathes life into the antagonists and controls them during combat situations. The Gamemaster's job is not to pound on the Player Characters until they die, but to provide reasonable and challenging opposition for them. Lastly, the job of GM is often tainted with perfume of godhood. Creating worlds and manipulating so many people and events can sometimes give that impression. If you're a Gamemaster, however, get that thought out of your head at all costs. You're no god. You're no puppet master either. Let your Non-Player Characters take a life of their own. Don't cheat them by making them do what you think is right. With time, you will find that your NPCs become more detailed and more intricate, and they will eventually surprise you by coming alive in your head. They will literally tell you what they want to do and all you become is a mouthpiece for that little corner of your mind that has become the Non-Player Character.

Remember that the game doesn't serve you, you serve the game. If you become a Grim Megalomaniac (another explanation for the acronym GM), you'll soon lose all your Players. Give the delusions of grandeur a rest — just have fun and make sure everybody else does.



1.2.2 - Game Balance

Unlike most other games, roleplaying games are not competitions between the Players. There is no real winner or loser, only the success or failure of missions. Roleplayers are expected to work together towards a common cause, and while the Gamemaster is responsible for supplying the obstacles and challenges, he is not the Players' enemy. His job is to provide the PCs with just enough opposition for them to feel they have earned their victory, but not so much to make it a no-win scenario. It is a delicate line to walk, one which is easily mastered by Gamemasters who pay attention to their Players.

In order to successfully resolve a situation, Player Characters have access to three general resources: their own abilities (internal resources), their friends and contacts (external resources), and their personal equipment and money (material resources). GMs should evaluate whether each of the resources is lacking, adequate or overabundant, and determine which one of the resources needs to be adjusted to give the Players a fighting chance. Without turning this principle into a mathematical formula, the Gamemaster should make sure the PCs have (on average) roughly adequate resources to tackle their opposition. If they are lacking in one particular resource, they should (perhaps only temporarily) have an overabundance of another one.

Another option is to do the reverse for the opposition. The latter also has the three resources mentioned above, and Gamemasters may opt to modify antagonists' resources rather than those of the PCs. If, for instance, there is no logical way for the GM to enhance the resources of the PCs without resorting to contrived plot devices, he can instead increase or reduce those of the NPCs. For example, an enemy who is highly skilled (internal resources) and is rich beyond dreams (material resources) may find himself without all the personnel he normally has under his command (external resources) and must do his dirty work himself. That gives the PCs a fighting chance. You should also remember that lack of preparation is no excuse and it should not lead you to create overly powerful opposition for your characters. Many Gamemasters come to a game unprepared, quickly whip up some nasties for the Player Characters to fight, then act all surprised when the Players are grumpy and unsatisfied. You should prepare villains ahead of time and make sure they give the Players a difficult — but not impossible — time.

One last bit of advice about the opposition: pacing is everything. Too much opposition too soon in a scenario can be as destructive as too little too late. Make sure you have some opposition ready during every segment of the game and of the campaign (beginning, middle and end). Usually, that opposition tends to become greater as the scenarios progress. Generally, it's a good thing to have at least two fights during the game, one after the first third of the scenario, and one near the end. The first battle should foreshadow the last one and hint at how much opposition the characters will face in the end. As a Gamemaster, you want to make sure the Players aren't taken by surprise, so follow these rough rules until you know your Players well enough to pull a few twists on them — just don't get carried away. Remember, you're the director of the show, and your only audience is your Players. If they don't enjoy the challenge, you've failed to entertain them and you've wasted everyone's time.

◆ Impartiality

While some rivalry between Player Characters is acceptable (and in some cases even desirable), personal conflict between Players is not. It is important to resolve what may appear to be a problem between Players before it evolves into something nasty and ruins the game for everyone. Often, rivalry between Players is due to the fact that one of the parties is not getting enough attention or the other one is getting too much. Regardless of your personal preferences as a Gamemaster, try to put everyone under the spotlight once in a while and give equal time to each Player. Definitely stay out of personal disputes between Players, but remind them that gaming is supposed to be fun and encourage them to work out their differences outside of game time. The worst thing you can do is to take sides. As a last resort, if worse comes to worst and the Players aren't making any effort to solve their problems, your only reasonable option is to kick the Players involved out of the game and hope they weren't essential to the campaign.

1.2.3 - Recordkeeping

You may want to use the Campaign Tracking Form on page 42 to keep track of various events in your campaign. Fill out the form below after each game, using as many forms as you need to cover all significant events which occurred during the session. This will prove invaluable later on when you want to pick up on loose threads or simply when you need to tell absent Players what happened during a previous game or scenario.

◆ Quick Tracking Form Explanation

In the Event Synopsis section, simply give an outline of the event and how it links with the previous and next events. Use the Allies and Opponents section to indicate what helped or hindered the PCs during the scenario, and in which way. The Loose Threads section allows you to jot down plot elements which are incomplete and which you may want to resolve at a later date. Record under Background World Events those events of note which do not affect the PCs' lives directly but represent notable milestones in the game world which the Players may refer to later on. Character Subplots occur on a more personal scale and should be noted with meticulous care; Player enjoyment is often proportional to the number and quality of the subplots he is involved in. Lastly, the Unbeknownst to the Players section allows you to keep track of events which occur behind the scenes without the PCs' knowledge.



THE PLAYERS - 1.3

A roleplaying game consists of a group of people creating an interactive story. It combines elements from theater, movies and improvisational acting. Like an actor, each Player takes the role of a specific character, with his particular background, personality quirks and professional abilities. These characters, called Player Characters (or PCs), band together to form a playing group called a party. Player Characters in a party usually work together because their motivations compel them to do so. They may not always like each other (as we mentioned before, it is all right for Player Characters to be rivals, just as long as it's clearly understood that it's not between the Players), but in the end they agree to work together towards some form of common goal.

So what makes roleplaying games any different from improvisational acting? For starters, roleplaying games are just that: games. Acting is done with the purpose of entertaining others. Games are played for the purpose of entertaining oneself. Players should always remember that the goal of the game is to have fun. While they should act out their characters' parts as faithfully as possible, no Player should be forced to perform in any way that makes him uncomfortable or prevents him from having a good time. Most roleplayers prefer to sit around a table and use their facial expressions, tone of voice and hand gestures to convey their characters' actions and emotions. Enthusiastic or dramatic Players often enjoy standing up and fully acting out their parts, using full body language and voice tremors to add depth and drama to their scenes. Shy Players may prefer to describe what their character does without making a spectacle of themselves. While some elitist gamers may judge the more theatrical Players to be better roleplayers, all that really matters is that everyone involved in the game enjoys himself. Gamemasters should remember at all times that not everyone gets entertained the same way. It is important for GMs to treat all Players fairly and give them some "air time" (i.e. interact with them) even if they prefer interacting with the more extroverted Players.

A quick note about method acting: no combat should ever be acted out! Serious injury could result. The big idea with roleplaying games is to *safely* do things we can't do in real life. If you're going to act out combat, you might as well take a walk on the wild side at 3:00 in the morning and pound on a few thugs. A roleplaying game is a simulation. As the famous doctor said: "Don't bury yourself in the part." Stick to game mechanics and verbal descriptions.



Finding Players - 1.3.1

Finding Players is not always an easy task. If your close circle of friends isn't enough, place ads in the local game shop, comic book store or the school activity board. Your ads should be simple and to the point, stating the number and types of Players you are looking for (see below), how often you want to play and — of course — that you're looking for Heavy Gear Players. One last option — one which probably works better — is to join the local gaming club and find gamers with your interests. Many clubs have a newsletter where you can advertise yourself as a GM looking for Players. Make use of it.

Once you have your Players, be upfront about the specifics of the campaign you want to run. Make sure everyone understands what the basic premises of the game are going to be and that they are comfortable with it. Work out a schedule which is good for everyone and make sure to confirm with your Players a day or two before the game to make sure no one forgets or has a sudden change of plans.

What Are Players Looking For? - 1.3.2

Not all Players enjoy the same kind of games, and GMs are well advised to take that into account before forming a group of Players for a campaign. Regardless of their individual play styles, Players should have similar expectations of the game. This will allow the Gamemaster to create a campaign which will last beyond the first three or four games (a critical time for a campaign).

Game Styles ◆

Although roleplaying stories could be divided in innumerable genres, we recommend a simplistic view to facilitate the "negotiation" process between Players and Gamemasters. By limiting the number of styles to choose from, you may reduce the time spent arguing over what kind of game everyone wants to play. The styles vary between Action and Intrigue. Action focuses on chases, exchange of gunfire and Gear combat. A series of extremely fast and furious encounters move the story forward, interspersed by some plot-revealing events. Intrigue relies on brains more than brawn and revolves around unveiling hidden information. Victory is achieved not by defeating the master villain in combat but by outmaneuvering him in intrigue. The very concept of "villain" is less clear in Intrigue campaigns, where no one's loyalties can be taken for granted. Of course, nothing stops GMs from mixing elements of Action and Intrigue. Most good roleplaying campaigns will do so, just as most good thrillers or adventure films do. These categories are not set in stone, but rather serve as helpful guidelines for Gamemasters and Players.



◆ Reality Factors

Suspension of disbelief — a process by which a viewer or reader voluntarily agrees to be fooled by premises which he knows may not be entirely realistic — is as important a concept in roleplaying as it is in literature or movies. Gamemasters and Players must agree on what level of reality they prefer before the game starts. In Heavy Gear, we use three Reality Factors to describe the various genres available.

The lowest level is **Gritty**. Firefights are very dangerous and heroes are just brave people taking great risks. The story is focused on individuals and their very personal quests. While not a perfect simulation of plain old everyday Real Life™, this is as close as it gets.

The middle level is **Adventurous**. This is recommended as the default for most games and is the one used in the various Silhouette books. Heroes and villains will tend to stand out just a bit more than Joe Average and death is easier to avoid.

The highest Reality Distortion Level is called **Cinematic**. This is epic adventuring where heroes and villains are larger than life and puny screen extras are mere cannon fodder. Even the most outrageous action has a chance of succeeding as long as it looks good.

| Campaign Styles <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Reality Distortion Level | Game Style | Game Style |
| | Action | Intrigue |
| Gritty | War Stories | Film Noir |
| Adventurous | Action/Adventure | Police |
| Cinematic | Heroic | Espionage |

| Campaign Examples (TV Series & Movies) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| War Stories | Action/Adventure | Heroic | Film Noir | Police | Espionage |
| Full Metal Jacket | Indiana Jones | Terminator 1 & 2 | Casablanca | Columbo | Mission: Impossible |
| Apocalypse Now | Top Gun | James Bond | Maltese Falcon | Hill Street Blues | The Saint |
| Platoon | Lethal Weapon | Star Wars | Blade Runner | Miami Vice | The Avengers |

1.3.3 - Novice Players

Getting new Players into a game, any game, is often the first challenge a GM will face. Players who are not familiar with roleplaying games or who have never played Heavy Gear may hesitate before joining your campaign. In the case of completely inexperienced Players, they need to know that they're not going to be rejected by the more experienced Players when they join. Too often, long-time gamers turn off new potential Players who express curiosity about the game: they speak in "game talk," an obscure lingo which novices cannot understand, trade "war stories" from their previous adventures which are meaningless to the newcomer, and in general display little tolerance for and offer no help to beginners. This has an adverse effect on the hobby and the Gamemaster, as host of the game, should encourage everyone to be helpful and show some understanding towards new members of the playing group.

◆ Guest Appearance

If a novice Player has expressed an interest in your campaign but isn't familiar with the world, the setting and the premises of your games, don't let him start a character right away. Rather, ask him (or her) to come to a game as a member of the audience and watch how it's done. If possible, you may want to give one or two NPCs to the guest if he feels he can handle it. This way, he may become familiar with the game without irritating the more experienced Players.

◆ Quick Explanation

Before anything else, make a quick summary of the world and the campaign premises for the novice Player. Next, go through the basic game mechanics and explain him briefly how combat works. Don't spend hours getting into the intricate details and how to do every little thing. If you overwhelm your new Player with too many rules, he'll hate the system and give up for good. The explanation should not last more than five to ten minutes. Emphasize the simplicity of Silhouette and show him as many illustrations as you can.

◆ Sample Combat

Most Players like to be rather proficient at combat to avoid losing their PC early during the game. Spend some time with novice Players to teach them the rudiments of the Silhouette combat system. Run them through a quick combat situation using a competent martial artist (Skills at 3/+1, UD of 7, STA of 35) versus an incompetent thug (Skills at 2/0, UD of 4, STA of 25). Make sure they understand how lethal combat can be. Give as many tips as you can. If you don't, they may blame you later for causing the death of their PCs.



Pre-Generated Character ◆

If the novice Player doesn't know yet what he wants to play, just make your best guess and assign him a pre-generated character on what you think his preferences are. The 2nd edition rulebook contains several character templates (pp. 88 to 97) which can speed up the character creation process. (If you have a first edition rulebook, check pages 20-43.)

Problem Players - 1.3.4

Gamemasters often get discouraged from running a campaign because they unsuccessfully dealt with problem Players in the past. The latter tend to have particular quirks and tendencies which, left unchecked, can ruin the game for everybody else. Gamemasters should be aware of the various types of problem Players and how to deal with them. This section only covers the most frequent and troublesome types. If a problematic individual is truly, irredeemably disruptive, just kick him out of the game and save everybody the aggravation. Make sure, however, that you've tried every trick in the book before doing so. Giving troublesome Players the final boot won't impress the other Players.

The Rules Lawyer ◆

This guy knows the rules inside and out. He can recite (correctly) any segment of the text from its paragraph number. He then uses this knowledge to find loopholes and give himself an unfair advantage over other Players. Make sure you set the record straight from the beginning: you're the GM. Listen fairly to all arguments, then make your decision. Be fair and objective in your judgement, and remind the Rules Lawyer that you don't always use all the rules in order to keep the game moving. That's often more important than searching five minutes for an obscure modifier.

The Killer ◆

Whatever the problem, the Killer use extreme measures to get rid of it. Anything that gets in his way is met with deadly force, regardless of the consequences. Make sure you warn him of the consequences of his actions before he pulls the trigger. Killing anyone indiscriminately attracts retribution. If the Killer is aware of the rules by which your world operates, he can never say you didn't warn him. If he ignores the warning, unleash angry NPCs on him.

The Munchkin ◆

This guy wants everything: high Attributes, high Skills, big guns, powerful vehicles, everything. These treasure hunters are hard to control. A word of advice: don't even try. Use reverse psychology instead: give them everything they want without opposition, and focus on the more interesting characters. They'll soon learn that the good stuff doesn't lie behind stats and wealth. Other Players won't complain if you give them interesting storylines.

The Show-Off ◆

Also known as the Spotlight Hound, this Player wants to be the center of attention. He wants to look good and to be worshipped by everyone in the game — Players, PCs and NPCs alike. He'll literally "teleport" from one scene to another (magically intervening in scenes where he's not supposed to be) and lie about his dice rolls. Stop him. He can't be at two places at the same time. Also, if he's rolled the dice while you weren't looking or if you can't see the dice, insist that he roll again. In fact, you should do this for everyone, just to avoid trouble.

The Specialist ◆

A hybrid of the Munchkin and the Show-Off, the Specialist systematically creates characters with very focused abilities. He's extremely good at one thing and one thing only. He'll often try to direct the game towards the area where his specialty is involved to the exclusion of everybody else's. He's sneaky and you may not realize it before it's too late. Make sure some situations cannot be resolved by the use of his skills alone. Better yet: make sure at character creation that he has a well-rounded character.

The Know-It-All ◆

This is the guy who has wide knowledge of a real-world topic and uses it in the game to its fullest extent. He imposes his knowledge on the Gamemaster, arguing his decisions whenever they don't make sense. You have two options: tell him that this is just a game and you need to cut corners to run the session smoothly (probably won't work) or you can pre-empt his arguments by asking him how it really works. Don't worry about the Know-it-all lying; he's more interested in showing off his knowledge than cheating. He'll tell it to you like it is, smug at being the center of attention. This way, he's happy, you've got accurate information and the flow of the game isn't interrupted.



2.1 - HEROES AND VILLAINS

As we mentioned before, characters (whether PCs or NPCs) are at the center of any story. They are the driving elements of a scenario. If you think of a movie or a book (one that had a story, not that other half of the movies which revolve on fight scenes or special effects), it is most likely the characters you remember the most, not the hardware or the setting (although these can be remarkable as well). Good characters are vital to an interesting story.

Campaigns work very much along the same principles as movies and TV series. The characters who appear throughout the game have functions very similar to the members of a movie cast. To help plan scenarios and campaigns, it is useful to categorize characters according to their importance in the game. GMs should make use of it both as a design tool when creating their own campaign or as a quick reference indicator when using pre-generated campaigns.

The cast rating system below completely ignores the concepts of allies or enemies. Rather, it focuses on plot importance and personal resources. Obviously, a simple campaign would only feature one Lead Character as an enemy and perhaps another one as ally, while a more complex and long-term campaign could include several of those (with dozens of Supporting Cast and Extras).

2.1.1 - Lead Character

A Lead Character is vital to the campaign. He is a mover and a shaker in the world, and weaves the background story in which the Player Characters become embroiled. On the side of the allies, the more typical Lead Characters are the fatherly officer, the strong and reliable commander or the soft-spoken, charming civilian. Allied Lead Characters are stable and often predictable, and should have a fairly detailed background. In Gritty campaigns, they often start as the heroes and die halfway through the series to let (one of) the characters take over as heroes themselves (not Rooks, obviously). As enemies, Lead Characters can be scheming politicians or power brokers with a hidden agenda (who wants to use the PCs, then kill them), a ruthless rebel leader, or the fierce and patriotic enemy commander. Lead Characters can also be independent individuals, with motivations that oppose them to both good guys and bad guys depending on the situation. In general, Lead Characters do not become important until later in the campaign and should not overshadow the heroes. Most Lead Characters are Rooks, Knights or Bishops.

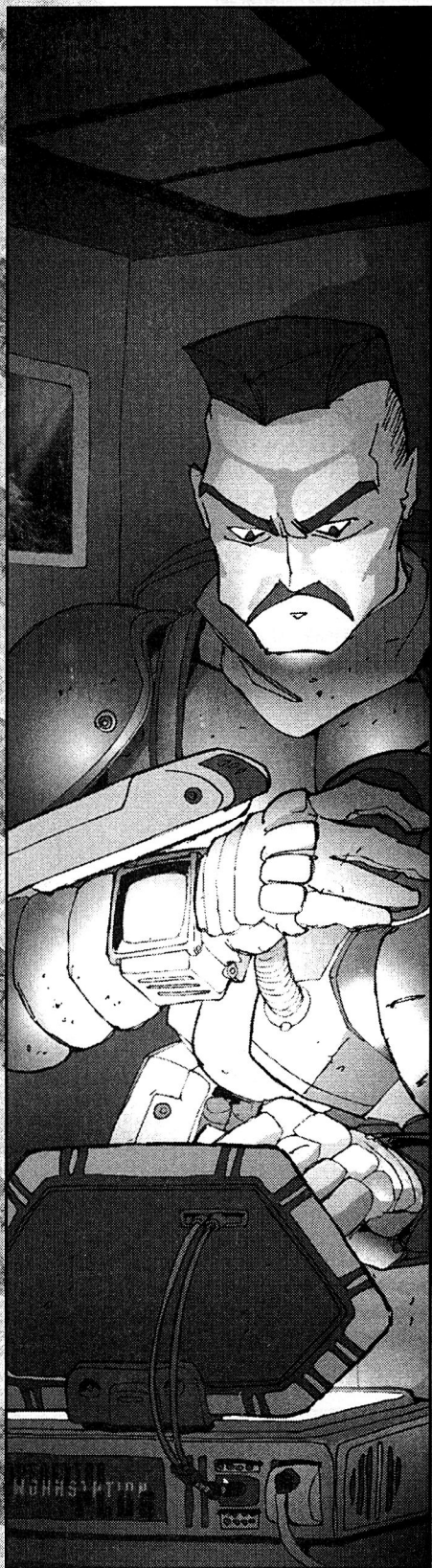
2.1.2 - Supporting Cast

When acting as allies, the Supporting Cast represents the various co-workers and friends who have enough importance in the story to receive actual names. Their backgrounds need not be as thoroughly detailed as the Lead Characters, but should be established prior to the campaign. They will most likely be involved in various subplots with the PCs and should be detailed enough to create good scenes. Enemy Supporting Cast members are few but memorable. Until fairly late into the story, they are the ones who provide most of the opposition to the Player Characters. They serve as a transition between the Extras (which the PCs fight in the beginning) and the Lead Character mastermind behind the story. They help GMs carry the storyline until its midpoint, after which their importance diminishes while that of the Lead Character(s) increases. Most Supporting Cast are Knights, although some may be Pawns or Bishops (rare).

2.1.3 - Extra

Extras represent "average" characters. They have no names or impact on the overall storyline, and are included primarily to be used as faceless minions or typical citizens. While most of them may be ordinary, some Extras are anything but everyday. Extras are generally Pawns, but can occasionally be Knights or Bishops.

Although Extras serve only minor roles in a scenario or campaign, Gamemasters can use them to inject flavor. Give them distinctive accents and mannerisms, especially if they hail from somewhere different than the PCs. Use them to show Players what average people on the street are thinking and how they behave. Are the PCs welcomed as heroes or feared as marauders? Extras will provide the answer. Also keep an eye out for Extras that catch the Players' fancy, these make excellent candidates for a spot as a recurring character or an upgrade to Supporting Cast.





THE PLAYER CHARACTERS - 2.2

As we mentioned earlier, Player Characters are the heart of the story, they are the heroes whose exploits we remember fondly or with awe once the game is over. Gamemasters must remember at all times that PCs are the exclusive property of the Players and they should not be tampered with in any major way without the Players' consent. Some GMs relish in mind-controlling PCs and telling them how they feel and what to do — that's **WRONG!** If the GM suddenly decides to manipulate the Players' PCs, he might as well play along. His story has become a boring, perhaps even offensive, movie, one which the audience would rather not watch. Why should they? Someone has usurped their roles. Let the Players play their characters the way they want to. See where it leads them and let them deal with the consequences. No harm done: it's only a game.

It can be effective to make some suggestions when describing a scene (e.g. "You feel tension building in your muscles as the smugglers enter your trap."), but do this in moderation. NPCs can also be used effectively to suggest emotions — if the Players' companions are nervous during a jungle patrol, that apprehension will transmit itself to the PCs in short order.



The GM's Role in Character Creation - 2.2.1

The Gamemaster's job is to ensure that the characters all fit together and that they will not kill each other after the first session. He may ask questions, ask a Player to expand on a particularly interesting point of background, and make sure **ABOVE ALL ELSE** that each character is his own "schtick," his own unique specialty that no one else has. It ensures that everyone is useful and that no one character can do everything. The GM should study the basic stereotypes which follow and try to have a well-balanced group that can handle as many varied situations as possible.

Character Stereotypes - 2.2.2

Stereotypes are extremely useful for a Player because they provide a basic template which can be used "as is" for a little while until he can give it a better and more surprising twist. We include four basic types below which have been staples of roleplaying games for the last twenty years. Gamemasters are encouraged to expand upon them or add new ones as they see fit, or they can create sub-classes for each broad category. Needless to say, we ignore gender considerations in the classes below, but creating a stereotypically male personality and using a female gender (or vice versa) can yield surprisingly fun results.

The Fighter ◆

Police officer, Gear pilot, soldier, mercenary, bounty hunter, bodyguard, this character relies primarily on firepower to solve problems. He is usually strong and agile, and can withstand more punishment than the average person. He needs some level of action to be useful and would most likely not be comfortable (or enjoyable to play) in a party of politicians. Potential twists: death wish, hopeless romantic, brilliant tactician, logistics expert, suave gentleman, idiot savant, post-traumatic stress disorder, unfocused, etc.

The Tinkerer ◆

Technician, scientist or computer wizard, this character gets things done through research, planning and careful study of the available data. Gifted with superior intellect but a frail physique, he handles puzzles and problems. He can be part of almost any group, but is seldom involved in action or combat scenes. Potential twists: powerful physique, total nerd, weapons specialist, sadistic streak, snivelling coward, sharp dresser, obsessive perfectionist, superstitious, grand schemer, successful lecher, etc.

The Socialite ◆

Media star, journalist, politician, public relations officer, this character has charisma, social skills and a glib tongue. The Socialite mingles with people, makes contacts and finds both resources and information whenever required. Socialites are almost diametrically opposed in nature and methods to Fighters, and do not mingle with them very well. Potential twists: hot tempered, mischievous, biting wit, bluntly honest, dangerously curious, foul-mouthed, refreshingly candid, depraved, etc.

The Rogue ◆

Scouts, thieves, rovers, brigands, Rogues are characters who rely on agility and wit to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. They are often (but not always) nimble and charming, and perform less-than-honest deeds when all else has failed. Potential twists: do-gooder, self-centered, amnesiac, redeemed criminal, fallen marshal, cynic, junkie, soft-spoken, rebel informer, etc.



2.2.3 - Fitting Characters Into Groups

For the character creation process, it is preferable for everyone to create their characters together around a table, with the GM going from one to another answering whatever questions the Players have. The PCs' motivations should be agreed upon by all Players and by the GM before the game starts to make sure the group has a solid party. It is the GM's responsibility to ensure that the Players fit well with each other and there are no potentially destructive conflicts. For instance, having a group of Badlanders composed of ex-Northerners and Southerners disillusioned with their respective governments is fine. They all hate interpol politics and may choose to work together against the oppressive governments. Having a group of soldiers composed of several patriotic Southern soldiers, one fanatic GREL and two Northern spies posing as Badlanders, all of them working to further personal goals, is not a good idea and will kill the campaign within a few sessions.

A classic Gamemastering technique often used to bond together the members of a newly formed group consists in a trial by fire. Take your group of PCs and put them through hell for a few game sessions. Make sure they save each other's lives several times over to help establish a relationship of trust between the PCs. GMs using this technique should be careful, however, not to create dissension instead of trust. Try to make clear that the Players can trust each other, even that they must if they are to survive. Don't use NPCs to try and break them up or drop hints that one of them is a traitor. This can be an enjoyable story twist, but only once PC trust is well established. Save it for later.

2.2.4 - Motivating Characters

As we mentioned above, make sure your characters have motivations which are not radically opposed to one another. Characters who have similar or compatible motivations will often be willing to work and stay together through the tough times that lie ahead. We provide below a few typical motivations often used in literature and movies. Use them and twist them around as you see fit. Remember, however, that short-term motivations alone won't carry your Players through a whole campaign. Encourage them to bond and forge stronger links between each other, as well as to develop group motivations that will drive them further. Motivations grow and change with the characters. Don't expect them to stay the same forever.

◆ Family

The character's family is or was involved in a tragedy. Either seeking revenge for their deaths or because they need his immediate help, the PC teams up with people who can assist him and goes through several adventures that make him realize that there is strength in numbers.

◆ Friendship

Some of the characters are long-time friends. Over time, they have learned to trust each other and work together to achieve some common goal (wealth, fame, professional status, etc.). They share everything easily and never hesitate to put their lives on the line for each other.

◆ Duty

The Player Character is part of a heavily traditional background, either a soldier or some powerful organization. He is asked to work with the others out of a sense of responsibility toward the organization. The character should have a strong code of honor, however, for this to work.

◆ Revenge

One or more of the character's loved ones (wife, parents, children, friends or even the character himself) have been hurt, and it's the PC's job to make sure whoever is responsible pays dearly for his grief. After a while, some characters almost forget why they are vengeful and simply stay that way.

◆ Survival

The characters with this motivation have a powerful common enemy (either a person or the environment). In order to survive, they team up, pool their resources and face the incoming threat. Once the threat is over, they may or may not remain together, however.

◆ Circumstances

Due to circumstances beyond their control, the PCs find themselves entangled in a web of events that further pushes them together. This is especially useful to put together characters who have little in common, but is a potentially short-term motivation.



Character Names - 2.2.5

| Male Name | Female Name | Last Name |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Adamo | Adrianna | Aardman |
| Adrian | Adrienne | Abram |
| Akira | Aisha | Adjanni |
| Alan | Alana | Adras |
| Aleizander | Alani | Adrian |
| Alex | Alara | al-Khaldi |
| Alexhander | Alexandra | Alany |
| Anders | Athana | Alfaz |
| Andreas | Alia | Algiers |
| Andrej | Allison | Ali |
| Andreus | Amanda | Allendale |
| Ang Cho | Anastasia | Allington |
| Angello | Andrea | Anastapulos |
| Anon | Andrya | Antonozza |
| Antoni | Anjä | Arkadjian |
| Arland | Anna | Ash |
| Arraño | Anni | Asmoli |
| Arthuro | Arana | Augusta |
| Arturight | Aristide | Austen |
| Ashton | Arlene | Aylwin |

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|----------|----------|-------------|
| Barbrah | Bazza | Beauford |
| Barnabus | Beatrice | Benitez |
| Baryl | Bekki | Ber |
| Benteen | Bella | Bindhari |
| Berengar | Bianka | Boudroft |
| Bolrand | Brandee | Bukmin |
| Cartisle | Carla | Capac |
| Carlos | Carlte | Chamberlain |
| Carlson | Chari | Chan |
| Charles | Clara | Coral |
| Cheg | Clio | Cornice |
| Colin | Connie | Czeshin |

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|---------|----------|-----------|
| Danghen | Dafnae | d'Aquitin |
| Danyel | Danyela | Damovich |
| Darvon | Dara | deRouen |
| Davood | Darlee | Detzer |
| Dayvid | Darlene | Devous |
| Demnos | Deanisse | Dhargh |
| Diego | Deeana | Diggs |
| Dooglas | Desra | Diturno |
| Dunkan | Destiney | DuBeau |

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| Ebert | Edwina | Earnshaw |
| Eduardo | Elaine | Edden |
| Elido | Elaaid | Ellagon |
| Enri | Elen | Embelton |
| Erich | Elena | Eoi |
| Erik | Elissa | Esperenze |
| Estebàn | Ella | Esteban |
| Etien | Elyza | Esza |
| Ezrah | Eveanna | Everett |

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|-----------|----------|----------|
| Farzhad | Fabienne | Farle |
| Felipe | Farah | Farrabee |
| Feliz | Federika | Finn |
| Fidel | Felicity | Forrest |
| Frederico | Ferah | Fracke |
| Fredo | Fernanda | Fryzel |

| | | |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| Gaël | Gabrielle | Gabriel |
| Gil | Gawaine | Gaitan |
| Giyom | Goya | Garysson |
| Gordon | Grace | Gautil |
| Grigori | Gwenlith | Gremalda |
| Gustav | Gwyn | Gumm |

| | | |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Hanjel | Hanna | Harrison |
| Hektor | Hannah | Henami |
| Helmut | Helena | Heynemande |

| Male Name | Female Name | Last Name |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Hjalmar | Henrietta | Huang |
| Hotsu | Henriette | Hypolite |

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Ian | Ilanora | Ildesta |
| Iano | Illyana | Inculca |
| Ichihiro | Indira | Ione |
| Ichiro | Irene | Ison |
| Isaac | Isabelle | Itibashi |

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|--------|----------|----------|
| Jackke | Jaana | Jacobi |
| Jang | Jackie | Jahmoon |
| Janos | Jamie | Jarak |
| Jarred | Jana | Jaxon |
| Jenop | Jayne | Jedburgh |
| Jerrey | Jennifer | Jerazic |
| Johnah | Joen | Jownz |
| Jonah | Jolaine | Jowz |
| Junt | Jorelle | Jubair |
| Jurgen | Judyth | Juno |
| Jyan | Julia | Jusnar |

| | | |
|---------|---------|------------|
| Kaitan | Karen | Kahn |
| Kalvin | Karlynn | Kasmir |
| Kane | Kathë | Kassler |
| Karl | Katja | Kempder |
| Kazuo | Katryn | Khodaverdi |
| Kenichi | Kerry | Klunn |
| Kilroy | Ketrine | Kondo |
| Konner | Kiara | Kosnar |
| Konnor | Kitani | Kross |
| Konzo | Klaudya | Kuchel |

| | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| Laurent | Laetitia | Lancee |
| Laurenz | Lania | Lang |
| Laxton | Lari | Langmuir |
| Lebou | Laurene | Lars |
| Lelland | Leena | Lazarus |
| Leon | Liyana | Leung |
| Lex | Lilianne | Li Song |
| Lexington | Lilyan | Lina |
| Lothar | Limari | Lindsay |
| Louis | Liza | Lo |
| Luc | Lorelei | Logan |
| Lucio | Lorie | Longchamps |
| Lucius | Louise | Longpre |
| Luk | Lucas | Loray |
| Lussian | Lucie | Lorenz |
| Luter | Lucy | Loyson |
| Lüther | Luka | Lozantes |
| Lyle | Lynn | Luong |

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|------------|----------|----------------|
| Mahmet | Madena | Malabar |
| Maistar | Maena | Maritz |
| Malachy | Maghean | Marquis |
| Malcom | Maia | Marris |
| Malkom | Maiko | Marshall |
| Mamoud | Maka | Maxim |
| Marco | Marina | Mayen |
| Marcel | Marsa | Mellanby |
| Marcos | Marta | Mendez |
| Marcus | Maya | Mendinger |
| Marice | Melian | Molay |
| Markus | Mia | Montroyal |
| Masmuro | Miji | Mor |
| Matsuo | Milani | Morasin |
| Mauleur | Miranda | Morose |
| Max | Miyako | Muller |
| Maximilian | Monike | Muna |
| Melzack | Monza | Münschstradler |
| Mikal | Morgana | Mustafa |
| Miron | Morianna | Mykels |
| Mordred | Mufusa | Myre |

| Male Name | Female Name | Last Name |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Naed | Nadia | Naguno |
| Nathani | Nancia | Nahm |
| Nead | Natalya | Neil |
| Nethial | Natasha | Nessen |
| Nigel | Nera | Noble |
| Nrsu | Nita | Nomak |
| Oliver | Oiku | Olangi |
| Orson | Onas | Orlov |

| | | |
|--------|----------|--------------|
| Parker | Patricia | Pasquali |
| Pol | Philicia | Peshitarelle |

| | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| Quin | Qeila | Quill |
|------|-------|-------|

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|---------|---------|----------|
| Rachid | Ramona | Raleigh |
| Rian | Ranna | Rawbins |
| Rikard | Rayshel | Reiss |
| Rockmar | Rebeyka | Richards |
| Rohgen | Regina | Roskiman |
| Rosi | Revana | Rupiano |
| Roz | Rial | Rusyn |
| Rupert | Risha | Ryles |

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|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Saddik | Sammi | Sabin |
| Salman | Sandi | Samant |
| Samuel | Sandra | Samo |
| Scot | Sara | Sandoval |
| Seen | Sarah | Sanz |
| Serge | Selene | Schalde |
| Seth | Shana | Setha |
| Sever | Shandra | Sez |
| Shan | Sharon | Shapiro |
| Siegfried | Sonya | Siluka |
| Silas | Stacee | Slovenski |
| Sinclair | Stacey | Sogabe |
| Stan | Stephi | Solanas |
| Stefan | Subdra | Stahl |
| Sudo | Sylvia | Stamens |
| Suman | Sylvie | Stoller |

| | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| Tatsugoro | Tami | Tamarra |
| Theodore | Taneeth | Tanaka |
| Thex | Tanya | Thangal |
| Tibor | Tara | Theophilias |
| Trenton | Terrie | Tomas |
| Troy | Tish | Torvas |
| Tsu | Tzuki | Tshombe |

| | | |
|---------|--------|-------|
| Ubert | Uhan | Ukero |
| Umberto | Ursula | Urich |

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|----------|----------|---------|
| Valis | Valrey | Vars |
| Viktor | Varsha | Venter |
| Vasco | Vassilia | Vincent |
| Veygus | Victorya | Voness |
| Vladimir | Virginia | Vyrant |

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|---------|----------|-------------|
| Wendyl | Wanna | Waklon |
| Wes | Wakima | Wang |
| Wilhelm | Wei | Wendelstedt |
| William | Wilma | Wertheimer |
| Winston | Wing Chi | Woolf |

| | | |
|--------|-------|------|
| Xavier | Xiana | Xing |
|--------|-------|------|

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|------|--------|------|
| Yang | Yanna | Yang |
| Yuri | Ylyana | Yul |

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|----------|--------|---------|
| Zavislak | Zara | Zekiel |
| Zekky | Zia | Zorfino |
| Zook | Zorina | Zucco |



2.2.6 - Character Perks and Flaws



In order to keep the dice rolling and the bookkeeping to a minimum, the Silhouette system uses a fairly small range of numbers to describe the capabilities and skills of an individual. This can lead to characters that are fairly similar, especially if they are in the same general line of work. To help Players create unique characters with unique capabilities, we provide the following Character Perks and Flaws.

Each Perk costs a certain amount of Skill Points (SPs) and each Flaw "gives back" a certain number of SPs. These are the same Skill Points that are given to purchase Skills, so a character with more Flaws than Perks can gain additional Skills or Skill Levels, while a character with more Perks will start with fewer Skills. There is no strict limit to the number of Perks and Flaws a character can have. In order to prevent excess we recommend not exceeding 12 points of Flaws (20 in a Cinematic game). The Gamemaster should be the final arbiter as to whether a character has too many Perks or Flaws and may choose to exclude some entirely (see below).

It is possible that the Players will want Perks or Flaws which are not listed in these pages. This is perfectly allowable, provided that some basic rules are respected. For starters, the Gamemaster **MUST** have the final word on what is available and what is not. Also, remember the golden rule: if it doesn't help the character, it's not a Perk; if it doesn't hinder the character (except once in a blue moon), it's not a Flaw. Beware of "free" points for Flaws that just won't come up during the game sessions. Lastly, Perks and Flaws should cost/give between 1 and 5 points. Also, before asking the Gamemaster to generate new Perks and Flaws, the Players must make sure that what they have in mind does not fall under a certain Attribute combination. For example, a popular singer will have a high INF rather than the Perk "Charisma." A fat man would have a high BLD and a low FIT, not the Flaw "Obese."

◆ Selecting Perks and Flaws

Gamemasters should be very careful about allowing the use of Character Perks and Flaws in their games and they should not be afraid of imposing strict limits on what is appropriate. Perks and Flaws give Players a variety of options to help define their character, but they tend to bring out the Rules Lawyer in many Players. The various options, each with a cost or benefit, drive some to make the most of the system in order to get special abilities and extra Skills. The number of angst-ridden, addicted, blind, one-armed combat monsters wanted by the law is legion in the halls of roleplaying history.

Solutions to this problem include limiting the number or gravity of Flaws and Perks. You can tell Players they can get only one Perk and one Flaw, forcing them to take only that which is really important for their character concept. Alternatively, you can limit the number of points they can get from Flaws. We recommend 12 as a good general limit, but bringing this down to 5 can work well when dealing with power-hungry gamers.

Gamemasters should also have final approval over all Perks and Flaws and make their decision according to two criteria: whether they fit the character concept and the campaign concept. The first criterion prevents blind Gear pilots; the second prevents multimillionaires in a campaign about Badlands rovers scrounging for resources. Gamemasters can also choose to remove some Perks and Flaws altogether. Those who believe in letting Players define their character's psychology without concern for points can eliminate personality-related Flaws, for example.

Gamemasters should also not impose unfair costs for Perks. If the campaign concept calls for everyone to have a military rank, be police officers, or be political leaders, then the Players need not pay for the relevant Perks. Gamemasters may have them pay for elevated rank or especially good reputations, but the campaign "base line" should be free.

◆ Gaining Perks and Flaws During Play

Roleplaying characters often evolve quite substantially during the course of a campaign, going, for example, from being untested pilots to national heroes. Changing Character Perks and Flaws can reflect this evolution. Only Perks and Flaws listed as Acquired can be gained over the course of a campaign, however.

In general, the Gamemaster should be the sole arbiter of Perks and Flaws once play begins. Experience Points need not be spent every time the Player Characters pick up a few new contacts and they gain no points when the government starts hunting them — these are just part of character evolution. Gamemasters should try to roughly balance new Flaws with new Perks, however, or else the PCs' lives will become no fun at all. GMs should be especially careful when doling out highly debilitating Flaws or ones that change the character concept (like Flashbacks or Blind). Optionally, GMs could allow Players to purchase new Perks by investing Experience Points. Treat these as Simple Skills, with the level equal to the lowest cost of the Perk. The Perks can then be improved in the same manner as any Skill. For example, a character buying a new Subordinate would pay 4 Experience Points for a "level 2" Subordinate and could then improve it up to level 5 (one step at a time) as any Skill. Wealth is commonly purchased in this manner, as Players invest their earnings over the course of the campaign.



Character Perks ◆

Perks are natural characteristics, aptitudes or social benefits that often prove useful to the character. Like all things in life, however, many Perks are not universally beneficial. Some Perks (usually social ones) have potential downsides that are listed along with them. Gamemasters and Players should keep these downsides in mind, but they should not outweigh the benefits of the Perk. Downsides work best when GMs use them to generate subplots, hence providing further character growth and depth.

It is also important to distinguish Innate and Acquired Perks and Flaws. Innate Perks and Flaws are characteristics that a person was born with, and which he cannot normally get rid of. These can only be bought during character creation. Acquired Perks and Flaws, however, are not genetic in nature and can be acquired at any time during the course of a campaign (or a character's life). The Gamemaster can either assign these Perks (or Flaws) as he sees fit or ask the Players to spend appropriate Experience Points (see *Gaining Perks and Flaws During Play*, p. 12).

► ACCELERATED HEALING [INNATE]

COST: 4

Thanks to some natural vigor, the character heals faster than other people (though he is not tougher because of it). The normal healing rules are used (see page 107 of the second edition rulebook), but the character needs only 75% of the required time. Accelerated Healing has no downside and is incompatible with the Slow Healing Flaw.

► ACUTE SENSE [INNATE]

COST: 2 PER SENSE [CHOOSE ONE]

The character has one above-average sense, such as vision or hearing, and tends to notice fainter signals than other people. He gets a +1 modifier for Notice checks based on that particular sense. Acute Sense has no downside, though overstimulation can be more painful than usual. Obviously, a character with the Blind or Deaf Flaws may not have Acute Vision or Acute Hearing.

► AMBIDEXTROUS [ACQUIRED]

COST: 1

The character can use either hand for tasks requiring manual dexterity, though he may not attack twice per action. Ambidextrous has no downside. One-Armed characters cannot be Ambidextrous.

► ANIMAL COMPANION [ACQUIRED]

COST: 1-4 DEPENDING ON USEFULNESS

The character has a faithful pet, steed or other animal companion. This animal is both well trained and emotionally bonded to the character, which means that it will stay by his side other than (perhaps) the occasional romp through the neighborhood. The downside of an Animal Companion is responsibility: pets must be fed, walked and housed.

► ANIMAL KINSHIP [INNATE]

COST: 2

The character has a "touch" with animals, both wild and domestic. Domesticated animals will respond well to training and instructions, granting the character a +1 when dealing with them. Wild animals are less likely to attack the character and may even respond to some very basic commands. GMs should decide on specifics based on the situation, but may allow characters with Animal Kinship to make a PSY (or Animal Handling) roll against a Threshold of 4 to calm a wild beast. The Threshold should be raised if the animal is enraged for any reason. Animal Kinship has no downside, although many people with this Perk become vegetarians out of empathy.

► AUTHORITY [ACQUIRED]

COST: 3

The character represents the authorities. He could be a policeman, a SRID agent, a Military Police agent, etc. The effect of this Perk depends largely on the circumstances — policemen have no extra legal authority outside their jurisdiction, although they may receive respect and some cooperation from citizens and local authorities. The potential downside of Authority is responsibility: the character will likely have to follow a strict code of conduct, report for duty and follow orders.

► CONNECTIONS [ACQUIRED]

COST: 3 TO 7 POINTS PER ALLY, 1 TO 5 POINTS PER CONTACT

The character has one or more useful connections. These can be close allies who would be willing to help the character no matter what, or more casual acquaintances with special skills or connections of their own. The cost of the connection should vary according to such factors as loyalty, influence, accessibility, resources, etc. This Perk does not cover casual, personal relationships (such as a lover, friends or neighbors) unless they are particularly useful or dedicated.

Allies are willing and able to help the character, even in dire circumstances, without asking for much in return (at least not immediately). Examples include a brother who is also a police sergeant or a friend in the military.

Contacts will not necessarily go out of their way to help the character without promise of recompense. They generally provide useful information or equipment, but will not come to the rescue at their own risk. Typical contacts include a snitch within a criminal cartel, a smuggler or a forger.

The potential downside of Connections is reciprocity. Contacts will expect either to be paid in cash or by being owed favors. Allies are less demanding, but are likely to call for help when they need it. Turning down an ally's call for help is a sure way to lose him.

THE CHARACTERS



2

► FAKE IDENTITY [ACQUIRED]

COST: 3 PER FAKE ID

The character has more than one identity. More than a simple forged passport, he has a complete, fully detailed life on the side, with separate dwelling, job and identification papers. People attempting to track the cover identity back to the character will find it very difficult to do so. The potential downside of Fake Identity is maintenance. The character needs to spend time and money keeping his alter ego current, doing such things as making bank transactions, subscribing to newspapers or making appearances as that person.

► FAMOUS [ACQUIRED]

COST: 2 TO 5 POINTS DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE OF FAME

The character is famous. He can be a well-known artist or a political figure. In certain situations, Famous will work for the character — people will readily help him or provide access to restricted areas. Fame's potential downside is lack of anonymity. The character may be recognized wherever he goes and may be watched by the press and other interested parties. This can make subtlety or stealth difficult.

► FAVOR [ACQUIRED]

COST: 1 TO 5

Someone important or a powerful group owes the character one or more favors. This debt is real and known by both the character and the indebted party, and is likely to be honored, all things being equal. The character may call in this debt when convenient, although story elements may limit his opportunity to do so. The downside of a Favor is resentment: if the character is not careful, the indebted party may feel he is being taken advantage of.

| | | Debt Cost <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Financial Debts | Debts of Honor | Point Cost |
| 2,500 marks/dinars | key favor | 1 |
| 12,500 marks/dinars | multiple favors | 2 |
| 50,000 marks/dinars | major boon | 3 |
| 250,000 marks/dinars | multiple boons | 4 |
| 500,000+ marks/dinars | life boon | 5 |

► LIGHT SLEEPER [ACQUIRED]

COST: 2

The character sleeps lightly and awakens at the slightest noise. He cannot be surprised when sleeping and gets a normal defense roll. Light Sleeper has no downside, other than that it may be difficult to get a good night's sleep in a noisy environment.

► LUCK [INNATE]

COST: 4

The character is exceptionally lucky. Once per session, the Player may elect to reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, he can choose to switch the modifier of a single die roll before making the roll (for a maximum of +5) — for example, turning a -2 into a +2. Luck has no downside and is incompatible with Bad Luck.

► MACHINE-TOUCH [INNATE]

COST: 5

The character is exceptionally good with machines and seems to understand them. He can purchase the Tinker Skill as a Simple Skill. Machine-Touch has no downside.

► NIGHT VISION [INNATE]

COST: 3

The character's eyes need very little light to see. As long as there is at least a small amount of light present, he can ignore the penalties for poor lighting (see rulebook, page 102). This perk is of no help in total darkness, however. The downside of Night Vision is that the character's eyes are sensitive to bright lights.

► PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY [INNATE]

COST: 3 PER POINT

The character has an excellent memory. Whenever a Knowledge roll is made to recall information previously seen, heard or read, the rating of the Perk is added to the dice roll. If the character has three or more points of Photographic Memory, any Knowledge-related Skills are considered Simple for learning cost. The downside of Photographic Memory is that it is extremely difficult to blank out traumatic events. Nasty Gamemasters can give PCs with that Perk some recurring nightmares about these difficult events.

► PRESTIGE [ACQUIRED]

COST: 2 TO 4 DEPENDING ON THE SCOPE AND POWER OF THE INFLUENCE

The character is either a recognized authority or carries significant prestige in a certain social, geopolitical or professional sphere. Although this is not a guarantee that the character will get his way all the time, his opinion will be listened to and he can find others to support him if need be. Typical areas of influence include: a city, the military, big business, the media and a government. Prestige's downside is notoriety: others in the same field may seek the character out or target him.



► PROPERTY [ACQUIRED]

COST: 3 TO 7 DEPENDING ON VALUE

The character owns a substantial and useful piece of property. This could include a nightclub, an cruise liner, a tank, or a mansion used as a headquarters. This Perk should only be used for key story props and settings — the owner of a cruise liner should have this Perk, but an accountant in the UMF with a private residence and car does not need it. This Property is also not part of the character's assets (see Wealth Perk), and it is expected that 1% of that amount is spent seasonally on maintenance and related salaries. If the character can't make his payments, there's always the loan sharks...

The Gamemaster and Player should cooperate to define the nature of specifics of the Property item. If it is important enough to justify a Perk, it will likely play an important role in the campaign. The more character the GM and Player can give the PC's bar (or homestead, aircraft, etc.), the more memorable it will become.

Note that Player Characters can pool Skill Points to become co-owners of a piece of Property. Just who covers the expenses is left up to the Players, but payment in proportion to SP contributions would be fairest.

If at some point the character wants to sell his property and exchange it for Wealth, he may do so by rolling a Business check against the point cost for the Property. He will get a Wealth Perk equal to (Property Cost + MoS – 1).

□□ Property Cost

| Property Value | Seasonal Maintenance | Point Cost |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 125,000 marks/dinars | 1,250 marks/dinars | 3 |
| 500,000 marks/dinars | 5,000 marks/dinars | 4 |
| 2,500,000 marks/dinars | 25,000 marks/dinars | 5 |
| 5,000,000 marks/dinars | 50,000 marks/dinars | 6 |
| 25,000,000+ marks/dinars | 250,000 marks/dinars | 7 |

► QUICK LEARNER [INNATE]

COST: 2

The character learns quite rapidly and can gain extra benefit from tutors. Quick Learners subtract one half-season from the number of half-seasons of tutelage required to learn a Skill from a tutor, although the minimum remains one week. Those teaching a Quick Learner also get a +1 bonus to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost of a Skill increase. Quick Learner has no downside, except the envy of fellow students who must work harder to learn the same thing.

► RANK [ACQUIRED]

COST: 0 TO 12

The character is a recognized member of a powerful military, paramilitary or civilian organization. This station will give him authority in certain circles as well as access to resources, contacts and equipment. Military Rank indicates membership in an organized military force with authority from one of the leagues of Terra Nova. Paramilitary Rank indicates membership in a force that wields armed might and is organized along military lines, but does not serve as the main defense force of a nation. Paramilitary forces may or may not operate with government authority. Civilian Rank indicates membership in an organized and powerful non-military organization, such as a powerful cartel, a government department or an organized crime family. Civilian Rank is categorized according to generic stations and should be purchased only if membership confers a real benefit. Note that military rank has a fixed cost, but civilian and paramilitary rank is provided with a cost range depending on the power and influence of the group. The potential downside of Rank is responsibility. Members of the military or other powerful groups have to follow codes of conduct, abide by regulations and follow orders from superiors. If Rank is in the free campaign "base line," higher Rank is purchased by paying the difference between the current and desired Rank.

□□ Rank Costs

| Rank | Military | Paramilitary/Civilian |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| enlisted/member | 2 | 0-2 |
| junior NCO/veteran member | 4 | 2-4 |
| senior NCO/elite member | 6 | 4-6 |
| junior officer/assistant-director | 8 | 6-8 |
| senior officer/director | 10 | 8-10 |
| general officer/senior director | 12 | 10-12 |

► SENSE OF DIRECTION [INNATE]

COST: 2 FOR 2D, 3 FOR 3D

The character seems to have a natural compass in his head. He always knows where he is located and never seems to get lost. In water or space, characters with the 3D Sense of Direction never get dizzy and can always figure out where up and down are. Sense of Direction has no downside. 3D Sense of Direction is incompatible with the Space Sickness Flaw.



► STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM [INNATE]

COST: 3

Characters with a Strong Immune System are especially resistant to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a +1 to Health tests made against the Contagion and Virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin. A Strong Immune System has no inherent downside other than the fact that the character will also resist beneficial drugs such as analgesics. This Perk is incompatible with Weak Immune System Flaw.

► SUBORDINATES [ACQUIRED]

COST: 2-5 PER SUBORDINATE

The character has one or more faithful underlings. These Subordinates are professionally bound to serve the character in a well-defined way, but do so above and beyond the call of duty. The Player and Gamemaster should develop the conditions of service as well as the identities of all subordinates. These characters can become excellent supporting characters in a campaign. Typical subordinates include: manservants, bodyguards and executive assistants. The downside of Subordinates is responsibility: they must often be paid and they may legitimately ask for assistance from time to time.

► THICK-SKINNED [INNATE]

COST: 4

The character has a high pain threshold and better resistance to injuries. Thick-skinned characters add five points to their basic Stamina and recalculate their damage thresholds accordingly. This Perk is normally innate, but anyone with martial arts training (Hand-to-Hand Skill equal to 3 or better) could acquire this Perk at character creation or during the campaign. Thick-Skinned has no downside.

► WEALTH [ACQUIRED]

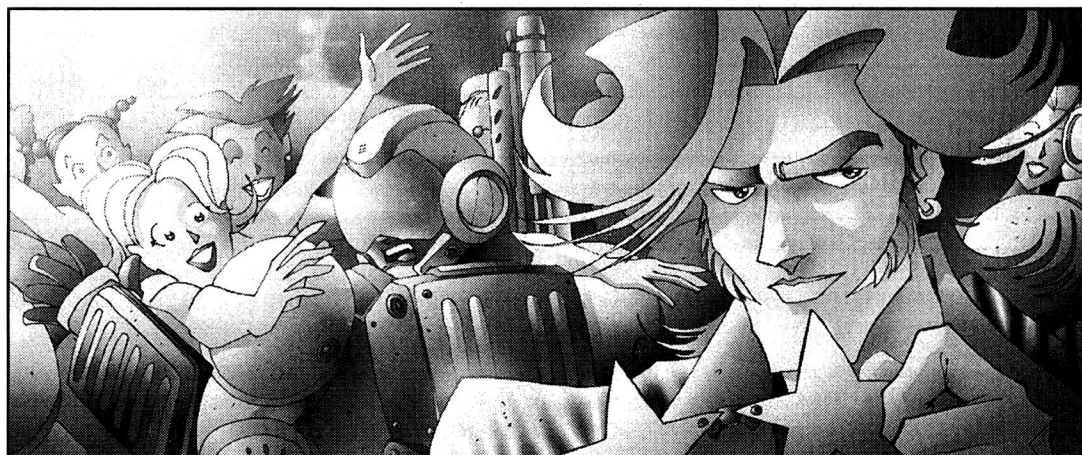
COST: 3 POINTS PER LEVEL, 1 POINT PER LEVEL IF NON-RENEWABLE

The character has money. Lots of it. Exactly how much depends on the character's rating. A Business Skill check is multiplied by 5% to determine how much money can be withdrawn within the hour. If the character has extra time to properly shuffle his assets, he can often withdraw larger sums: 6 hours give a +1 bonus to the Skill check, a full day gives a +2, a week gives a +3 and a season gives a +4 (not cumulative). Making a withdrawal temporarily reduces the character's Wealth rating by 1 for a duration equal to the period listed in the table below. That represents the time it takes to "reset" the assets. If another withdrawal is made during that period and the Business roll is a fumble, the Wealth Perk is permanently reduced by one level. The character points invested in the Perk are lost. Optionally, characters can have non-renewable Wealth, that indicates a fixed amount of cash that is not making money for itself. In this case, the Wealth reduction from spending is permanent.

This Perk can be bought during the campaign. Treat the Perk as a Simple skill. The potential downside of Wealth is responsibility. The wealthy must maintain their fortunes, taking at least some interest in their holdings. Tax audits and lawsuits may also be targeted at wealthy characters.

Wealth Cost ☐

| Assets Value | Period | Level |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|
| 25,000 marks/dinars | 12 hours | 1 |
| 125,000 marks/dinars | 1 day | 2 |
| 500,000 marks/dinars | 3 days | 3 |
| 2,500,000 marks/dinars | 1 week | 4 |
| 5,000,000 marks/dinars | 3 weeks | 5 |
| 25,000,000 marks/dinars | 9 weeks | 6 |





Character Flaws ◆

Flaws are hindrances that get in the way of the character's life. Some of them are little more than quirks that make social interactions a little more difficult. Flaws can be removed later on during the campaign through good roleplaying and a liberal amount of Experience Points. Like the downside of Perks, some Flaws have potential upsides, small benefits that come with a hindrance. These upsides should never outweigh the penalties of the Flaw.

Getting rid of a Flaw requires two things. First, the Player must spend an amount of Experience Points equal to three times the number of points that the Flaw gives. Secondly, the Flaw must be eliminated through roleplaying (e. g. a Wanted character must defeat or otherwise dissuade his hunters, a Deaf character must undergo corrective surgery). If a Flaw is resolved through roleplaying but XPs are not spent, the Gamemaster can replace the Flaw with another one of equal cost or by another occurrence of the same one. In the first example above, the character who has defeated his pursuers might be hunted by another group or end up picking up a Nemesis.

► ADDICTION (ACQUIRED)

COST: ADDICTION RATING ÷ -3 (ROUND DOWN)

The character is psychologically or physically addicted to something. It might be drugs, it might be adrenaline, it might even be sex, but he needs regular doses of it. If the character goes for 6 hours without a dose, he must make a WIL check against the rating of his addiction (chosen when the Flaw is taken) or suffer a general -1 penalty. The threshold for each additional check is at +1. When the character gets his "fix," the penalties are lifted and he can go another 6 hours without the drug. Addiction has no upside.

► ALLERGY (INNATE)

COST: -1 FOR A MILD ALLERGY, -3 FOR A SEVERE ONE

The character is allergic to certain food, items or chemical compounds. This can range from a mere inconvenience to a deadly danger. When the character is exposed to the allergic agent, a Health test is made against a Threshold of 5. If failed or fumbled, Mild Allergy causes constant itching and scratching, giving an action penalty equal of -1. A severe allergy is much more dangerous: if the test is failed, the victim receives a Flesh Wound; if fumbled, a Deep Wound. These must be stabilized according to the usual wound rules. Allergy medicines give a bonus to the HEA roll: +1 for off-the-shelf tablets, up to +4 for special antihistaminics.

► AGE (SPECIAL)

COST: -4 (YOUNG), -2 (OLD)

The character is either unusually young or old, which may impose limits on his freedom of movement and on how seriously others take his opinions. Young characters are considered to be young teenagers (16-20 cycles) and will have a great deal of trouble being taken seriously by adults, may have to attend school and may not be able to get into adult establishments like bars. Old characters are considered senior citizens (95+); they may also have problems with respect and with their health. The potential upside of Age is attitudes: juvenile misbehavior may be forgiven and older characters may benefit from some respect from the young.

Optionally, the Gamemaster can impose Attribute and Skill caps to reflect the effects of age. Young characters may have a maximum BLD and KNO of 0 and may not have any Skills at Level 3. Old characters may have a maximum AGI and FIT of 0.

► AMNESIA (ACQUIRED)

COST: -2

The character has no recollection of his life up to a few days or weeks ago. This Flaw should be severely monitored by the Gamemaster because it can easily play havoc with a campaign. Players should also be warned that they are effectively giving up any control over their characters' past. The potential upside of Amnesia is unknown allies. Some friends from the character's past life may be willing to help him, although some enemies may well be close behind.

► ANIMAL ANTIPATHY (INNATE)

COST: -1

Something about the character is disturbing to animals, both domestic and wild. Domesticated animals are less likely to respond to commands or stay calm in his presence and he suffers a -1 penalty to Animal Handling and Riding tests. Wild animals are more likely to attack the character and, even if they don't attack, will respond aggressively to his presence. Animal Antipathy has no upside and is incompatible with the Animal Kinship and Animal Companion Perks.

► BAD LUCK (INNATE)

COST: -5

The character is constantly plagued by bad luck. Once per game, an opponent may reroll a Fumble. Alternatively, the Gamemaster can choose to switch the result of a die roll (maximum of +5) — for example, turning a +2 into a -2. The Gamemaster, however, may not use this to kill the character outright, only to make his life miserable. Bad Luck has no upside and is incompatible with the Luck Perk.

► BELIEFS (ACQUIRED)

COST: -1 TO -3 DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE BELIEF

The character strongly believes something that is generally not accepted and can expose him to ridicule in the mainstream: stoneheads are hollow and contain alien artifacts, there are ghost landships sailing in the Great White Desert, Exeter is a huge mind-control experiment by evil scientists from Atlantis, etc. This belief could even be dangerous, leading the character to take huge risks, such as heading out for a trip in the White Desert with little or no protection. The only upside to Beliefs is that the character may attract allies who share his convictions, although having delusional conspiracy theorists as allies is at best a mixed blessing.



► BLIND [ACQUIRED]

COST: -5 IF PERMANENT, -2 IF REMOVABLE

The character cannot see. This condition may be temporary or permanent. The character suffers a -2 modifier to his Notice checks and a -4 to all combat actions. A blind person cannot perform activities which require vision. Blind has no upside.

► BLOODLUST [ACQUIRED]

COST: -3

The character is either inherently mean and vicious or suffers from a lack of control in combat due to desensitization or dehumanizing training. When in battle, he leaves morality behind and will attempt to kill his opponent by any means possible. He will never accept a surrender, nor will he surrender or retreat himself. When prisoners must be taken, they live only as long as they are useful to the character. Characters suffering from Bloodlust who wish to overcome their deadly instincts must pass a PSY test against a Threshold of 5. Bloodlust has no upside.

► CODE OF HONOR [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -4 DEPENDING ON DEPTH OF THE CODE

The character lives by a code of honor. The Player and Gamemaster should define this code in terms of how stringent it is and how seriously the character takes it. Note that "honor" can mean many things to many people, so it may take some time to decide exactly what this code entails. A Code of Honor's potential upside is respect: characters who behave in a consistently honorable manner — especially when it puts them at a disadvantage — may gain the trust and admiration of other honorable people.

► CRIMINAL BACKGROUND [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -2 DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF THE CRIME

At some point in his past, the character committed a criminal act. He may have done some prison time or gotten away free, but the incident continues to haunt him in some way. This could entail a criminal record making it hard to get a job or respect or "old friends" continuously appearing in awkward situations. Criminal Background's potential upside is contacts: at times these "old friends" can be somewhat useful.

► CURSE [ACQUIRED]

COST: -2

The character is under a curse. Whether it is real or imagined is to be determined by the Gamemaster and the Player, but either way it should affect the character in tangible ways. This characteristic is more akin to a tragic destiny than to a supernatural "hex." The Player should choose one aspect of the character's life (love life, job, friendships, finances, etc.) that continuously refuses to "work out." GMs should be aware that even if there is no supernatural aspect to the Curse, it does tend to introduce the concept of destiny. This can be a very effective storytelling tool, but may strain suspension of disbelief in a hyper-realistic campaign.

► DEAF [ACQUIRED]

COST: -4, -2 IF REMOVABLE

The character cannot hear. This condition may be temporary or permanent. The character suffers a -1 modifier to his Notice checks, and cannot perform activities which require hearing. Deaf has no upside.

► DEBT [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -5

The character owes someone a substantial debt, which can include money but also debts of honor or patronage. The person to whom the character is indebted may be tolerant or demanding, but either way the debt is a recurrent drain on the character's time or resources. The potential upside of a debt is a contact: the person who the character owes may be able to be of some help occasionally, although it usually means ending up further in debt. The Player and the GM should agree on how much and when the character is expected to reimburse his debt.

| | | Debt Cost <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Financial Debts | Debts of Honor | Point Cost |
| 25,000 marks/dinars | key favor | -1 |
| 125,000 marks/dinars | multiple favors | -2 |
| 500,000 marks/dinars | major boon | -3 |
| 2,500,000 marks/dinars | multiple boons | -4 |
| 5,000,000 marks/dinars | life boon | -5 |

► DEDICATED [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -3 DEPENDING ON THE DEMANDS OF THE DEDICATION

The character is dedicated to a certain cause or a powerful, all-consuming goal. In the case of ideals, the character will follow them whenever possible. The more extreme form of this characteristic is fanaticism. If the dedication is to a specific goal, the Player and the GM should determine it together and ensure it is largely unattainable, giving the character a strong motivation throughout the campaign. Dedication's potential upsides are contacts and respect. Others dedicated to the same cause (or who seek the same goal) may be willing to help a truly dedicated character, although they may also expect such help themselves.



► DEPENDENT [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -4

The character must take care of someone: an adopted child, a relative, etc. This responsibility includes care, protection and friendship and should be quite demanding on the character's schedule. In addition, enemies might attempt to use the dependent against the character. Gamemasters should resist the urge to turn a Dependent into a constant target for attack. Focus on character interaction and the small demands of a Dependent (going on holiday, help with homework, etc.). Save the kidnapping for the campaign's climax. A Dependent's potential upside is aid: the other character may be helpful in certain situations.

□ Dependent Cost

| CP/SP total | Cost | CP/SP total | Cost |
|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| 5/10 | -4 | 10/30 | -2 |
| 10/20 | -3 | 20/30 | -1 |

► FLASHBACKS [ACQUIRED]

COST: -2

The character has sudden flashbacks of his past, especially in stressful situations. The Player and Gamemaster should define just what these flashbacks are and what trauma they stem from. Specific triggers for the flashbacks can also be chosen. Characters experiencing flashbacks must make a WIL or PSY roll against a Threshold of 4 to act. Flashbacks have no upside.

► HEAVY SLEEPER [INNATE]

COST: -1

The character sleeps like a brick and is very hard to awaken. Heavy Sleepers must make PER or Notice tests with a -3 penalty to see if they awake in a dangerous situation. Heavy Sleeper has no upside and is incompatible with the Light Sleeper Perk.

► INFAMOUS [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1 TO -4 DEPENDING ON SEVERITY AND EXPANSE

The character has a bad reputation. This reputation may or may not be deserved, but it sticks to the character like the proverbial bad penny. Infamy can denote unpleasant reputations (e. g. a notorious cheat) or something more terrifying (e. g. an underworld assassin). Infamy's potential upside is fear: those with terrible reputations may be intimidating.

► INSOMNIA [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1

The character has difficulty sleeping or is plagued by constant nightmares. He is constantly tired. Optionally, the Gamemaster may impose a -1 penalty for actions that require endurance and prolonged concentration. Insomnia has no upside.

► LAME [ACQUIRED]

COST: -4 IF PERMANENT. -2 IF REMOVABLE

The character has a medical problem in one or both legs. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have his legs fixed for any number of reasons. The character suffers a -1 modifier to movement-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities which require jogging or faster movement. Being Lame has no upside.

► LIAR [ACQUIRED]

COST: -1, -3 IF MYTHOMANIAC

The character generally does not tell the truth. Whenever he speaks, he will lie if it is practical or gets him off the hook. A more serious version of this is the full-blown mythomaniac, who cannot tell the truth and keeps inventing stories about himself and the people around him. Being a Liar has no upside.

► MECHANICAL INAPTITUDE [INNATE]

COST: -1

The character is all thumbs when it comes to mechanical or electronic devices. Any Skill test involving the use of a complex machine suffers a -1 penalty. Mechanical Inaptitude has no upside. It is incompatible with Machine-Touch.

► NEMESIS [ACQUIRED]

COST: -2 TO -5 DEPENDING ON POWER, INTENTIONS AND FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE

The character has a long-time enemy or rival. Whenever they meet, they engage in contest of wits or plain combat. If the character gets rid of his Nemesis, another one will pop up to replace him until the point cost is paid (a vengeful lover? a younger sibling?). The Player and Gamemaster should cooperate to create the Nemesis and determine how the rivalry began. Nemesis' potential upside is allies: the enemy of your enemy may be your friend.

Although a Nemesis will undoubtedly cause a Player Character no end of trouble, this Flaw can be among the best in terms of campaign development. This Flaw gives a Gamemaster all the justification he needs to create a dogged master villain who pops up at the most inopportune times. GMs should put a great deal of effort into Nemesis, both because they are a lot of fun and because they will undoubtedly be very important to the character they are hunting. Nothing is quite as memorable as a good villain. An interesting variation can be noble Nemesis, who hunt the Player Character to right a wrong or because it is their duty.



► OBLIGATION [ACQUIRED] COST: -1 TO -3 DEPENDING ON SEVERITY AND FREQUENCY

The character is under some kind of obligation. He may have a steady job and be required to show up on schedule, or he can have to obey certain people. The Player and the Gamemaster should cooperate to define the scope of the obligations and the reasons why the character is under orders. Note that characters who have the Authority or Rank Perks cannot purchase Obligation tied to the same employment that confers these benefits — the obligations are just part of the territory. They can, however, have other Obligations. Obligations has a potential upside in contacts: superiors and fellow employees can occasionally be of assistance.

► ONE-ARMED [ACQUIRED] COST: -2, -4 IF PERMANENT

The character is missing an arm. This condition may be temporary, the result of an accident for example, or it may be permanent, if the character cannot have it replaced for any number of reasons. The character suffers a -1 modifier to any manipulation-related Skill checks, and cannot perform activities which require both hands. One-Armed has no upside.

► PARANOID [ACQUIRED] COST: -1

The character believes that some people are in league to cause him harm. Anything bad that comes to him is automatically the result of this conspiracy. Anyone refusing to believe in said conspiracy is automatically part of it and probably out to get the character — or so he thinks. Paranoia has no upside.

► PHOBIA [ACQUIRED] COST: -2 FOR MILD PHOBIA, -4 FOR SEVERE PHOBIA

The character has an unreasonable fear of something. It might be a certain item, a situation, a color, or an animal. Mild Phobias mean that the character suffers a -1 action penalty when in the presence of the object of his phobia, due to nervousness and distraction. Severe Phobias mean that the character must pass a WIL roll against a Threshold of 4 to function at all in the presence of the object and even then suffers a -1 action penalty. Phobias have no upside. Gamemasters can reduce the cost to -1/-3 for uncommon objects of Phobia (such as fear of the ocean in a campaign occurring in the Great White Desert).

► POOR [ACQUIRED] COST: -2

The character does not have much money and has no secure source of income. Characters who obtain such a source during play will find forgotten debts catching up with them until they pay off this Flaw in XPs. Poor characters cannot afford anything above the basics without making arrangements through roleplaying. Poverty has no upside.

► POOR SENSE [ACQUIRED] COST: -2 PER SENSE (CHOOSE ONE)

The character has one or more especially poor senses. He has trouble noticing and distinguishing stimuli that are faint or muffled. The character suffers a -1 penalty to all Notice tests related to the affected sense. Poor Sense has no upside.

► QUIRK [ACQUIRED] COST: -1 PER QUIRK (MAX. -2)

A quirk is a small personality flaw or habit that poses only minor limitations on actions. Quirks are intended as roleplaying aids to reward Players for giving their characters some life. This should not be abused, however, so Players receive extra Skill Points only for their first two Quirks. Common Quirks are listed below, but Gamemasters and Players should feel free to add others as long as they are not severely limiting on the character. Note that Quirks can include good habits (such as always giving to charity or taking in strangers) as long as they are mildly limiting on the character. At the Gamemaster's discretion, characters who wish to suppress their Quirk temporarily (e. g. cowards who must run into danger) may have to pass a WIL test against a Threshold of 3. Quirks have no upsides. Common Quirks include: cowardice, cruelty, curiosity, gluttony, greed, intolerance, lacking a sense of humor, laziness, miserly compulsion, overconfidence, pacifism, pride, selfishness, squeamishness, stubbornness, vengeance fixations, and other good or bad habits.

► SECRET [ACQUIRED] COST: -2 TO -3 DEPENDING ON THE GRAVITY OF THE SECRET

The character has a dark secret. The Player and Gamemaster should decide on the nature of the secret, but there should always be a good reason why this elements must be kept hidden. It could be a criminal past (Criminal Background represents a known criminal past), a past indiscretion, a current illicit affair, or any number of other damaging information. If the secret is revealed and the Player does not pay the XPs to remove it, then another level to the secret, or a different secret altogether must be chosen. Secrets have no upsides.

► SICK [ACQUIRED] COST: -1 TO -4 DEPENDING ON SEVERITY

The character has a serious ailment that impairs him in some way. The Player and Gamemaster should define the illness and its symptoms. An important (if medically inaccurate) distinction can be made between degenerative and chronic diseases. Degenerative diseases (such as cancer) will only get worse if untreated, while chronic disease are stable but debilitating. The Gamemaster and Player should agree on the specifics of the disease the Player Character suffers from. Game statistics can be generated using the Disease Rules (see rulebook, p. 111). Only masochistic Players and Gamemasters should give their characters highly contagious airborne diseases because they will surely end up with entire infected parties and sick NPCs. Easily controlled contagious diseases (or non-contagious ones) are much better choices. There is no upside to being Sick.

**► SLOW HEALING (INNATE)****COST: -4**

The character heals more slowly than other people. The normal healing rules are used (see page 107 of the rulebook), but the character needs 50% more time to heal. Slow Healing has no upside.

► SLOW LEARNER (INNATE)**COST: -2**

The character has a hard time learning in a structured or academic environment. He still benefits from teachers, but less than most. A Slow Learner must add one to the number of half-seasons required to learn a Skill with a tutor; the time can still be reduced to one week by skilled teachers, however. Those teaching Slow Learners also suffer a -1 penalty to their Teaching Skill test to reduce XP cost. Slow Learner has no upside, and is incompatible with the Quick Learner Perk.

► SOCIAL STIGMA (INNATE)**COST: -1 TO -3 DEPENDING ON SEVERITY**

The character is part of a social group that has a bad reputation. People will shun him and, in the more extreme case, try to harm him. The Gamemaster and Player should cooperate to define the stigmatized group and the nature of the stigma. In the case of global-travel campaigns, Gamemasters should adjust the Flaw's cost depending on how widespread the Stigma is. To eliminate this Flaw, the character must spend appropriate Experience Points, but also either prove he is no longer a part of the group or somehow end the stigma toward the group — something that could take the length of a campaign. Stigma's potential upside is contacts: other members of the stigmatized group may be willing to cooperate for mutual benefit.

The most common social stigma on Terra Nova is being a foreigner. This can be used in any campaign set in a single league where the Player Characters interact with people with strong nationalist (and prejudiced) feelings. The Southern Republic is infamous for its disdain of foreigners, but the other leagues are far from innocent. Obviously, if the PCs are part of a multinational group like the Northern Guard or Southern MILICIA, national origin is less crippling (unless one hails from an enemy state, of course). GREs and other former CEF troops are also stigmatized virtually everywhere on Terra Nova.

► SPACE SICKNESS (INNATE)**COST: -1 PER POINT**

The character gets sick and nauseous when in free fall. Whenever the character finds himself out of a gravity environment, he gets a penalty equal to the rating of this Flaw to all his dice rolls. There is no upside to Space Sickness.

► SPLIT PERSONALITY (ACQUIRED)**COST: -1 TO -4 (GM'S DISCRETION)**

The character has two or more personalities. They are usually different aspects of the same person, though only one is in control at any time. What triggers the switch from one personality to the other is highly variable and depends on the individual. Stress is the most common trigger. Each personality has its own set of mental Attributes (CRE, INF, KNO, WIL, PSY) and its own psychological Perks and Flaws. Ideally, all personalities should have the same point cost, but the Gamemaster may diverge from this in specific cases. Player and Gamemaster should cooperate to create all the identities.

The Gamemaster should be in control of personality-switching unless the Player proves himself willing to roleplay the switches spontaneously without looking to maximize his advantage. The cost of the Flaw should be used as a guideline as to how useful the personalities will be. A -1 version could see personality switches happening at useful times about 50% of the time and switches rarely endangering the Character. The -4 version, however, should see personality switches coming at the most embarrassing or downright dangerous times. The tough-as-nails killer suddenly becomes a wallflower when he's about to interrogate a witness, for example.

► THIN-SKINNED (INNATE)**COST: -4**

The character has a low pain threshold, putting him out of commission on even the lightest injuries. Thin-skinned characters subtract five points from their Stamina and recalculate their Damage Thresholds accordingly. Thin-Skinned has no upside.

► WANTED (ACQUIRED)**COST: -1 TO -5**

Somebody is currently chasing the character. Whether or not this is justified, the character will have to face relentless, often-armed pursuers that appear at the worst time (Gamemaster's choice). The Player and the Gamemaster should cooperate to define the hunters and the reason for the hunt. Wanted usually indicates a group hunting the character or an individual doing so for professional reasons — a personal enemy is covered by the Nemesis Flaw. Masochistic Players can combine Wanted and Nemesis. The cost of the Flaw should be based on the power of the hunter, his intentions and the frequency of his appearances. Wanted's potential upside is allies: others hunted by the same group may be helpful while on the lamb.

► WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEM (ACQUIRED)**COST: -3**

Characters with a Weak Immune System are especially vulnerable to disease and the effects of drugs. These characters get a -1 penalty to Health tests made against the Contagion and Virulence of diseases, as well as the Potency of a drug or toxin. Weak Immune System is often an innate character element, but is listed as an Acquired Flaw because it can result from severe disease. A Weak Immune System has no inherent upside, though the character will also be less resistant to beneficial drugs such as analgesics.



2.2.7 - Experience and Character Advancement

Gaining experience and slowly building a character is one of the rewards of roleplaying. Too many Players, however, see this purely in a game perspective: How high are my stats? how much money does my character have? etc. It can be just as rewarding to improve your knowledge of the character as a person and develop a solid persona that will come alive in your imagination. Character advancement should reflect how far along in his "character story" the hero has come, not be the character story in itself.

We describe below a number of categories for which Gamemasters should award (or deduct, in the case of bad roleplaying) Experience Points for roleplaying games. For tactical games, however, the Players may want to improve the pilots they are using if they have a continuing campaign. The surviving pilots, after all, should be allowed to improve their Gear-related Skills if they perform well in combat. They should receive 1 XP for each recorded kill they have made (either an Overkill or all movement systems destroyed and no weapons left), -1/2 XP for each Light Damage they receive, -1 XP for each Heavy Damage and -3 XP if their vehicle is completely destroyed or rendered helpless (immobile and no weapons). If the campaign is hybrid (i.e. both tactical and roleplaying) and the Gamemaster is feeling generous, he may allow the Players to receive points for roleplaying (see table below) and for their tactical performance, but should insist that tactical XPs and ONLY those be spent on tactical Skills (Piloting, Gunnery, Electronic Warfare, Communication and Leadership).

◆ Emergency Dice

These represents your character's true experience. Experience Points that are spent raising stats or buying new Skills represent training and techniques. The real experience, though, comes from using Emergency Dice. That's the experience that saves the skin of the pilot — he may not know all those fancy advanced maneuvers, but he's got the timing down pat with what he does know. In the real world, such experience is essential to reach a certain level of expertise. Tutors cannot teach that. As an optional rule, Gamemasters could require that a number of Emergency Dice be spent before the Player can buy the next level for one of his character's Skills. We recommend a number of EDs equal to the square of the next Skill level (i.e. to bring a Skill up to level 4, the Player should have used 16 Emergency Dice with that Skill since he's brought it up to level 3).

◆ Awarding Experience Points

Gamemasters should encourage character growth without making them into demi-gods. Make sure they put some XPs aside as Emergency Dice, which is probably the most tangible benefit of good play — they allow PCs to survive increasingly difficult situations. Gamemasters can also suggest (but never impose) which Skills PCs should raise, based on what they have been doing (practice makes perfect, after all) and what capabilities the party seems to be lacking.

Awarding Experience Points* ☐

| Base XPs | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Player showed little interest in the game and did not get involved | 0 |
| Player gave a good effort, but did nothing exceptional | 1 |
| Player always stayed in character and showed enthusiasm | 2 |
| Technical Bonuses (Max +2) | |
| Performed critical maneuver that moves the story forward | 1 |
| Discovered vital information or plot element | 1 |
| Makes clever and unexpected use of character abilities | 1 |
| Roleplaying Bonuses (Min/Max ±3) | |
| Dramatic acts of self-sacrifice | 1 to 5 |
| Player selflessly provides scenes for other characters | 1 |
| Player acts wildly out of character, even if successful | -1 to -3 |
| Scenario Bonuses (Min/Max ±3) | |
| Players worked as a team | 1 |
| Minor setback or failure in a multi-session adventure | -1 |
| Major setback or failure in a multi-session adventure | -3 |
| Game Bonuses | |
| Short Game Session (two hours or less) | x0.5 |
| Typical Game session (three to four hours) | x1 |
| Long Game session (five to ten hours) | x2 |
| Marathon Game session (ten hours or more) | Normal XPs every four hours |

*No session can end with less than 0 XP or more than 6 XPs





Character Story - 2.2.8

No Player Character should be created without a character story. Storytelling almost invariably involves conflict. That conflict, however, is seldom without a purpose. It serves to push the character towards the resolution of his problems, of the basic premises behind his motivations. Heroes seldom begin a story as perfect beings. The story, after all, has to talk about something beyond their day-to-day adventures. Most of the time, those very adventures help the character resolve some sort of problem or difficulty in his past, and bring him closer to achieving some form of stability in his life. In essence, the character story is the movement between the initial character (at the beginning of the campaign) and the final one. Players should always develop some basic character story for their PCs and tell the Gamemaster what they expect it to be.

Let us take the story of a street criminal from, say, Khayr ad-Din who lost his friends during the CEF bombing raids of the War of the Alliance. He starts with a desire for revenge against Earthers and GREs and sets out on a path to slake that thirst. In the process, he discovers other people who, like him, suffered from the War and bonds with them. They work together for a long while, then near the end it is revealed that one of them is a former Earth soldier who has forsaken his past and embraced Terra Nova as his new home. Our hero feels betrayed, but eventually comes around and realizes that mistakes of the past matter little when compared to the value of his new friendship. In the end, the character walks away from his life as a rebel and joins the army to protect those who need it — people like his long-lost friends. Trite as this story may be, the character in the end is not the same as the character in the beginning. The character story is what occurred in the middle.

In roleplaying games, it is best to let the Player come up with his own character story, although it should be clearly explained and understood that the GM may modify it according to his campaign. The Gamemaster has at least something to start from, and the Player may enjoy the spins and twists which the GM comes up with. After all, if he knew everything about his character's story, the Player might find it less interesting to play.

Why even bother with a character story? You may think that your Players are obtuse or beyond help, that they only care about the Attributes, Skills and equipment of their characters, that they are munchkins and power gamers, or that they simply won't bother. Maybe you're right, but it's also possible that they were never introduced to the concept at all and might enjoy it. Give it a shot. Think of it as a pill and sugar-coat it with what they prefer to play, be it action, combat or whatever else strikes their fancy. If you're clever and discreet enough, they'll soon realize that it gives great depth to their characters and might insist on having a character story for every PC they play from now on.

Major Life Changes ◆

As we mentioned above, characters should not be static. They evolve, grow and change as their experiences and needs push them towards new goals and beliefs. To spice up a character's story, the GM may consider bringing in some of the following elements, especially if they can help the PC grow. Remember, however, that overdoing it may be just as bad as not doing enough. Players may suggest life changes and the GM should welcome this input, but watch for disguised munchkinism (no "I discover a super-weapon").

☐ Major Life Changes Tables

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------------|
| • | Death of a friend/family member/beloved pet |
| • | Loss of a limb/sense |
| • | Expulsion from group |
| • | Surviving a deadly threat/accident/plot |
| • | Discovering a faith/idea/truth |

Death Scenes ◆

This is often very tricky to pull off during a campaign. Character death can happen in one of three ways. It can be the result of a blatantly stupid decision on the part of the Player; it can be the result of bad dice; it can be a well-thought, planned decision on the part of the Player. Whatever the case, the GM should try to give meaning to the death of the PC, even if the Player did something totally weird or out of character.

Self-sacrifice often creates classic (and highly dramatic) death scenes. The Gamemaster should allow the Player to almost automatically succeed some kind of very heroic act if he is sacrificing himself for the sake of someone else. The threat of dying has to be very real, however, to prevent Players from sacrificing their characters every other game session. Optionally, the GM may grant a +5 bonus which the Player may spread over all the actions required by his death scene (a +3 here, a +1 there and another +1 there; or simply a +5 on one critical action).

Dying speeches are another staple of death scenes. They can be corny, but when skillfully done, they add an emotional depth to the scene that can even move some of the more sensitive Players to tears. The trick is to avoid so-called cool one-liners and turn the speech into a simple gesture, a smile or any form of closure on something which was important to the character in the past.



2.3 - THE NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



Non-Player Characters represent an essential part of any roleplaying campaign. They populate the world in which the PCs operate and they spice up any scenario. A game that does not feature at least a few NPCs for the Player Characters to interact with can suffer from a variety of problems, one of them being a lack of "life" in the game world. Players who simply adventure with their group and no one else are essentially walking in a desert, encountering the occasional enemy to defeat (through combat, of course) and don't have the feeling there really is a world for them to interact with. Wise Gamemasters will use hordes of NPCs to keep the Players on their toes. Since (theoretically) no two NPCs are alike, this means there are no standard reactions or operating procedures for the Players to rely on, forcing them to find new and creative ways to solve problems. Furthermore, this gives an advantage to PCs who have developed more than combat skills for their characters — the Etiquette Skill, for instance, can be tremendous help in pleasing the locals.

Important NPCs (see *Lead Characters*, p. 8) are like the Gamemaster's personal characters (sometimes called GMPCs) and should ideally benefit from the same level of attention to detail as the Players' own characters. They should be well developed, consistent characters, complete with their quirks, speech patterns and physical descriptions. The Gamemaster should be ready to play them at a moment's notice and always in accordance to their backgrounds and previous encounters with the Players (if applicable).

2.3.1 - Looks

One of the bane of most Gamemasters is the dreaded moment when they must create an NPC on the spur of the moment to spice up a stale scene or to introduce a last-second rescuer to assist the Players when they need it the most (GM says, "This girl emerges from behind a crate, wearing light flak armor and holding one 6 mm machine pistol in each hand, providing you with cover fire against the enemies," while thinking, "Okay, gotta figure out what she looks like, what her name is, what she's doing here... Whatever, I'll just keep shooting and figure it out after the combat scene."). The following tables should help GMs in those situations. Naturally, the percentages and proportions are skewed and don't reflect reality, but when you're in a fix and need it now, it's at least helpful to have somewhere to start. Gamemasters should nonetheless make a minimum of effort to create small details that make for memorable NPCs (scars, physical deformities, eye patches, features, styles of dress, speech, combat preferences, unusual items, etc.).

Appearance Table ☐

| Add 2d6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| Age | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 |
| Height* | 150 | 155 | 160 | 165 | 170 | 175 | 180 | 185 | 190 | 195 | 200 |
| Weight** | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 | 75 | 80 | 85 | 90 | 95 |
| Hair | White | Blonde | Red | Auburn | Brown | Black | Brown | Auburn | Red | Blonde | White |
| Eyes | Amber | Blue | Green | Brown | Brown | Black | Brown | Brown | Green | Blue | Amber |

* Height is measured in centimeters (1 inch = 2.5 centimeters); subtract 1 from dice result for women.

** Weight is measured in kilograms (1 kg = 2.2 lbs); subtract 2 from dice result for women.

Special Features Table ☐

| Add 2d6 | Appearance | Behavior | Clothing |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 2 | Albino | Absentminded | Rags |
| 3 | Unusual Height | Gloomy | Timmins |
| 4 | Artificial Limb | Silent | Inexpensive |
| 5 | One-Eyed | Brutal | Utilitarian (cheap) |
| 6 | Tattoo | Fanatic | Uniform |
| 7 | Scar | Drug Addict | Plain |
| 8 | Bald | Zealot | Formal Wear |
| 9 | Birthmark | Pacifist | Utilitarian (good) |
| 10 | Missing Limb | Loquacious | Elegant |
| 11 | Overweight | Sociable | Fashionable |
| 12 | Body Odor | Tenacious | High Fashion |



Sample Non-Player Characters ◆

We provide you below with a dozen sample Non-Player Characters inspired by the various archetypes and NPCs found throughout our supplements. Even if you have those supplements, you can use those NPCs as quick-fix replacements until you can make full writeups.

□□ NPCs in a Nutshell

| Generic NPC | +1 Attr. | -1 Attr | Lvl 3 Skill | Lvl 2 Skill | Lvl 1 Skill |
|----------------|----------|---------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Badlands Rover | BLD | APP | n/a | Drive | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | CRE | | Hand-to-Hand | Dodge |
| | PER | KNO | | Small Arms | Gambling |
| | WIL | | | | Intimidate |
| Bounty Hunter | BLD | n/a | Notice | Hand-to-Hand | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | | Investigation | Dodge |
| | INF | | | Small Arms | Intimidate |
| | | | | | Law |
| Executive | APP | n/a | Business | Bureaucracy | Computer |
| | CRE | | | Etiquette | Leadership |
| | INF | | | Leadership | Notice |
| | KNO | | | | Psychology |
| Gear Pilot | AGI | n/a | n/a | Gunnery (HG) | Combat Sense |
| | PER | | | Communications | Elec. Warfare |
| | | | | HG Pilot | Notice |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Guide | CRE | n/a | Navigation | Drive | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | Survival | Notice | First Aid |
| | KNO | | | Phys. Sc.: Geography | Riding |
| | PER | | | | Small Arms |
| Marshal | AGI | n/a | Investigation | Combat Sense | Dodge |
| | BLD | | | Hand-to-Hand | Law |
| | FIT | | | Notice | Melee |
| | PER | | | | Streetwise |
| Medic | KNO | n/a | First Aid | Computer | Bureaucracy |
| | PSY | | | Life Sciences | Combat Sense |
| | | | | Medicine | Etiquette |
| | | | | | Notice |
| Mugger | BLD | APP | n/a | Notice | Combat Sense |
| | PER | CRE | | Intimidate | Dodge |
| | | KNO | | Streetwise | Hand-to-Hand |
| | | PSY | | | Melee |
| Police Officer | BLD | APP | n/a | Investigation | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | | Law | Drive |
| | KNO | | | Notice | Dodge |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Politician | CRE | n/a | n/a | Bureaucracy | Business |
| | INF | | | Etiquette | Leadership |
| | | | | F. Language | Psychology |
| | | | | | Theatrics |
| Smuggler | AGI | APP | n/a | Camouflage | Dodge |
| | CRE | PSY | | Combat Sense | Drive |
| | PER | | | Stealth | Forgery |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Trader | INF | n/a | Business | Navigation | Drive |
| | KNO | | | Etiquette | Intimidate |
| | PER | | | Gambling | Notice |
| | | | | | Streetwise |



2.3.2 - Equipment Packages

The packages below may prove useful on the fly. Each profession can be rated with three echelons: Insignificant, Noticed and Prestigious. Belongings are divided between Wealth, Combat, Survival and Technology. Refer to the sub-tables on the following page.

Equipment Packages ☐

| Profession | Insignificant (1-3) | Noticed (4-5) | Prestigious (6) |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Badlands Rover | Wealth -2 | Wealth -1 | Wealth |
| | Combat | Combat +1 | Combat +1 |
| | Survival | Survival | Survival +1 |
| | Technology -2 | Technology -2 | Technology -1 |
| Bounty Hunter | Wealth -1 | Wealth | Wealth +2 |
| | Combat | Combat+1 | Combat +2 |
| | Survival -2 | Survival -1 | Survival -1 |
| | Technology -1 | Technology | Technology +2 |
| Executive | Wealth | Wealth +1 | Wealth +3 |
| | Combat -2 | Combat -2 | Combat -2 |
| | Survival -2 | Survival -2 | Survival -2 |
| | Technology | Technology +1 | Technology +2 |
| Gear Pilot | Wealth | Wealth | Wealth |
| | Combat | Combat | Combat +1 |
| | Survival -1 | Survival -1 | Survival |
| | Technology -1 | Technology -1 | Technology |
| Guide | Wealth -2 | Wealth -1 | Wealth |
| | Combat -1 | Combat | Combat |
| | Survival +1 | Survival +2 | Survival +3 |
| | Technology -2 | Technology -1 | Technology |
| Marshal | Wealth -1 | Wealth -1 | Wealth |
| | Combat +1 | Combat +2 | Combat +3 |
| | Survival -1 | Survival | Survival |
| | Technology -1 | Technology -1 | Technology -1 |
| Medic | Wealth | Wealth +1 | Wealth +3 |
| | Combat -3 | Combat -2 | Combat -1 |
| | Survival -1 | Survival | Survival +1 |
| | Technology +1 | Technology +2 | Technology +3 |
| Mugger | Wealth -3 | Wealth -2 | Wealth -1 |
| | Combat | Combat | Combat +1 |
| | Survival -2 | Survival -1 | Survival |
| | Technology -2 | Technology -2 | Technology -2 |
| Police Officer | Wealth -1 | Wealth -1 | Wealth |
| | Combat +1 | Combat +2 | Combat +2 |
| | Survival -1 | Survival -1 | Survival |
| | Technology | Technology | Technology +1 |
| Politician | Wealth +1 | Wealth +2 | Wealth +3 |
| | Combat -3 | Combat -3 | Combat -2 |
| | Survival -2 | Survival -2 | Survival -2 |
| | Technology | Technology +1 | Technology +1 |
| Smuggler | Wealth | Wealth | Wealth +1 |
| | Combat -1 | Combat | Combat |
| | Survival -1 | Survival | Survival |
| | Technology | Technology | Technology +1 |
| Trader | Wealth | Wealth +1 | Wealth +2 |
| | Combat -1 | Combat | Combat |
| | Survival -1 | Survival -1 | Survival |
| | Technology -1 | Technology | Technology |



THE CHARACTERS

2

☐ Wealth Table

| Roll 1d6 | Carrying (in marks/dinars) | Credit Card (30-80% spent) |
|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| -1 and below | 1d6 | 0 |
| 0 | 1d6+5 | 0 |
| 1 | 1d6 x 5 | 500 |
| 2 | 2d6 x 5 | 1,000 |
| 3 | 4d6 x 5 | 2,500 |
| 4 | 3d6 x 10 | 5,000 |
| 5 | 2d6 x 50 | 10,000 |
| 6 | 1d6 x 100 | 50,000 |
| 7 | 2d6 x 200 | 100,000 |
| 8 and above | 3d6 x 300 | 250,000 |

☐ Combat Equipment Table

| Roll 1d6 | Weapon | Armor | Ammo Clip(s) |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| -1 and below | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 0 | Club (AD+5) | Light Leather (5) | n/a |
| 1 | Vibroknife (AD+9) | Hvy Leather (10) | n/a |
| 2 | 6 mm Pistol (x10) | Light Flak Vest (15) | n/a |
| 3 | 13 mm Pistol (x25) | Light Flak Suit (20) | +1 (8 ammo) |
| 4 | 9 mm Machine Pistol (x15) | Med. Flak Vest (25) | +1 (20 ammo) |
| 5 | 7 mm Assault Rifle (x22) | Med. Flak Suit (30) | +2 (30 ammo) |
| 6 | 9 mm Heavy Rifle (x30) | Hvy Flak Vest (35) | +2 (10 ammo) |
| 7 | 9 mm Chaingun (x30) | Hvy Flak Suit (40) | +2 (50 ammo) |
| 8 and above | 24 mm Anti-HG Rifle (x70) | Turtleshell (60) | +3 (3 ammo) |

☐ Survival Equipment Table (Result indicates listed item and all those above it)

| Roll 1d6 | Desert | Wilderness | Urban |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| -1 and below | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 0 | Survival Rations | Survival Rations | Watch |
| 1 | Water Condenser | Survival Kit | Personal Assistant |
| 2 | Survival Kit | Compass | Personal Communicator |
| 3 | Compass | First Aid Kit | Medium Class Clothing |
| 4 | First Aid Kit | Tent | Data Disks (1d6) |
| 5 | Desert Suit (non-recycling) | Binoculars | Trideo Recorder |
| 6 | MemCompass | MemCompass | Designer Clothing |
| 7 | Tent | Climbing Gear | Personal Computer |
| 8 and above | Desert Suit (water-recycling) | Prospecting Tubes | Scrambling Device |

☐ Technological Equipment Table (Result indicates listed item and all those above it)

| Roll 1d6 | Infiltration | Communication | Technical |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| -1 and below | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 0 | Binoculars | Cellular Phone | Drugs |
| 1 | Black Bodysuit (+1 Stealth) | Journalist VR Rig | First Aid Kit |
| 2 | Nightvision Goggles | Tracers & Bugs | Cutting Torch |
| 3 | Lockpick (+1 Mechanics) | Communication Headset | Med. Belt & Scanner |
| 4 | Thermal Goggles | Scrambling Device | Mechanical Tool Kit |
| 5 | Gas Mask | Throat/Ear Comm Set | Medical Kit |
| 6 | Electr. Lockpick (+1 Electr.) | Communication Rig | Electronics Tool Kit |
| 7 | Stealth Helmet | Military T/E Comm Set | Tech Rig |
| 8 and above | Stealth Bodysuit (+2 Stealth) | Mil. T/E Comm (subdermal) | Surgical Field Kit |



3.1 - THE PLAY IS THE THING

So far, we have covered the people who play the game (Players and Gamemasters) and the characters who are involved in the stories of the campaign. We must now cover the game itself — its rules and its storylines. Too often, Gamemasters and Players alike put the rules before the story, turning what would be a wonderful storytelling experience into a tiring exercise in mathematics, bookkeeping and technical haggling. On the other hand, some gamers go the other way, disregarding the rules completely in favor of a rich storyline. This can also cause problems — no one knows how the game is played and the Players experience frustration because they have no idea how to use their characters to the full extent of their capabilities. They feel at the mercy of the Gamemaster, acting as puppets in a scenario over which they have little control. Ideally, a game should balance rules and storytelling. Rules help define and quantify action scenes, but should not be used to overrule or stifle creative thinking. Much like a movie, gaming must feature some surreal action once in a while, just to make it more interesting for the viewer.

You, the Gamemaster, have probably already chosen (after talking to your Players) the type of game you wish to run: the style, tone, location, power level, etc. Your task now consists in engineering a story that will fit those criteria. This is your “homework,” but it doesn’t need to become a burden. In fact, calibrating the rules, detailing the part of the world in which the Players will operate and creating the people who inhabit that area are some of the pleasures of GMing. You should also more or less plan the course of the story and how you expect it to end initially. Remember that the Players may take the game in another direction altogether, but it is better to have an ending in mind in case you need it than not have anything and close the campaign with a pat ending. Ongoing campaigns are fine and dandy, but they lack a tight storyline and often don’t have as much dramatic impact as campaigns which have been carefully developed. If the GM spends a bit of time preparing a solid series of scenarios (often called “episodes”), his campaign (or “series”) is going somewhere and has more consistency. You don’t have to do it, but you will find that thinking in terms of episodes and series will make your life easier, and prevent your campaign from sputtering down into oblivion.

In a few words, keep it clean and tight. Know where you’re going and roughly how long you expect to take to get there. Feel free to change your mind on the way, but remember to bring closure at the end of the campaign and quit while you’re ahead. After all, how many series went on past their due deaths and now survive as pale shadows of what they once were? You don’t want your Players to say, in a few years, “Oh, his game was fun until that particular scenario, and it went downhill from there — he should have ended it at that moment instead of dragging it on.”

Before starting a campaign, however, you may want to use a trick that television studios have used for decades: the pilot. Instead of doing the character creation separately or letting the Players come up with their own characters, have everyone come over on a Saturday, early during the day, and spend most of the afternoon designing everyone’s PC. Take a break, have supper, and come back for a 4-5 hour evening session introducing everyone to each other and adventuring together for a bit. This will give Player Characters an opportunity to interact with one another and to find out whether they are compatible for the campaign. It gives them a taste of your Gamemastering skills, and it gives you an idea of how they play and what you can expect from them in the future. You will most likely see subplot ideas emerge which you should write down for future reference. After the pilot session, give everyone a chance to modify their respective Player Characters if they’re not entirely comfortable with them. If you need to make adjustments to the campaign, this is the perfect time to do it. Explain to your Players what changes you’d like to bring and why. In the world of television, there are often discrepancies between the pilot and the actual series which follows as a result of the modifications to the basic premises. It makes the series more marketable and broadens its appeal. There’s no reason why you couldn’t do this with your own campaign.

When planning your campaign you can also choose between “American” and “Japanese” style campaigns. American-style campaigns are similar to standard American TV series: there is a basic concept and character evolution, but no fixed ending. Scenarios can tie into each other, but many will stand alone. Japanese-style campaigns have a planned ending from the get-go and pretty much every scenario takes one step toward that ending. American-style games can be a lot of fun and allow for more Player input, but they may feel episodic and static — very little seems to change. Japanese-style campaigns are usually more dramatic, but they are often shorter and Players may feel railroaded toward a pre-ordained ending. A good compromise is to have an overall plot to the campaign with an ending in mind, but to also intersperse the series with scenarios that are not related. If you find that the PCs are more interested in these side-stories, you can change the campaign’s focus slightly without anyone being the wiser.





THE RULES - 3.2

As we mentioned above, Players and Gamemasters often make too big a deal of the rules during roleplaying sessions. They really shouldn't. Rules are a means to an end, not the end itself. If a rule annoys everyone or doesn't seem to make sense, ignore it. That's right. **IGNORE IT.** We, the game designers, are telling you to ignore the rules whenever you believe it's appropriate (and fair). You are the Gamemaster, it's your scenario and it's your game. You decide what goes, not us. We just write the rules. It is your task to interpret then and use them as you see fit. So long as you remain fair and make sure the Players are having a good time (very important!), rules don't have to interfere with your fun.

Never let a Player bully you around by saying that the rules say you have to do this or that. That's only for general situations and may not apply all the time. That's why there's a Gamemaster. That's why roleplaying games don't translate well on computers — nothing is as flexible as human intelligence (and no, that's NOT an oxymoron). With time, you will find several Players who are fond of an activity that has earned the less-than-enviable name of rule-raping. This consists of finding all possible ways to abuse a game system by taking advantage of its unavoidable weaknesses and loopholes. Don't stand for it. Watch for it, especially during character creation, and expose it plainly. The direct approach can yield surprisingly good results.

Breaking the Rules - 3.2.1

Sometimes, the rules get in the way of a good story. The Silhouette system is no exception. It is a fairly accurate (and unforgiving) simulation of reality. Sometimes, in order to move the game forward and entertain your Players, you have to bend or even break the rules. Here are a few Do's and Don'ts.

Do... ♦

...Let the character run with it if he's found a creative way of handling a situation, even if it's not in the rulebook. If it becomes repetitive, however, you may want to tell the Player that it's becoming routine and won't get "preferential" treatment anymore.

...Save a character from certain death if all that condemned him was a bad die roll. It doesn't mean, however, that the character has to escape unscathed.

Many Gamemasters dislike killing PCs because they fear the wrath of their Player friends. They often let Players walk all over them and get away with outrageous behavior. Avoid this. Do not hesitate to kill a character who does something stupid and deserves what's coming to him. Anyone willing to enter a fight knows there's a chance of dying. If the Players figure out they are invulnerable, the game becomes an absurd parody of life.

Don't... ♦

...Cheat on your die rolls. Except when Players shouldn't know the result immediately (e.g. Notice rolls), roll in front of the Players, not behind your screen. Players will feel they have earned their victories if they know you aren't giving them any breaks.

...Save a character who puts himself in harm's way. If the Player does it, he may be doing it for the right reason (sacrificing his character to save the group, for instance), but he may also be doing it for purely selfish reasons (to test your resolve about killing PCs, perhaps).

If the Players get into deep trouble, resist the urge to have NPCs come to the rescue. If they got into that mess on their own, they have to get out of it by themselves. If the cavalry rides in every time they're about to die — and no matter how action-packed it may seem to you — the Players will resent having NPCs steal their scenes. It is better to allow them generous chances to succeed (i.e. lower difficulty thresholds) than relegate them to secondary roles and watch the henchmen save the day. If you really must introduce someone to help them, make sure that person is not equipped to handle all opposition and gets knocked down quickly.

Improvising - 3.2.2

The ability to improvise is the most important skill a Gamemaster can develop. Gamers are notorious for doing the unexpected, pulling a rabbit out of their hats or throwing in the kitchen sink when all else fails. The more you try to anticipate what they're going to do next, the more surprised you'll be when they do something else. There are two ways you can handle it: you can railroad them into a single-line adventure that allows for no straying from the planned path (Players find that extremely frustrating); or you can be ready to improvise. Be smart and choose the second option.

You should prepare your scenarios before hand, but avoid being overprepared. It is better to give yourself room to maneuver than set out everything in advance. Try to have a few contingency plans for those fragile areas where you suspect the Players may go astray, but keep in mind it may not be enough. Have several generic NPCs on standby to use in case the Players decide to investigate an area of your campaign you haven't fully prepared yet and be ready to use subplots as main stories if you don't have anything better to serve them. Deal with the situation and keep the game moving. Maybe you can gently steer the PCs back on the right track later.



3.2.3 - Plot Movers

Most roleplaying games operate as a succession of scenes. Player Characters interact with NPCs, through conversation, intimidation, combat, etc., until a point where the scene should end. Novice Gamemasters are often apprehensive when that moment comes, especially when they have to resort to improvisation. They don't know what's coming next and how to handle it. They know they must keep the game moving before someone gets bored, but they've got the equivalent of writer's block. They don't know where to go next and how to handle it. All they need is a trigger, something they can use as a springboard towards the next scene. That's what we call a Plot Mover.

Preferably, Gamemasters should always have a few Plot Movers ready before the game, in case things get stale or slow. Ideally, it should be something which is at least mildly relevant with the current storyline, or possibly a hook to a future thread which the Players can choose to follow later on. Because they are designed to spice things up, most Plot Movers tend to be action oriented — nothing livens up the atmosphere like an old-fashioned chase scene or a combat. It is entirely possible, however, to simply have a mysterious character show up, do or say something very odd, then vanish. Since Plot Movers rely heavily on improvisation, only develop the basic premise enough to keep the scene going and to wake your Players up. Figure out the rest later, after the game, when you have more time to elaborate on that premise. Sometimes, improvising something forces you to put a new twist on what you had designed and helps you surprise your Players (and yourself) with an unexpected turn of events.

Plot Movers ☐

| Title | Description |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assassins: | A hired killer botches his attempt on a PC's life. |
| | a) The assassin gets killed by the PCs and drops a hint (verbal or physical) as to who hired him |
| | b) The assassin leaves and the PCs track him down to a hideout from which he vanishes without a trace. |
| Bureaucracy: | The characters run afoul of red tape in their investigation. |
| | a) A stubborn (and incorruptible) clerk seems determined to stop their efforts with countless forms. |
| | b) A corrupt clerk misdirects the characters' investigation toward several dead ends. |
| Home Front: | Some enemy threatens a PC's family. |
| | a) He only wants to scare the characters and leave, but may hurt them if threatened. |
| | b) He hurts or kills one as a demonstration of what may occur if the PC persists. |
| Innocents in Danger: | Enemies have taken hostages and are making demands. |
| | a) The villains make outrageous demands and threaten to kill a hostage every 15 minutes. |
| | b) The hostages are actually accomplices of the villains. |
| Raw Action: | The chief enemy has sent some troops to get rid of those pesky Player Characters. |
| | a) The opposition is real and will carry through with its mission, perhaps even with fanatical zeal. |
| | b) The opposition is only strong enough to distract the PCs from the real crime happening elsewhere. |
| Remember Me?: | The PCs are not the only ones with a long memory: an old enemy comes back to haunt them. |
| | a) He means to kill the Player Characters to make them pay for their past affront. |
| | b) He only wants to hurt them, ruin their reputations and threaten their loved ones. |
| Crowd Scene: | The PCs are in hot pursuit (or being chased) and they fall upon a parade or some kind of rally. |
| | a) They have to go against the flow of the crowd to find/escape their prey/pursuers. |
| | b) The enemy begins shooting through the crowd to get to the Player Characters. |
| Annoying Reporters: | The Player Characters are investigating something and so is that annoying reporter. |
| | a) The reporter decides to tail the PCs and see if they lead him anywhere where there's a hot story. |
| | b) The reporter finds out about some embarrassing information regarding the PCs' past activities. |
| Beat the Clock: | The PCs are in a tough spot and only have a limited amount of time to resolve the situation. |
| | a) Some deadly device (bomb, poison, raid) is going to be set off if they fail. |
| | b) Enemy reinforcements are on their way and will surely capture the PCs if they don't hurry up. |
| Weather Patterns: | Terra Nova is prone to violent and sudden changes in weather. |
| | a) A tempest suddenly develops and hinders both movement and visibility. |
| | b) Characters find themselves ill-equipped to handle the weather and must quickly find shelter. |
| Wheels Within Wheels: | The PCs find themselves inadvertently entangled in the political machinations of several groups. |
| | a) A group needs them to distract enemy forces, who happen to be on their side in the first place. |
| | b) The PCs obtain evidence of some conspiracy, and several buyers start harassing them. |
| The World Out There: | Sometimes, even Player Characters pay attention to the news — and Terra Nova has a lot of it. |
| | a) The PCs learn about some important international event. |
| | b) The PCs hear about some local rumors of trouble with rovers or rebellious youth gangs. |



Fumbles - 3.2.4

Too often, gamers believe that a fumbled Skill roll spells doom for the Player Characters. If everyone wants to play it that way, that's fine, but it's probably more fun to be a little more flexible. Most of the time, fumbles can complicate an already tense situation and make the Players nervous. Fumbles should only really matter during combat, where they can have critical repercussions. Players should be encouraged to spend their XPs to purchase emergency dice and avoid fumbling. Characters with Skills at level 1 should be aware that they will fumble one out of every six times, and spend XPs accordingly (or suffer the consequences).

Attack Fumbles ◆

These are the most common fumbles, and the ones that may have the nastiest effect on the PCs' health. Gamemasters may use some of the suggestions below or come up with their own variants. Ideally, it should indicate a complete failure to hit the opponent and inconvenience the PC without having a crippling effect.

☐☐ Attack Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Dazzled by an unforeseen reflection |
| 2 | Dud ammo |
| 3 | Melee weapon gets caught on something |
| 4 | Misfeed |
| 5 | The gun jams |
| 6 | Character slips |

Defense Fumbles ◆

Defense Fumbles are the most tragic of all. Seeing as they yield a result of 0 for the purpose of calculating the Margin of Success of the attacker, they often have lethal effects. If the Player Character who fumbles a defense roll has the Character Perk of Luck, he should use it right then and there. Because of the mathematical nature of the defensive fumble, all the Gamemaster has to do is describe it in an interesting way. There is no way to avoid the damage.

☐☐ Defense Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Chose the wrong defensive move |
| 2 | Distracted |
| 3 | Peeked from cover at the wrong time |
| 4 | Character slips |
| 5 | Disoriented, facing the wrong way |
| 6 | Ran into the attack |

Perception Fumbles ◆

Characters should be required to make Notice checks on a regular basis to become aware of imminent threats or to pick up obscure details. A fumbled Notice roll does not necessarily mean the character hears, sees or otherwise perceives nothing — sometimes, it's just that the PC picks up the wrong information. Gamemasters should be creative and have the character's attention focus on something which may only seem relevant, but isn't.

☐☐ Perception Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Distracting sight or noise |
| 2 | Grain of sand in the eye |
| 3 | Misread/misheard an important detail |
| 4 | Surveillance equipment malfunctions |
| 5 | Attractive person passing by |
| 6 | Shadows play tricks with the eye |



◆ Social Interaction Fumbles

The traditional *faux-pas* do not come without a price. Whether the PC is trying to intimidate a prisoner, lie to a police officer or seduce a potential romantic partner, social interaction fumbles can yield a variety of results, from the totally dramatic to the irresistibly hilarious. Depending on how tense the situation is, the GM may use the fumble to lighten or darken the mood. Social Interaction fumbles should not be overly dramatic or permanent. Gamemasters should give the Players the opportunity to talk their way through it and perhaps to reroll if they've come up with a clever excuse or explanation for their fumble. Be careful to not give it to them too easily — they did fumble — and no matter how good the secondary roll may be, it shouldn't completely compensate for their mistake.

Social Interaction Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Accidentally insults someone (poor choice of words, bad translation) |
| 2 | Momentarily forget an important detail or argument |
| 3 | Someone you know arrives and contradicts you |
| 4 | Unbecoming fit of coughing |
| 5 | Use a detail or argument that's painful to other party |
| 6 | Use wrong detail or argument |

◆ Stealth Fumbles

While almost never immediately lethal, fumbling a Stealth check can rapidly lead to a life-and-death situation. The Gamemaster should be lenient, however, and give the PC some chance to recover the situation. After all, in this case, failing a Stealth check only means the character is visible, not necessarily noticed. Someone has to be paying attention in the first place. This is a classic in movies and literature. Use it and turn the PCs into nervous wrecks. If the character is noticed, you can either follow up with a combat scene or a chase scene. Either way, if your game was getting a little slow, this is the perfect time to get some action going. Be especially harsh against Players who make it a habit of taking off without the rest of the group to go "solo." Being discovered is much less serious if you have back-up.

Stealth Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Animal takes a loud interest in you |
| 2 | Character breaks a twig |
| 3 | Coughing fit |
| 4 | Fails to notice give-away shadow or reflection |
| 5 | Stumble upon someone (security guard, passerby, etc.) |
| 6 | Fails to notice security camera |

◆ Technical Fumbles

Technicians don't always know they've fumbled their work. Sometimes, it only becomes apparent when the device, weapon or vehicle is being used. In such situations, the GM should test the Skill behind his screen (just so the PCs don't realize the roll has succeeded or not), then decide what to do if the result is a fumble. The possibilities are endless, and all are valid if they annoy the character to at least some extent. Another option is to have a part break or explode immediately (doing only minor damage, if any). This can set the Player Characters on a rapid side-quest to find a replacement part in a panic. A technical fumble can also be used for recurrent comic relief ("That Hunter's v-engine whines ever since Jakkie tried to fix it!").

Technical Fumbles Random Table

| Roll 1d6 | Result |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Break important piece (vital to object's main function) |
| 2 | Computer crashes and wipes its memory and drives |
| 3 | Device works for 1d6 turns, then fuses |
| 4 | Device works half the time, and only upside-down |
| 5 | Equipment's innards disintegrate in a shower of sparks |
| 6 | Equipment will blow up once turned on for the third time |



COMBAT - 3.3

Without conflict, there is no plot. Characters who do nothing and face no opposition make for poor stories or, more precisely, do not make a story at all. Conflict is a vital part of storytelling, and conflicts sometimes lead to outright combat. In roleplaying and tactical games in particular, combat is almost unavoidable. Unfortunately, many novice Gamemasters blunder and run combats in a methodical, almost monotone manner. While few Players will leave a campaign because the combat situations are uninteresting, it is always wise to have that angle covered, and to run fight scenes that grab their attention and get their blood racing.

Combat is one of the GM's multi-purpose tools. It can get the game moving again, provide clues that went unnoticed before, wake the Players up when the game enters a lull and generally spice things up a little bit. Unfortunately, it also means there is great potential for abuse.

As a Gamemaster, you must remember that Players don't always know everything which their characters know. For instance, a twelve year-old Player with a grizzled combat veteran PC may not know what to do if he gets ambushed, but his character would. If you as a GM can think of a better way to react to a situation than the Player does, and if it would make sense for the PC to know what you do, then it's your duty to at least tell the Player how to improve his odds of survival. Allow Knowledge or Skill tests if the information is relevant. Note that the reverse situation is also possible, and you should encourage your more knowledgeable Players to give you hints if they know something you don't. Do yourself a favor and take their advice; it'll make you a better Gamemaster in the end. Remember: you're a judge, not a god.

This section covers most of the elements which you should watch for during combat. Vehicular combat makes use of pretty much the same elements, suitably modified to take into account their greater size and speed. For instance, vehicles may also make use of cover, especially nimble vehicles such as Gears or combat bikes.

As with all things in gaming, common sense should prevail. Be flexible, be fair and most of all, be entertaining. The Player Characters are the heroes, so they should more or less win the fight, unless they really mess up their die rolls or work against each other. Still, don't be afraid to kill characters if they deserve it (i.e. if they did something tragically stupid) or if the Player wants to retire his current PC to start a new one. If one Player tries to get another killed, however, there is a serious problem that could stem from Player conflict. Discourage this behavior as best you can, unless everyone is open to vicious PC rivalry (a rare situation, indeed).



Combat Sense - 3.3.1

Many Players chafe under the restrictions imposed upon them by the Combat Sense Skill. They don't understand why they're not allowed to take actions if they blow their rolls. "Hey, all I wanna do is shoot my gun! It doesn't take a genius to do that!" These Players have probably never been shot at or have forgotten what it's like. It's easy to sit in an armchair and pretend to have the reflexes of a squirrel and the heart of a lion, but reality doesn't work that way. When a human being is placed in a dangerous situation, his mind drops back to a more primitive, survival-oriented level. We all fear being hurt, especially by lethal chunks of metal flying at Mach 1. Much of a soldier's training focuses on new reflexes that improve his odds of survival and help override these natural instincts, thus allowing him to fight back without having to think about it (and lose precious seconds panicking).

The key to translating this into game terms is to be explicit. Don't say: "You fumbled your Combat Sense roll; you don't get to act." Say instead "You break into a cold sweat and you flinch defensively as bullets impact on the wall just above your hiding spot. You want to do something, but it's like you're just a passenger in your own body. Your hands fumble for your weapon, but you're too nervous and you can't seem to get the safety off quickly enough." That way, the Player won't feel cheated and the character may actually start avoiding combat situations, much like a real person would (a sane one, anyway).

Movement - 3.3.2

While movement rates can be used in roleplaying, they should serve as a guideline more than exact numbers. Drawing a simple map may help the Players relate to the environment and choose on their course of action. You can use pieces of string to approximate how far the characters can get, but avoid calculating every half-centimeter. It can slow the game to a crawl and make it look more like a lagging computer simulation than the dangerous, fast-paced melee your Players are expecting.

In the case of vehicles, there are numerous driving and piloting stunts available to the PCs, and it would be futile to try and list them all. You should simply choose a difficulty threshold for the action — a bootlegger turn at 120 kph is a lot harder to do than a simple U-turn at 10 kph. Whatever the action attempted, apply the vehicle's Maneuver as a modifier on all Piloting/Driving tests.



◆ Chase Scenes

Chase scenes and frantic pursuits are a staple of the action genre, and can provide some great gaming moments. The Gamemaster should decide how far apart the participants or vehicles are from each other at the beginning and note the speed (in meters/round; for vehicles, that's MPs x 10) down on paper. Each combat round, the characters/drivers/pilots should make an Opposed Skill Test (either Athletics, Drive or Piloting), then add their speed in meters/round (don't forget that some terrain will slow you down) and any applicable modifiers.

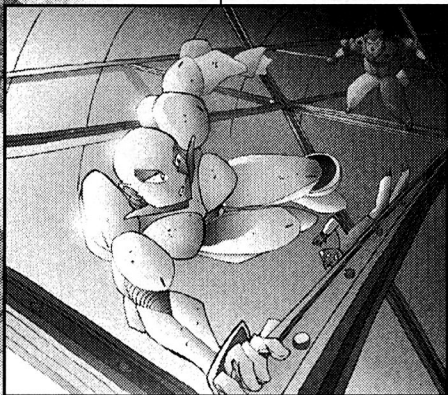
The winner of the test may increase or decrease the distance between the participants by a number of meters equal to their Margin of Success. The pursuit ends when one side is disabled, the pursued party moves out of sight, or someone gives up.

Chase Scene Modifiers* □□

| Condition | Modifier |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Traffic | -1 |
| Heavy Traffic/Obstacles | -2 |
| Winding Path | -3 |
| Tightly Winding Path | -6 |
| Maneuver | Modifier |
| Slalom (+1 to defense rolls) | -1 |
| Wheelie (bikes only) | -1 |
| Bootlegger (180° turn, full stop) | -2 |
| Side Wheels | -(Size/2), round up** |

* All modifiers are cumulative

** Modify by an additional -2 if no ramp is available to shift the vehicle's weight.



3.3.3 - The Environment

For some reason, opponents (and sometimes even the characters) often don't use the cover they have available — a horrible mistake. The Silhouette system is lethal, and the only way they can hope to survive a fight is to avoid being hit; that means using cover. Just standing there and shooting may work in Dick Tracy movies, but it's hardly believable. Gamemasters should always provide the Players with some opportunity for cover (see the defensive values for cover in the Second Edition rulebook, p. 103). If they're fighting in an alley, make sure there are dumpsters and old cars nearby. Be descriptive. If you want, go visit a real alley before the game and jot down a few of the cover opportunities you can find. The more details you give the Players, the more they'll use it and the more dynamic your combat scene will be.

Gamemasters should feel free to play around with lighting and visibility. A fight in the dark can be extremely unnerving for the Players, especially if they forgot to bring some kind of lighting equipment. A combat scene under pouring rain is also another movie classic that has great impact on the Players. Whatever you do, avoid bland gamespeak ("You have a -2 modifier for all attacks"). Instead, describe the situation: "The water pouring down your face gets into your eyes and blurs your vision. To make matters worse, it's very dark; your only light source is a lonely bulb placed high on the wall to your left. Suddenly, flashes burst from the blurred shadows, briefly revealing the outlines of incoming gunmen. (Oh, and by the way, your attacks are at -2.)"

3.3.4 - Burst Fire

Most people see burst fire as nothing more than a waste of ammunition, or as a rule too complex to bother with. It's not. Burst fire is a great way of forcing your opponents to keep their heads down while you're doing something else. To perform saturation fire, you need a weapon that has a Rate of Fire (ROF) greater than zero. The attacker chooses an area (either a 50-meter hex for vehicle weapons or a 10-meter radius for personal weapons), then rolls his attack normally (except that half the weapon's ROF, rounded down, is added to the result). Record the result: that's the Saturation Threshold. Anyone or any vehicle which enters that saturation zone later during the combat round must beat the Saturation Threshold. If the defender fails, the Margin of Failure is multiplied by the Damage Multiplier of the weapon and the resulting damage is treated as usual. There are two limitations to this type of fire: the saturation zone must be within the medium range of the weapon, and the weapon uses 30 shots of ammunition (or 8 rockets) per ROF point invested into the attack. If the weapon doesn't have this much ammo left, the result still stands and the ammo magazine is emptied (you still need at least 10 rounds or 4 rockets to attempt saturation fire). Saturation fire is perfect to set up a defense perimeter which the enemy will prefer to avoid and which will decimate almost any infantry trying to cross it. While it takes a great deal of ammunition, it offers extremely valuable defensive advantages. Clever GMs will use automated gun turrets to reinforce the defenses of enemy installations and force PCs to use only certain hexes. A nasty Gamemaster may even lay mines in those non-saturated areas to further trap (and damage) those who escape or avoid the saturation fire.



Injuries - 3.3.5

Whenever a character gets wounded, there are consequences. Because the Silhouette system uses thresholds that create very specific and clear-cut game effects, it is often assumed that unless there's a Flesh or Deep Wound result, nothing has happened. Nothing could be further from the truth. If the attack connects, there is at least a minimal level of pain. Even though the damage may not be enough to cause a penalty, it doesn't prevent the pain from being at least distracting. When there's a Flesh Wound, it hurts. A lot. When there's a Deep Wound, it hurts to tears. The black and white nature of the Silhouette wound system is often misleading. While the wound may not be enough to register a game effect, it will certainly affect the character. Keep reminding him about it: "Okay, your shot hits the second gunman. By the way, the recoil from your rifle causes a sharp stab of pain in your bruised shoulder." Or try this: "You're bleeding a bit from several minor cuts, leaving little drops of blood on the floor." If you remind him often enough, the Player will eventually have to do something to fix it, if only to shut you up.

Flesh Wounds may seem negligible, but cause a great deal of trouble. Several players work under the assumption that although they have a Flesh Wound, they should not see the -1 penalty apply to anything intellectual they do. This stems from the fact that Gamemasters often don't take the time to properly describe what the wound looks like. If you tell the player, "You have a Flesh Wound — you're at -1 on everything you do," he will simply shrug and ignore the effect, then start to argue that the penalty should not apply. If you tell him, "You've fallen face first on the ground — you've broken your nose and your forehead is bleeding enough to partially blind you," they will understand why their Skill checks are tougher. Deep Wounds are even worse. They are rapidly incapacitating, enough to cause a -2 penalty on all rolls. The pain is sharp and mind numbing. As with Flesh Wounds, they should be described with great detail to ensure that PCs realize the extent of the damage they have received. Think of it this way: a bit more damage and it would have been sufficient to kill the character.

It is a tradition in roleplaying games to act tough and ignore the wounds of our Player Character. Thanks to a powerful Hollywood tradition, most Players assume that showing a brave face is an easy feat and try to roleplay that, hoping to fool a generous GM into letting them get away with it. You know better than that. If they really want to ignore (at least partially) a wound penalty, you should ask them (no more than once per combat scene) to make a Willpower test versus 5 (like all rolls, this one is affected by the action penalty for the wounds; -1 per Light Wound, -2 per Deep Wound). You can reduce the PC's action penalty by a number of points equal to the Margin of Success. Note that this "counter-penalty" only affects the action penalty, not Health tests or any other test the GM deems appropriate. If the Player fails his test, he should make an immediate System Shock test, adding the Margin of Failure to the other penalties to his roll. The Players should be encouraged to spend Emergency Dice to improve their odds of success if they really want to look tough. We recommend that this rule only be used in Cinematic games, although Gamemasters may want allow a Player Character to do it during a scene that is particularly heroic where he is risking his life. At the end of the fight, the GM should also have the Player roll a standard System Shock test to see if the character remains conscious.

You may need to refer to some rules in the rulebook in order to quickly resolve these rolls. System Shocks are explained on p. 17 of the first edition rulebook and on p. 56 of the second edition rulebook. Health tests are explained on p. 49 (1st edition) and 99 (2nd edition) of the rulebook.

☐ Typical Wound Effects

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No Damage | Minor cuts Bruises Nausea |
| Flesh Wound | Deep cuts Bleeding bruises Cracked ribs Sprained articulation |
| Deep Wound | Fractures Internal bleeding Puncture lungs Torn ligaments Cut muscles |



The Opponents - 3.3.6

Gamemasters often under-play the opposition to the characters. Enemies are real people who want to accomplish their mission and live through it. Like the Player Characters, they use their intellectual resources to their limits and take advantage of every break offered to them (unless they're not particularly bright). They don't particularly relish the thought of physical harm and take appropriate action to prevent it. They will use body armor, cover, ambush, sneaky tactics, grenades — anything that will keep them alive while eliminating the threat. Whatever the Players do, the bad guys can do also. The Gamemaster should not give his NPCs any bonuses for creative combat maneuvers, however. That's something that should only be given to Player Characters. Overall, by playing smart villains and enemies, the Gamemaster can avoid the escalation syndrome that can lead to outrageous opposition. ("What? Another squad of Legendary soldiers?!") Keep your enemies smart and weak.



3.3.7 - Tools of the Trade



Many Players like to collect weaponry. They also like to carry it around. Beyond the social problems it causes, it may be inefficient. Often, a simple pistol will do the trick where an assault rifle would be too conspicuous or just plain dangerous — swinging a long-barreled weapon in the confined space of a landship's corridor is asking for trouble.

Visible weapons and armor mean trouble. Most people prefer to lead peaceful lives and will do their best to avoid unpleasant situations. Individuals who are armed to the teeth appear as scary and dangerous. Ordinary John and Jane Doe — who are not known for their bravery (average Willpower or lower) — tend to steer clear of those people. If engaged in conversation, they will answer briefly and will take the earliest opportunity to leave the area. At best, they will remain polite and courteous, and only provide the Players with specific answers to their questions, unless the latter have enough Influence and Psyche to counteract the very negative effects of the hardware they carry around.

Some other people tend to be very antagonistic when faced with armed individuals. Young punks or other anti-social persons may react with aggressiveness and try to antagonize the Players, taunting them and daring them to show they “have the guts” it takes to use their weapons against someone their own size. It is often considered a rite of passage among small gang members to show off how tough they are by harassing someone bearing weapons.

Most establishments forbid (or at least severely frown upon) openly displayed weapons. Again, this comes back to trouble. The owners will ask the individual to leave his weapons with the doorman for safekeeping. On that particular topic, several Gamemasters take advantage of the Players' collaboration by having the weapons permanently disappear. This is a grave mistake. Players whose weapons were stolen this way once will never again part with their armament. GMs should do this sparingly, and not the first few times around. PCs who cause trouble in the establishment will be thrown out and their weapons will be returned to them through the police (who will no doubt ask questions about the origins and the legality of the weapons, and why there was a disturbance in the establishment).

Lastly, people who are obviously geared up for combat are the first ones marked for death in a dangerous situation. From the opposition's perspective, you start by killing (or disabling) anyone who is strong enough to oppose you, then you deal with the small fry. Simply put, Players who walk around with visible combat equipment are just asking for it.

3.3.8 - Basic Tactics

There exist more combat tactics than can be covered in this booklet. If you really want to put your Players through hell, just try to find information about the basic techniques used by real-world soldiers. (Alternatively, you could also do a net search on the internet to find the Evil Overlord's List, which describes what you need to do to have a good, invulnerable villain.) Note that the following tactics should not be used to eliminate characters wantonly, but basic techniques which military types should know. They can be used by PCs as well as Gamemasters, so you may also want to show them to your Players to give them a fighting chance.

Using these hints and tactics, you will quickly realize that you don't need powerful characters to provide strong opposition to the Player Characters, and in fact that you can challenge them with even the weakest of adversaries. Be cautious, however, not to make them feel inadequate or incompetent. Your Players' egos could be hurt if you repeatedly defeat them using weaklings. Since they are the heroes of the story, you should be lenient and make sure that once you know how to defeat them, you don't get carried away and defeat them ALL the time. Be generous and let them have some fun. It's their story after all. Some Gamemasters often root and cheer for their villains, which is all right if they want to give their Players a scare, but ultimately, they shouldn't be sincere. The game isn't a competition between the GM and the Players, but an exercise in collaborative storytelling.

◆ Shoot First

That's probably the main rule you have to learn. If you get rid of the enemy before he can even try to hurt you, your chances of surviving the encounter are excellent. Don't allow the enemy the opportunity to fight back. Use snipers if you can — you can see them, they can't see you. The idea is to strike first, strike hard, and show no mercy.

◆ Get Cover

Any cover. Fast. A ditch, a tree, even a street curb will do it if nothing else is available. By using cover, you greatly reduce your odds of taking damage, or reduce that damage if you get hit. Never walk on the road if you can walk in the forest. It may take longer, but you have more time than health. Usually.

**Gather Intelligence** ◆

Ask around about potential enemies. Get the lowdown on who they are, how they operate, what kind of equipment they use, who employs them and on their greatest weaknesses. Knowing your enemy is essential. If you know what tricks they will pull on you, you can prepare against them and turn the tables. If you don't, you can bet you'll be at a disadvantage (especially if they did their homework and studied your profile). Proper intelligence is vital to success in combat. It's *improper* intelligence that is a problem.

Avoid Trouble ◆

The best way to handle a potentially explosive situation is not to pull the trigger. Try talking your way out of it. Better yet: try NOT to be there when the proverbial spit hits the fan. If you're not there to be shot at, you can't get hurt. If at all possible, try to steer clear of potentially dangerous areas. Gamemasters should give Players fair warning about what could be considered dangerous behavior, but if they persist, then they're fair game. For Non-Player characters, the GM is the final judge of whether his NPCs are reckless or not.

When In Doubt, Grenade It Out ◆

With a good toss, a grenade can get within some of the most heavily armed positions. It can rid you of multiple opponents at once, and is generally unconcerned by body armor. Tear gas grenades are also great to incapacitate under-equipped enemies. Unless they have appropriate gas masks, they choke, cry and become easy pickings. Be careful, however. Clever people will use mesh screens to keep grenades out and possibly send them back your way! Smoke grenades are also great. They provide some cover for you and can psych out your adversaries. Just remember that smoke goes both ways. They can't see you, but you can't see them.

If It's Obvious, It's Probably a Trap ◆

If there's something in the middle of the road that looks suspicious, or if you're entering a canyon that seems to be the perfect site for an ambush, then you're probably headed for trouble. And even if you're not, a healthy dose of paranoia is going to get you through many adventures. A word of caution, however: paranoia in small doses is fine, but if you spend 90% of the game session taking outrageous precautions before doing anything, you're wasting everyone's time. Stick to what makes a modicum of sense. As for NPCs, they should be reasonably prudent, but nothing is more boring than an NPC who has prepared everything and is always ready for action. Be sensible.

Work in Teams ◆

Characters should cover each other as they advance, leapfrogging toward their objective and ducking behind cover. They should first concentrate their firepower on the highest visible threat, then move to the next biggest threat, and so on. Always find the enemy's weak point if there is one. Make sure to coordinate fire to benefit from multiple attacker bonuses. Attacking from several angles and distracting the enemy with mock fire is a great way to instill a sense of panic among the opponents.

Use Passive Defense Systems ◆

Mine fields, wires, and traps can all help secure areas and prevent the enemy from surprising you when you least expect it. For instance, that nice sniping position on the cliff overlooking your camp is just begging to be mined. Prudent travelers and soldiers do more than just take turns standing watch during the night, they make sure that they're well protected where they're vulnerable and that anyone attempting to sneak up on them is detected and (preferably) eliminated. You shouldn't just rely on these devices, however, because clever scouts can learn to bypass them and surprise you. Also, remember where these systems are so you don't trip them.

Get Terrain Advantage ◆

Make sure you choose where the battle is going to take place. If you can, lure the enemy into a narrow location where his maneuverability is reduced, then hit him with all you've got. Being on your own turf is certainly a great asset in any combat situation. You can set traps, lead the enemy into your own troops, corner your opponents in a dead end, etc. Even if you don't get to choose the battlefield, still try to make the best of what you've got. Terrain advantage is extremely effective and one of the lowest-cost solutions to handle more powerful opposition. Incidentally, avoid doorways and obvious access points. They are often watched and booby-trapped.

If It Looks Bad, Leave ◆

If it doesn't look like you're going to win, get out of there *pronto*. As the saying goes, "He who runs away, lives to fight another day." If for some reason the opposition is greater than anticipated, it's best to leave and return with reinforcements, or to use another approach altogether (especially since the enemy is now aware of your attempt and will prepare accordingly). Only a fool stubbornly prolongs a battle which he will inevitably lose. (Incidentally, there are a lot of foolish gamers out there who think that if they fight long and hard enough, they'll win; they're dead fools, too.) Use your brains: get out alive, then return with more firepower or better tactics.



3.4 - CREATING LIVELY PEOPLE AND PLACES

The art of description is very important in roleplaying games. The Gamemaster who merely describes a few vague characteristics about the environment, and mumbles a few hints about what is where and who is doing what, is hardly doing his job right. We have five senses. Each one of them should be addressed, just like in real life. Don't just give colors and images, describe the sounds, the smells and various textures of the environment where the PCs have set foot. More than that, give actions to background characters. Take any scene in a movie. The extras are moving about, chatting, arguing or trading. They're doing something. So should your extras. Also mention the weather, the architecture, the "mood" of the area. All this will help you create a strong atmosphere for your Players.

Roleplaying is, in many respects, very similar to method acting. Players find it easier to get into their character if the GM sets the right mood. Be evocative. Don't hesitate to change your tone of voice or speech patterns, or to create sound effects whenever appropriate. If you have the time, prepare character handouts: photographs, local maps, relevant illustrations from the books, etc. Also use mood music and lighting whenever possible. Nothing conveys the feel of a lonely night patrol like dimming the lights and putting on some eerie music. Oh the other hand, fast-paced aggressive music (heavy metal, industrial or grunge) makes for excellent background during combat.

◆ Slang & Street Talk

Because few GMs have artistic talent, they often rely on their voice to characterize their NPCs. It becomes important to know how to change your voice, your vocabulary and your topics based on which character you are impersonating. Pay attention to the origin of the character, what league he comes from, and what kind of accent he has. That should help you give the Players a hint about who they're dealing with. Vocabulary should help narrow down the possibilities: more educated people tend to show off their linguistic expertise by using long words, convoluted syntax, and literary expressions; less educated people just keep it straight and simple, and often make characteristic mistakes.

Sample Terranovan Vocabulary and Expressions □

| People | Derogatory/Familiar Name |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Republican (SR) Citizen | Snake, Southie, Repper, Repboy |
| Easterner (ESE) Citizen | Sunny, Eastling |
| Mekongite (MD) Citizen | Dinarhead, Two-Face |
| Humanist (HA) Citizen | Zombie, Plato |
| Norlight (NLC) Citizen | Northie, Zealot |
| Mercantile (UMF) Citizen | Grubber, Markface |
| Westerner (WFP) Citizen | Woofpee, Soldja, Clanhead |
| Badlanders | Savages, Xenos, Loners, Bads, Baddies |
| BRF Members | Barfboys, Barfers |
| GRELs | Vatfreak, Vatface |
| Earth Citizen | Terran, Earther |
| Professions | Derogatory/Familiar Name |
| Guide | Tracker, Pathman/woman |
| Politician | Lollipop, Snake, Weasel |
| Executive | Corp, Stiffneck, Nose-Up |
| Jack-of-all-trades | Joat, Jackboy/gal, Jacker |
| Lawyer | Weasel, Stick |
| Police Officer | Cop, Bull/Cow, Gun-Joe/Jane |
| Expressions | Definition |
| Smells like dawg dung | Very suspicious (rotten) situation |
| Cheap as speat; Made in Timmins | Something of very little value, cheaply made |
| Are you feeling happy? | Opening Line for Barnaby's Happy Hour, used ironically |
| Checking for rovers | Making sure a plan is sound or flawless |
| As bored as a GREL in a whorehouse | To have nothing to do at all with a situation |
| Stiff stuff | Rules that cannot be bent |
| Gear up, heavy down | Prepare for battle and kick enemy butt |
| Lonely as a Bethanite in Ashanti | really lonely |
| Mad dawgs and Norlights go out in the midday sun | Only fools go out at noon in the Badlands; being foolish |
| To pull a Harris | Get into a situation without thinking of the consequences |
| Badlander's lie | To lie in order to achieve peace and quiet |
| Stubborn as a barnaby | Intellectual rigidity |





Dramatic Settings ◆

When the GM is short on time and doesn't have time to properly prepare the descriptions for the areas which the Players will visit, it's always useful to have a few pre-generated descriptions handy, such as those below. Clever Gamemasters may want to keep them on small 5" x 8" cards with a mini-map for handy reference during the game. These texts describe stock locations and situations, of course, and should be adjusted to reflect the specifics of your campaign. They also provide a good example of descriptive techniques you can use for your own locations and of traditional "sets" for action sequences.

□□ Deep Jungle

You stand in the middle of a lush, oppressive jungle. The air is thick and humid, and you hear the buzzing of invisible insects and the shuffling of small lizards around you. You breathe heavily as you make your way (machete in hand) through the dense foliage. The soil is soft under your steps, cushioning your advance, the occasional branch cracking under your boots. It is difficult to see the sky through the green canopy above you. You could easily get lost, here.

□□ Corporate Office

The large office exudes power and affluence. Large bay windows give a vantage view of the city below. The executive desk, clean and tidy, is diagonally positioned near a corner, the room seemingly converging toward it. A small bar stands to its right and a computer station to the left. Diametrically opposed to the desk, a series of small couches and comfortable chairs surround a low round table, a section that is undoubtedly used to entertain a few important guests during private meetings.

□□ Scrapyard

Piles of junk emerge everywhere like a miniature mountain chain of trash. Used tires, defective appliances, broken toys, everything that is old and forsaken eventually find its way here. The stench is strong and unpleasant, this stew of garbage simmering under the hard rays of Helios. Further behind the hills of trash, you know several trashers scavenge the piles for salvageable items, recycling what little they can to survive. Forget about talking to them, though: they shun you the way you shun them.

□□ Abandoned Warehouse

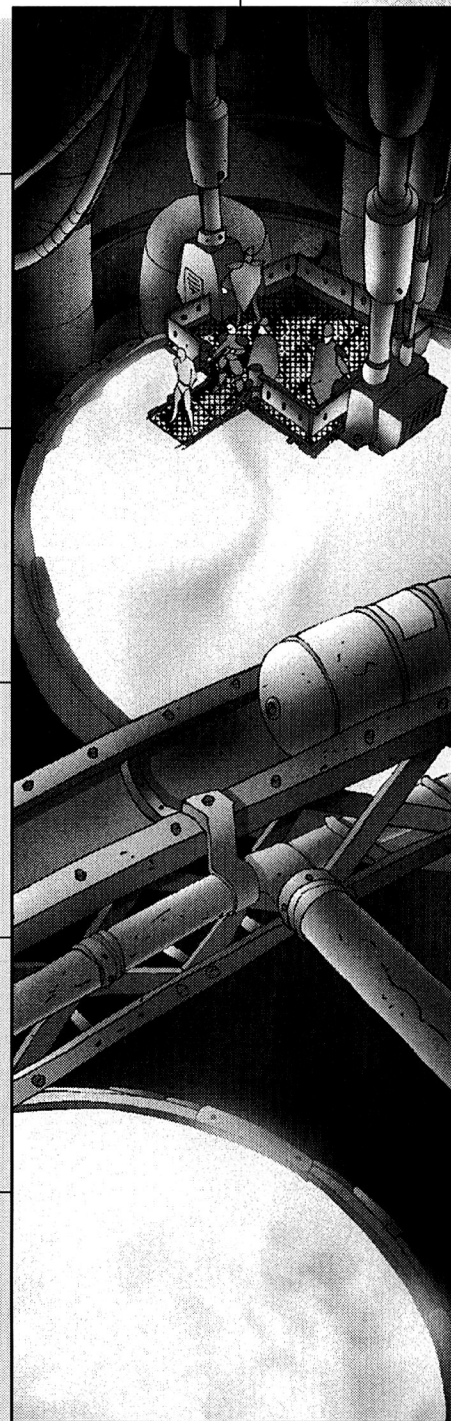
The smell of dust in the air convinces you this warehouse has not been used in cycles. Reinforced steel shelves are lined up in long, seemingly endless rows that converge toward the other extremity of the building. Countless empty crates and containers are stacked in various corners of the few open areas, abandoned there by long-gone workers. The ceiling is high and while the warehouse is dark, you can make out the metal struts that support the ceiling. There are countless hiding places, here — perfect for an ambush.

□□ Automated Factory

The overwhelming sound of machinery and conveyor belts forces you to shout to make yourself understood. You notice from a distance several workers with safety earmuffs, walking slowly or scribbling notes on some pad; they pay no attention to you. Narrow catwalks stretch above you zigzagging between pillars of machinery and large pipes. Metal spiral staircases lead up to a series of air-conditioned soundproofed offices on the second floor, where foremen with their sleeves rolled up monitor production.

□□ Crowded Marketplace

The open air bazaar is buzzing with activity, hundreds of shoppers strolling aimlessly between the sidewalk stands and open-front boutiques, the occasional enthusiastic merchant shouting slogans to attract clientele. A few street artists perform various feats to earn coins from the curious. From rudimentary carts pulled by barnabies to sturdy Badlands convertible store-trucks, the bazaar is a confusing mixture of old and new technologies. It has no clear boundaries, no straight lines and absolutely no structure.





Dark Alley ☐

The narrow street is barely lit by the lamplights at each end — the middle is dark and eerie, many shadows playing tricks with your eyes. You notice a bit of movement, then two shiny marbles pointed at you — a stray hopper's eyes. It scurries rapidly when it notices you, fading into more shadows. You stand there for a few moments, peering into darkness, your ears picking no more than the sound of dirty water trickling down rainpipes. The city in the background continues its murmur, indifferent to your situation.

Maglev Station ☐

Everything in a maglev station seems to have been designed to dwarf the humans who enter its halls, from the extremely high windowed ceilings to the beach-wide loading platforms and docks. The crowd moves in orderly lines, their luggage already on its way to the cargo, several security agents with white gloves answering questions and pointing to the right directions. The air vibrates with the hum of the powerful engines in the maglev. The shrill of a whistle pierces the air, announcing the last five minutes before departure.

Stormy Rooftop ☐

It is dusk. A rare thunderstorm causes pouring rain to obscure your vision, and the occasional clapping of thunder deafens you for a few seconds at a time. The rooftop is old and poorly maintained. The windows of the maintenance shed to your right are boarded up, the door sealed with a rusty lock. Near the edge, the upper half of a dead neon sign emerges, reading "GALL," the first part of Gallant Theater. You hear the sound of a hopper nearing your perch — just a patrol, or someone looking for you?

Construction Site ☐

The construction of the large plaza has only begun. It is no more than a huge pit with earth roads circling down to the bottom. The foundations for the buildings have been laid, but much still remains to be done. Several trucks have been parked near mobile homes, most likely administrative centers from which the construction is being monitored. Many containers and dumping areas provide cover to anyone setting up an ambush.

Amusement Park ☐

It is halfway through the evening and the sun has set. Hope and Faith shine above the park, mostly ignored by the children looking for new rides to try and by the parents trying to restrain them. There are hundreds of people walking about; despite the large walking areas, everything is crowded and it is difficult to move about. There are dozens of rides available, from the classic House of Mirrors and roller coaster to the newer Holo Nightmare and Dimension Adventures. If a crisis were to break here, there would be a riot.

Abandoned Homestead ☐

The desert sands keep blowing, slowly covering the abandoned installations. A hundred meters east of the homestead, the power station and its solar arrays is falling into disrepair. To the west, the waterroot fields remain unharvested, the wild desert slowly reclaiming it. The perimeter wall of the homestead proper has broken in several places, allowing sand dunes to enter and cover most of the inner courtyard. The buildings are still in good condition, but deteriorating fast, like the rest of the fading homestead.

Colonization Museum ☐

The Central Exposition Area is quiet, although there must be a hundred individuals walking about. Most visitors have a headset guide and don't really need to talk among themselves. To the right, large viewscreens feature various scenes from the colonization days. To the right, multiple artifacts reveal the primitive yet efficient beginnings of colonization on Terra Nova. At the center of the area, a trio of very large stoneheads dominates the room and reminds everyone that colonists were artists as well.



STANDARD PLOTS AND SUBPLOTS - 3.5

While Terra Nova is a rich world, populated by countless monsters and interesting individuals, that is not enough to make a good game. Gamemasters need a good plot. If characters and creatures represent the meat of a campaign, the plot represents the backbone. Without plot, you have a shapeless mass or, at best, a gross and deformed being. Plots and subplots are essential elements of a campaign, and GMs need to work on them if they want to keep their Players entertained.

Earlier, we mentioned subplots. They represent minor storylines that develop during the course of game play. Think of them as secondary attachments to the main story. Gamemasters should continuously introduce little leads and tidbits, regardless of whether Player Characters follow them or not. After all, the entire world does not revolve around whatever task the characters have set out to do. It has a life of its own. Often, subplots can later develop into the focus of a scenario. For instance, during one scenario, the characters might see a news report about the theft of a military arms shipment. Later on, they might stumble across some thugs carrying some unusually powerful weapons. A week later, the characters might be asked to neutralize a terrorist group which claims to have stolen a nuclear warhead. Not only is it good foreshadowing, it also gives Player Characters an opportunity to get involved before minor trouble becomes a big problem.

Among the classic subplots, stories revolving around love are certainly the most common. Romance is one of the strongest character motivations, and often reinforces a PC's determination towards his goal. It becomes particularly interesting when the character's loved one becomes involved with one of his enemies or vice versa (the classic daughter-of-the-villain-in-love-with-the-hero play). Remember that love can have tragic results, too.

Another classic subplot is that of the parent/sibling/master in need of assistance. Player Characters who have a broad network of friends and contacts will often call upon them for favors, but usually forget that favors should go both ways. Sometimes, it's a friend or a family member who comes to them with problems and requests. The character's sister is having a rough time with her love life and confides her problems to the PC; or the PC's brother was just dumped by his lady love, and since he doesn't buy her excuse, he wants the PC to try and find out if she left him for some other guy; or a mentor and long-time friend of the PC has disappeared (or was assassinated), and the PC needs to investigate what really happened; or a nephew or niece of the PC wants to follow in the PC's footsteps, but the latter doesn't think it's a good idea and wants to put a stop to it. The possibilities are numerous. Involving the Player Characters on a romantic or sentimental level almost invariably adds depth to their characters, and gives meaning to their life goals.

Coming Up With Ideas - 3.5.1

The first step in any story development is to come up with story ideas. This need not be done in any organized manner, but it is usually preferable to write them down as they come. Many clever Gamemasters carry little notebooks with them in which they can scribble their ideas at any time. Those concepts can later be organized and further developed into stories or characters.

Gamemasters should not be afraid to borrow ideas from other sources. For one thing, roleplaying is usually done to have fun and reliving a version of a favorite movie or book can be just that. Sometimes, a new twist on an old story can be just as enjoyable as an original tale. Shakespeare is recognized as the English language's greatest dramatic author, but he "stole" most of his plots from classical or medieval sources. GMs should not hesitate to do the same. One potentially great (and inexpensive) source of story bits is the local TV guide. All the movies are briefly summarized and can provide a story seed which a GM may find relevant to his or her campaign.

Another extremely realistic source of ideas, the morning newspaper provides a needy Gamemaster with seeds for countless adventures. It may be useful to link a contemporary personality with one of Terra Nova that has corresponding goals and values, and to see what he or she does. As soon as that personality makes a statement or takes action, the GM can determine an equivalent for the Terranovan personality. You should always remember, however, that Terra Nova is a bit more colorful than contemporary Earth, so you have to make your events equally vivid.

Naturally, you can also use several of the plot ideas provided in most Heavy Gear books. Some of them may not be usable for the Player Characters in your campaign, but you can use them as background elements or scenarios in which your NPCs participate — it gives them something to talk about to the Players when they meet.

Whatever method you choose, you should always remember that you have made implicit promises to your Players about the campaign from the day you started it. The campaign has a style and a purpose. It has a tone, an attitude, a "voice." Players expect you to stick to that style, and that expectation is justified. You shouldn't change it on a whim. It diminishes the strength and consistency of your campaign. You should also be mindful of the purpose of your campaign. Every game you add should make that purpose (sometimes called the "message" or the "goal") more obvious, more clearly defined. It should emphasize what direction the campaign is taking, where you're going with it. If you change those two premises from session to session, you will confuse your Players. If they come to the game expecting extra cheese pizza and you serve them green peppers and peanut butter pizza, you're going to have a very puzzled group of Players. In short, stay true to your campaign concept.

When all else fails, the classic "wilderness" adventures remain a solution. The PCs are just dropped in the middle of nowhere and have to make their way back home. Such a time-tested scenario could be the "Jail Break": the PCs have been captured and must make their way out. In doing so, however, they stumble upon something much bigger and must resolve that problem first if they are to survive.

APPENDIX

A



EVENT TRACKING SPREADSHEET

Event Name:

Date:

Game Session #:

EVENT SYNOPSIS:

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OPPONENTS

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BACKGROUND WORLD EVENTS

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CHARACTER SUBPLOTS

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UNBEKNOWNST TO THE PLAYERS . . .

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CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

Campaign Title:

REALITY FACTOR:

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|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gritty | Deadly, harsh world, with little room for heroes |
| Adventure | Action-packed, believable stories, characters and feats |
| Cinematic | Outrageous action with larger-than-life characters and stunts |

GAME STYLE:

| | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|
| Action | Emphasis on action, combat and chase scenes |
| Intrigue | Emphasis on politics, puzzles and deception |

BEST CHARACTER TYPES:

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CAMPAIGN THREAD:

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MAIN OPPOSITION:

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MAIN ALLIES:

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CHARACTER CHECKLIST

Character Name:

Chesspiece:

TYPE

| | | | |
|-----------------|------|------------|-------|
| (highlight one) | Lead | Supporting | Extra |
|-----------------|------|------------|-------|

NATURE

| | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------------|-------|
| (highlight one) | Ally | Independent | Enemy |
|-----------------|------|-------------|-------|

SELF

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FACADE

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MOTIVATION

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SCHTICK

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QUIRKS

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RESOURCES

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APPENDIX



A

PLAYER CHARACTER PERSONALITY WORKSHEET

Name:

Nationality:

Occupation:

City-State:

Date of Birth:

Gender:

Height:

Weight:

Hair Color:

Eye Color:

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

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WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

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WHO ARE YOUR PARENTS?

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WHO ARE YOUR SIBLINGS (IF ANY)?

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WHAT IS YOUR SOCIAL STANDING?

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WHAT WAS THE MOST NOTABLE EVENT OR MOMENT OF YOUR CHILDHOOD? WHY?

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WHAT WAS THE MOST NOTABLE EVENT OR MOMENT OF YOUR ADOLESCENCE? WHY?

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WHAT DID YOU DO UPON BECOMING AN ADULT?

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WHY DO YOU DO YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION?

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WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE DOING IN 5 CYCLES?

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LIFE GOALS

FEARS/PHOBIAS

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APPENDIX

A**TURN ONS**

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TURN OFFS

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GREATEST QUALITIES

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GREATEST FLAWS

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HOBBIES

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PERSONAL SECRETS

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BEST FRIEND(S)

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WORST ENEMY(IES)

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INTELLECT (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 1)

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RELIGION (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 2)

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WEALTH (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 3)

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MORALITY (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 4)

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ROMANCE (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 5)

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BRAVERY (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 6)

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TEMPERAMENT (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 7)

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FACADE (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 8)

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SELF (CHOOSE OR ROLL FROM TABLE 9)

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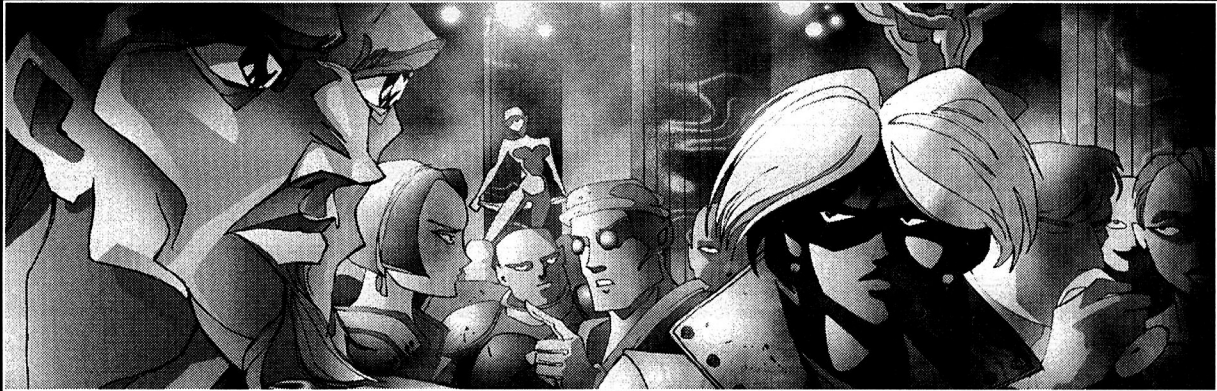


TABLE 1: INTELLECT

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Gullible | Skeptical | Dreaming |
| 2 | Methodical | Inquisitive | Logical |
| 3 | Analytical | Average | Brilliant |
| 4 | Scheming | Dense | Studious |
| 5 | Curious | Precise | Dull |
| 6 | Imaginative | Resourceful | Active |

TABLE 2: RELIGION

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 | Saintly | Rebellious | Inquisitive |
| 2 | Contemptuous | Cynical | Pious |
| 3 | Respectful | Profane | Humble |
| 4 | Impious | Obedient | Blasphemous |
| 5 | Fanatical | Irreverent | Practical |
| 6 | Indifferent | Virtuous | Atheist |

TABLE 3: WEALTH

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Generous | Spendthrift | Covetous |
| 2 | Disordered | Possessive | Wastrel |
| 3 | Careless | Rapacious | Selfish |
| 4 | Greedy | Sensible | Analytical |
| 5 | Avaricious | Businesslike | Responsible |
| 6 | Miserly | Lucky | Thrift |

TABLE 4: MORALITY

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | Inspired | Responsible | Deceitful |
| 2 | Lustful | Liar | Scrupulous |
| 3 | Indecisive | Sly | Virtuous |
| 4 | Impressionable | Unforgiving | Immoral |
| 5 | Adventurous | Honorable | Naive |
| 6 | Truthful | Industrious | Reprehensible |

TABLE 5: ROMANCE

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Mysterious | Charming | Blustering |
| 2 | Delusional | Amorous | Romantic |
| 3 | Witty | Flirtatious | Imposing |
| 4 | Ingratiating | Seductive | Overbearing |
| 5 | Prudent | Glamorous | Naive |
| 6 | Gullible | Passionate | Reckless |

TABLE 6: BRAVERY

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Joker | Brave | Bold |
| 2 | Fearless | Competitive | Impudent |
| 3 | Daredevil | Foolhardy | Merciless |
| 4 | Cowardly | Timid | Deceptive |
| 5 | Prudent | Adventurous | Craven |
| 6 | Calculating | Rash | Reckless |

TABLE 7: TEMPERAMENT

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Depressed | Jolly | Stubborn |
| 2 | Resigned | Unforgiving | Headstrong |
| 3 | Taciturn | Optimistic | Sober |
| 4 | Vain | Suspicious | Solitary |
| 5 | Arrogant | Humble | Bitter |
| 6 | Easygoing | Selfish | Pessimistic |

TABLE 8: FACADE

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Opinionated | Gentle | Helpful |
| 2 | Loyal | Cheerful | Insensitive |
| 3 | Playful | Shy | Aloof |
| 4 | Compassionate | Mischievous | Morose |
| 5 | Helpful | Courteous | Silent |
| 6 | Rude | Blunt | Trusting |

TABLE 9: SELF

| Roll 1d6 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 |
|----------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | Innocent | Hedonist | Diplomatic |
| 2 | Proud | Naive | Bigoted |
| 3 | Uncertain | Resourceful | Compassionate |
| 4 | Vengeful | Exacting | Pessimistic |
| 5 | Optimistic | Authoritative | Indulgent |
| 6 | Unscrupulous | Haghty | Altruistic |

HEAVY GEAR



A

This is a full-page image of a blank sheet of graph paper. The paper is white and features a uniform grid of small, light gray squares. The grid covers the entire area of the page, from edge to edge, providing a template for drawing or writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

| |
|---------------------|
| NAME: |
| PROFESSION: |
| RANK: |
| NATIONALITY: |
| UNIT: |

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| AGI | APP | BLD | CRE | FIT |
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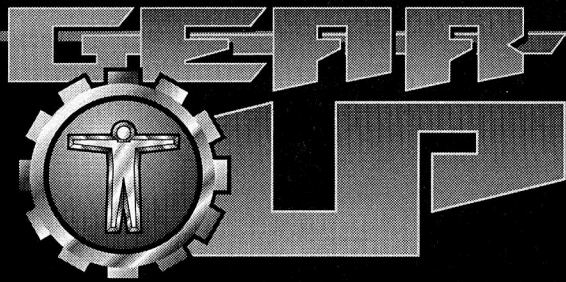
| STR | HEA | STA | UD | AD |
|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| | | | | |

| INJURY | SCORE | ARMOR | PENALTY | # |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------|---|
| FLESH WOUND | | | -1 | |
| DEEP WOUND | | | -2 | |
| INSTANT DEATH | | | DEAD | |

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

| Age Group | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| 18-24 | 28% |
| 25-34 | 22% |
| 35-44 | 18% |
| 45-54 | 15% |
| 55-64 | 12% |
| 65-74 | 8% |
| 75-84 | 5% |
| 85+ | 2% |

YOU'VE TALKED THE TALK, NOW WALK THE WALK



GEAR UP, THE FAN CLUB FOR DIE-HARD FANS ONLY

You told us you really like Heavy Gear, that you cannot wait for the products to come out every month. You dream of Spitting Cobras fighting against Ferrets, of Kodiaks ripping apart Jägers. You can tell us everything about Miranda Petite, Yang Jowinz and Thor Hutchison. Yet, every once in a while, someone slips a bit of info in a HG discussion about something you don't know anything about. Where the heck do you get that info? Simple: join Gear Up and get all the inside dirt.

Gear Up contains information on upcoming products, exclusive scenarios, in-depth information on locations, contests and exclusive merchandise. That's not all. When you join Gear Up, you become a recruit of one of two regiments that are part of the Heavy Gear storyline. Your character actually becomes part of the world of Heavy Gear and may even be featured in some of our products. As you play other Gear Up members (either face to face or through the internet), your ranking will increase. Be the top Gear jockey and earn special prizes.

On first joining Gear Up, you'll receive a sixteen-page booklet which contains all the forms and information about the club. During the year, you will receive four more sixteen-page newsletters.

There are several options for joining Gear Up:

- The Regular Membership includes a membership pin as well as the regular mailing, sent to you four times a year. [Canada \$29.95 CAN. GST incl. / United States \$24.95 US. / Intl. \$29.95 US.]
- The Electronic Membership includes the regular mailing, but in PDF format. The newsletter is emailed to you four times a year. [Canada \$11.95 CAN. GST incl. / United States \$9.95 US. / Intl. \$9.95 US.]
- The Squadron Membership includes five memberships mailed to one address. This is a package deal of five subscriptions for the price of four. [Canada \$119.95 CAN. GST incl. / United States \$99.95 US. / Intl. \$119.95 US.]
- See our web page for more details (www.dp9.com).

HEAVY GEAR CHARACTER INFORMATION

Allegiance: (circle only one)

Terranovan League (no Badlanders allowed): _____

Terranovan City-State (no Badlands city): _____

Heavy Gear of Choice: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Do you grant Dream Pod 9 the right to use your character in the HEAVY GEAR world?

Signature: _____

(Your signature grants Dream Pod 9 the right to use your character in its products)



or



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Canada, H2H 2S6

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DREAM POD 9

LEAGUE LOGOS



CONFEDERATED
NORTHERN
CITY-STATES



NORTHERN
LIGHTS
CONFEDERACY



UNITED
MERCANTILE
FEDERATION



WESTERN
FRONTIER
PROTECTORATE



ALLIED
SOUTHERN
TERRITORIES



SOUTHERN
REPUBLIC



MEKONG
DOMINION



EASTERN SUN
EMIRATE



HUMANIST
ALLIANCE



BADLANDS



PEACE RIVER

CITY-STATES, MAGLEV LINES AND BORDERS



CNCS CITY-STATE



CNCS CAPITAL



AST CITY-STATE



AST CAPITAL



NUCOAL CITY-STATE



INDEPENDENT CITY-STATE



ALPHA MAGLEV



BETA MAGLEV



GAMMA MAGLEV



NORTHERN BORDERS



SOUTHERN BORDERS



STANDARD WATER COLOR

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TERRA NOVA WORLD MAP

THE COMBAT ROUND

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| [Step Zero: | Set-up Phase] |
| Step One: | Declaration Phase |
| Step Two: | Initiative Phase |
| Step Three: | Activation Phase |
| Step Four: | Miscellaneous Events Phase |

Repeat Steps One to Four until each Combat Group has had the opportunity to move and act. A Combat Group may only move and act once per round. If one Player no longer has any Combat Groups left to use, he skips his phases until the end of the round.

Command Points (page 129) have four possible functions. CPs can be used as a regular action, with no penalty. CPs may buy a +2 modifier to a single Defense roll. CPs may activate a unit out of sequence. CPs can allow a unit to turn up to 180 degrees, even if it has no movement left. Command Points always have priority over initiative.

ACTIONS EXAMPLE

Among possible combat actions:

- fire one weapon
- fire one set of linked weapons
- embark/disembark one (1) crewman
- perform a physical attack (ramming, kicking, punching, etc...)
- activate an auxiliary system (ECM, active sensors, communication, etc...)

TERRAIN COSTS

| Terrain Type | Walker MP | Ground MP | Hover MP | Obscurement |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Clear | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| Rough | 1 | 2 | 1 | - |
| Sand | 2 | 2 | 1 | - |
| Woodland | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Jungle | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Swamp | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Water | 2* | 3* | 1 | 2** |
| Deep Water | 2* | 3* | 1 | 4** |
| Urban† | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Dense Urban† | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| +1 elevation | add 2 | add 2 | add 4 | - |
| -1 elevation | add 1 | - | - | - |

* Only amphibious walkers and ground vehicles may enter Water hexes. Other walkers and ground vehicles will flood and automatically be put out of action if they enter a Water hex. Amphibious vehicles cannot enter or exit water while moving at top speed.

** Water only produces Obscurement if the defender is in a Water hex and is not a hovercraft. Only affects normal sensors; vehicles with the Aquatic Sensors Perk do not suffer any obscurement effects from Water or Deep Water terrain.

†Damage Point Capacity: 80 per HEX for Urban, 100 for Dense Urban.

DETECTION THRESHOLD MODIFIERS

Applied to attacker's Electronic Warfare skill roll

- **Sensor Bonus** variable, by default 0

Applied to defender's Concealment Threshold

- **Stealth Bonus** variable, by default 0

- **Movement Penalty** -1 per hex moved by target

- **Combat Penalty** -1 per weapon fired by target

ATTACK ROLL

Roll **Gunnery** skill/attribute plus these modifiers:

- **Fire Control**

The Fire Control rating of the vehicle

- **Weapon Accuracy**

The Accuracy rating of the weapon

- **Range**

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------|----|
| Point Blank | +1 | Long | -2 |
| Short | +0 | Extreme | -3 |
| Medium | -1 | | |

- **Attacker's Movement**

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| Stationary | +2 | Combat Speed | +0 |
| Half Combat Speed or less | +1 | Top Speed | -3 |

- **Minus the Obscurement Total**

DEFENSE ROLL

Roll **Piloting** skill plus these modifiers:

- **Maneuver**

The Maneuver rating of the vehicle

- **Defender's Movement**

| Hexes Moved | Defense Mdf. | Hexes Moved | Defense Mdf. |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 0 | -3 | 7-9 | +1 |
| 1-2 | -2 | 10-19 | +2 |
| 3-4 | -1 | 20-99 | +3 |
| 5-6 | +0 | 100-999 | +4 |

- **Arc of Attack**

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|
| Attack is from Front | -0 | Attack is from Rear | -2 |
| Attack is from Rear Flank | -1 | | |

DAMAGE VS ARMOR

| Damage to armor | Outcome | What happens |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Dama. < Base Arm. | No Effect | Nothing; armor is merely scratched |
| Dam. = or > Base Arm. | Light Dam. | -1 Armor; Roll on Syst. Damage Table |
| Dam. = or > Base Arm. x 2 | Heavy Dam. | -2 Armor; Roll on Syst. Damage Table |
| Dam. = or > Base Arm. x 3 | Overkill | Vehicle Destroyed |

FIRE ARCS

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| F | forward (180 degrees) |
| FF | fixed forward (120 degrees, one hex ahead) |
| Rt | right (180 degrees) |
| L | left (180 degrees) |
| Rr | rear (180 degrees) |
| T | turreted (360 degrees) |

INFANTRY ROF

| Min. Number of Troopers w/Weapon | ROF bonus |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | +1 |
| 4 | +2 |
| 8 | +3 |

SYSTEMS DAMAGE

| Damaged System | LIGHT DAM. | Heavy DAM. |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 Fire Control | SubTable A | Roll on SubTable A and add +1 |
| 2 Structure | SubTable B | Roll on SubTable B and add +1 |
| 3 Crew | Crew stunned* | 10% casualties, min 1. |
| 4 Movement | -1 MP | 1/2 remaining MP (round down) & -2 maneuver |
| 5 Auxilliary Syst. | -1 to 1d6 Aux. Systems | 1d6 Auxilliary systems destroyed |
| 6 Roll Twice on this table | | |
| | | *-1 action for 1 round |

SUBTABLE A: FIRE CONTROL DAMAGE

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | -1 to a single Weapon |
| 2 | -2 to a single Weapon |
| 3 | -1 to all Weapons |
| 4 | Single Weapon destroyed |
| 5 | Fire Control system destroyed (-5 to attacks) |
| 6 | Roll Twice on this table |
| 7 | Ammunition/Fuel Hit — roll 1 die: |
| 1-3 | Ammo Storage and Fuel Tank Ruptured (vehicle cannot more or fire weapons) |
| 4-6 | Chain Reaction! Ammo and Fuel Explodes! (Vehicle Destroyed and Crew Killed) |

SUBTABLE B: STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

| | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | -1 MP |
| 2 | 1/2 remaining MP (round down) |
| 3 | -1 to Maneuver |
| 4 | -2 to Maneuver |
| 5 | Power transfer failure; No movement |
| 6 | Catastrophic crew compartment failure, 75% casualties, minimum 1 |
| 7 | Complete structural failure; vehicle is destroyed, but crew survives |

TACTICAL SYSTEM FUMBLE EFFECTS

| Situation | Fumble Effect |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Initiative | lose automatically; if both fumble, reroll |
| Attack | miss automatically |
| Defense | hit automatically unless attack also fumbles; for damage purposes treat roll as 0 |
| Active Sensors | fail to achieve LOS automatically |
| High Speed 180° turn | crash; take Light (1-4) or Heavy (5-6) damage |

RAMMINGS

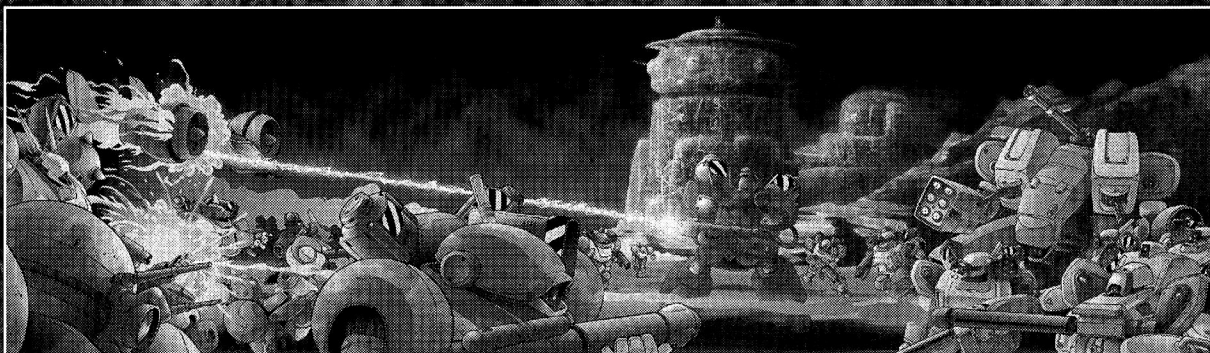
| Ramming Direction | Impact Speed |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Head On | Attacker Speed + Defender Speed |
| Side | (Attacker Speed + Defender Speed)/2 (round up) |
| Rear | Attacker Speed - Defender Speed |

IMPACT SPEED MODIFIERS

| Impact Speed | Damage Modifier |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1-2 | -2 |
| 3-4 | -1 |
| 5-6 | +0 |
| 7-9 | +1 |
| 10-19 | +2 |
| 20-99 | +3 |
| 100-999 | +4 |

NPCS IN A NUT SHELL

| Generic NPC | +1 Attr. | -1 Attr | Lvl 3 Skill | Lvl 2 Skill | Lvl 1 Skill |
|----------------|----------|---------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Badlands Rover | BLD | APP | n/a | Drive | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | CRE | | Hand-to-Hand | Dodge |
| | PER | KNO | | Small Arms | Gambling |
| | WIL | | | | Intimidate |
| Bounty Hunter | BLD | n/a | Notice | Hand-to-Hand | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | | Investigation | Dodge |
| | INF | | | Small Arms | Intimidate |
| | | | | | Law |
| Executive | APP | n/a | Business | Bureaucracy | Computer |
| | CRE | | | Etiquette | Leadership |
| | INF | | | Leadership | Notice |
| | KNO | | | | Psychology |
| Gear Pilot | AGI | n/a | n/a | Gunnery (HG) | Combat Sense |
| | PER | | | Communications | Elec. Warfare |
| | | | | HG Pilot | Notice |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Guide | CRE | n/a | Navigation | Drive | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | Survival | Notice | First Aid |
| | KNO | | | Phys. Sc.: Geography | Riding |
| | PER | | | | Small Arms |
| Marshal | AGI | n/a | Investigation | Combat Sense | Dodge |
| | BLD | | | Hand-to-Hand | Law |
| | FIT | | | Notice | Melee |
| | PER | | | | Streetwise |
| Medic | KNO | n/a | First Aid | Computer | Bureaucracy |
| | PSY | | | Life Sciences | Combat Sense |
| | | | | Medicine | Etiquette |
| | | | | | Notice |
| Mugger | BLD | APP | n/a | Notice | Combat Sense |
| | PER | CRE | | Intimidate | Dodge |
| | | KNO | | Streetwise | Hand-to-Hand |
| | | PSY | | | Melee |
| Police Officer | BLD | APP | n/a | Investigation | Combat Sense |
| | FIT | | | Law | Drive |
| | KNO | | | Notice | Dodge |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Politician | CRE | n/a | n/a | Bureaucracy | Business |
| | INF | | | Etiquette | Leadership |
| | | | | F. Language | Psychology |
| | | | | | Theatrics |
| Smuggler | AGI | APP | n/a | Camouflage | Dodge |
| | CRE | PSY | | Combat Sense | Drive |
| | PER | | | Stealth | Forgery |
| | | | | | Small Arms |
| Trader | INF | n/a | Business | Navigation | Drive |
| | KNO | | | Etiquette | Intimidate |
| | PER | | | Gambling | Notice |
| | | | | | Streetwise |



| TYPICAL DIFFICULTY THRESHOLDS | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Moronic |
| 2 | Routine |
| 3 | Easy |
| 4 | Moderate |
| 5 | Challenging |
| 6 | Difficult |
| 7 | Very Difficult |
| 8 | Extremely Difficult |
| 10 | Near Impossible |
| 12+ | Pray for Divine Intervention |

| ATTACKER'S MODIFIERS | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| • Range | |
| Point blank range (≤3m) | +1 |
| Short range | +0 |
| Medium range | -1 |
| Long range | |
| Extreme range | |
| -2 | |
| -3 | |
| • Attacker Movement | |
| Stationary | 0 |
| Walking | -1 |
| Jogging | -2 |
| Running | -3 |
| • Intoxication | |
| Mildly intoxicated | -1 |
| Moderately intoxicated | -2 |
| Heavily intoxicated | -3 |
| • Lighting | |
| Area is poorly lit | -1 |
| Area is very poorly lit | -2 |
| Area is barely light | -3 |
| Area is completely dark | -4 |
| • Aiming | |
| Per round of aiming (max bonus equal to skill level) | +1 |
| Aiming at specific location, except head | -2 |
| Aiming at head | -3 |
| • Weapon Accuracy Modifier | |
| Varies according to weapon used | |

| DEFENDER'S MODIFIERS | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Defender Movement | |
| Stationary | -1 |
| Walking | +0 |
| Jogging | +1 |
| Running or sprinting | +2 |
| Dodging (cumulative with movement) | +2 |
| • Cover | |
| Under light cover | +1 |
| Completely hidden by light cover | +2 |
| Under heavy cover | +3 |
| Completely hidden by heavy cover | Automatic success |
| • Intoxication | |
| Mildly intoxicated | -1 |
| Moderately intoxicated | -2 |
| Heavily intoxicated | -3 |



| MOVEMENT SPEEDS | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sprinting Speed* = | 25 + 5 x (Fitness + Athletics skill) |
| Running Speed = | 2/3 Sprinting Speed |
| Jogging Speed = | 1/2 Sprinting Speed |
| Walking Speed = | 1/3 Sprinting Speed |
| *All speeds are expressed in meters/round. | |

| FIRE INTENSITY | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Intensity | Source of Flame |
| 1 | candle, lighter, or match |
| 2 | gas light, oil lamp, kindling |
| 3 | torch, gas range |
| 5 | campfire, bunsen burner, flare, acetylene torch |
| 7 | bonfire, napalm, incendiary grenade |
| 10 | inferno, chemical fire |
| 20 | periphery of nuclear strike*, fuel-air grenade |
| 100 | near a nuclear strike*, reactor meltdown* |
| 1000 | ground zero of a nuclear strike* |
| * The following are only ratings of heat intensity from nuclear attacks and do not include the concussive and radiation effects of these terrifying weapons. | |

| SAMPLE FLAMMABILITY RATINGS | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Flammability | Object Type |
| 1 | propane, natural gas, hydrogen gas, methane |
| 3 | gasoline |
| 4 | paper, pitch, crude oil |
| 6 | normal clothing, rugs, upholstered furniture |
| 7 | dry firewood |
| 8 | hair, fur |
| 9 | fresh cut or treated wood, most plastics, leather |
| 12 | magnesium flares |
| 15 | fire retarding clothing |
| 50-200 | most "non-flammable" objects like steel and concrete |

| SAMPLE ELECTRICAL INTENSITIES | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Intensity | Electrical Source |
| 1 | licking a 9 volt battery (ouch!) |
| 3 | car battery |
| 5 | 110 volt domestic current (North America) |
| 7 | 220 volt domestic current (Europe) |
| 10 | local power lines, industrial lines |
| 20 | power mains |
| 25 | minor lightning strike |
| 50 | large lightning discharges |
| 100 | hydroelectric dam generator |

| SKILL IMPROVEMENT COSTS | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Level | Simple | Complex |
| 1 | 1* | 2 |
| 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | 9 | 18 |
| 4 | 16 | 32 |
| 5 | 25 | 50 |
| 6 | 36 | 72 |
| 7 | 49 | 98 |
| 8 | 64 | 128 |
| *All costs are listed in XPs. | | |

| MASTER SKILL LIST | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Skill | Attribute | Comp. | 1st Ed. | 2nd Ed. |
| Acrobatics | AGI | Simple | 50 | 57 |
| Aircraft Pilot | AGI | Complex | 50 | 57 |
| Animal Handling | CRE | Simple | - | 59 |
| Archery | AGI | Simple | 50 | 57 |
| Athletics | FIT | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Bureaucracy | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Business | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Camouflage | CRE | Simple | 51 | 60 |
| Combat Sense | PER | Simple | 54 | 65 |
| Communications | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Computer | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Cooking | CRE | Simple | 51 | 60 |
| Craft (specific) | CRE | Simple | - | 60 |
| Dance | AGI | Simple | 50 | 57 |
| Demolitions | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Disguise | CRE | Simple | - | 60 |
| Dodge | AGI | Simple | 50 | 57 |
| Drive | AGI | Simple | 51 | 57 |
| Earth Sciences | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Electronics | KNO | Complex | 53 | 63 |
| Electronic Warfare | CRE | Complex | 51 | 60 |
| Etiquette | INF | Simple | 52 | 62 |
| First Aid | KNO | Simple | 53 | 64 |
| Foreign Lang. (Spec.) | KNO | Simple | 53 | 64 |
| Forgery | CRE | Complex | 52 | 60 |
| Gambling | PER | Simple | 54 | 66 |
| Gunnery (specific) | PER | Complex | 54 | 66 |
| Hand-to-Hand | AGI | Simple | 51 | 58 |
| Heavy Gear Pilot | AGI | Complex | 51 | 58 |
| Heavy Weapons | AGI | Simple | - | 58 |
| Intimidate | BLD | Simple | 51 | 59 |
| Investigation | PER | Complex | 54 | 66 |
| Law | KNO | Complex | 53 | 64 |
| Leadership | INF | Simple | 52 | 62 |
| Life Sciences | KNO | Complex | 53 | 64 |
| Literature | CRE | Simple | 52 | 60 |
| Mechanics | KNO | Simple | 53 | 64 |
| Medicine | KNO | Complex | 53 | 64 |
| Melee | AGI | Simple | 51 | 58 |
| Music | CRE | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Naval Pilot | PER | Complex | 54 | 66 |
| Navigation (spec.) | KNO | Complex | 54 | 65 |
| Notice | PER | Simple | 54 | 66 |
| Physical Sciences | KNO | Complex | 54 | 65 |
| Psychology | KNO | Complex | 54 | 65 |
| Slight-of-Hand | AGI | Simple | 51 | 58 |
| Small Arms | AGI | Simple | 51 | 58 |
| Social Sciences | KNO | Complex | 54 | 65 |
| Space Pilot | CRE | Complex | 52 | 61 |
| Stealth | AGI | Complex | 51 | 58 |
| Streetwise | INF | Simple | 52 | 62 |
| Strider Pilot | AGI | Complex | 51 | 59 |
| Survival | CRE | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Swimming | FIT | Simple | 52 | 62 |
| Tactics | CRE | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Teaching | CRE | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Theatrics | INF | Simple | 53 | 62 |
| Throwing | AGI | Simple | 51 | 59 |
| Tinker | CRE | Complex | 52 | 61 |
| Visual Art | CRE | Simple | 52 | 61 |
| Zero-G | AGI | Complex | 51 | 59 |

HEAVY GEAR GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE

The seemingly deserted hangar suddenly came to life, but Joe Gear was ready. From his right, where Rover Jaxon had disappeared, half a dozen black-clad SAID agents sprang into action, leaping from crate to crate, guns blazing for a second before they ducked behind steel containers. Bullets ricocheted off heavy pipes and bounced off Joe's armor while he lifted his heavy assault rifles — one in each hand — towards the killers. No need for cover, he was the hero, the man of the hour, the epitome of virility! He pulled the triggers, gritting his teeth and frowning angrily at those annoying swats. His rifles vomited streams of hot lead through flaming nozzles. A bead of sweat trickled around his brow, then down his chiseled chin. This was good, very good! His targets were being mowed down like hapless hoppers, clutching dramatically at their wounds or somersaulting backwards before dying on the floor. Joe Gear let out an angry bellow as the last of the Southern agents died a gruesome death. He lifted his guns up, striking a heroic pose. Some smoke gently spiraled up from the overheated barrels, the peaceful moment contrasting sharply with the previous scene. Joe knew his prey had had enough time to escape.

"You can run for now, Rover Jaxon!" Gear shouted. "I'll come back..."

"CUT! CUT!" Phil Bull cried over the megaphone. Suddenly, the filming crew froze and Joe Gear once more became Piotr Wellet, mild-mannered action movie actor. Bull strode angrily towards the actor, waving thick ream of paper — the Script.

"It's 'I'll be back', Piotr, not 'I'll come back!'"

Running a game is no picnic. This supplement contains vital information that will provide everything both novice and experienced Gamemasters need to run a dynamic, action-packed, highly entertaining Heavy Gear campaign. The Gamemaster's Guide also provides a full listing of Perks and Flaws for roleplaying characters, allowing you to add extra detail to your Heavy Gear characters.

- Full color map of Terra Nova
- Three-fold Gamemaster's Screen
- Easy-to-access reference tables
- How to handle novice or problem Players
- Character Perks and Flaws
- Random equipment-package tables

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