

PSYCHEDEMIA



Paul Stefko

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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Alan-Michael Havens	Christian	Amhtransidhe	Jack	Rasmussen	Marc Mundet	Nicola Urbinati	Richard	Stephen Rider
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Alexander R. Corbett	Christopher	eneko zaraux	Jacob Moffitt	John Rogers	Marshall Smith	Noel Warford	Rick	Timothy Carroll
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brian allred	David Dorward	Guisepppe	Cubertafon	Barranquero	Matthew Whiteacre	Paulo Rafael	Sanchit	
Brian Chase	David E Ferrell	D'Aristotile	Jeff Craig	Katie Ramsey	Micha Davis	Guariglia	Scrath Vakos	
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	Rosa	Thunestvedt	Jim Nicholson	Leif Erik Furmyr	Morgan Ellis	Philip Nicholls	Selene O'Rourke	
	Edward MacGregor	Harry Lewis	Jim Shei	LeSquide	Nick Bate	PK	Sharif Abed	

ADVENTURERS

Adam Gutschenttner	Carl-William	Derek Mayne	Ian Charlton	John Clayton	Link Hughes	Misdirected Mark	Robert Rees	Stephen Hood
Aidan Grey	Carlos Martin	Devon Apple	Ian Noble	John Fiala	Lisa Hartjes	Productions	Robert Rydlo	Stephen Morning
AJ	Charles Chapman	Dianne	Ian Stanley	John Hawkins	Lobo	Mitch Christov	Robert Zasso	Stephen Vaughn
AI Billings	Charles Kirk	Didier Bretin	Indi Latrani	John Hidebrand	Loren Norman	Nichell Smallman	Rocco Pier Luigi	Steve Ela
Alan Phillips	Chip Dunning	Dillard	Irene Strauss	John Lambert	Lowell Francis	Maomi McArthur	Rodrigo	Steve Gilman
Alex Norris	Chris &amp; Brigid Hirst	Dan Arnold	Isaac Carroll	John Petritis	Luca Agosto	Nathan Barnes	Roger Carbol	Steve Kuncic
Alexander	Chris Edwards	Doug Blakeelee	Ismael	John Portley	Lucas Bell	Nathan Reed	Roland	Steve Radabaugh
Alexander Permann	Chris Helman	Douglas	Ivan Begley	John Taber	Lucian Smith	Neal Dalton	Ron Blessing	Steven Code
Alexey Kerschchuk	Chris Kulus	Doyce Testerman	J. Brandon Massengill	John Tabin	Lukar	Nessalantha	Ron Müller	Steven D Warble
Alexis Lee	Chris Lock	Drew Shiel	Jack Gulick	John William McDonald	M. Kenny	Nicholas McIntyre	Roninkelt	Steven desJardins
Alistair	Duncan	Duncan	Jackson Hsieh	Johnathan Wright	M. Alan Thomas II	Nicholas Pilon	RobynKelt	Steven K. Watkins
Alan Bray	Chris Nolen	Dylan Sinnott	Jaime Robertson	Jon Rosebaugh	m.h.	Nicholas Sokeland	Roy LaValley	Steven Markley
Aloyed	Christian Lajoie	Earl Butler	Jake Linford	Jon Smejkal	Manfred	Nick Proud	Ryan Burpee	Steven Sims
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Andrew Grant	Christopher Smith Adair	Eric Mascariatu	James Boldock	Jonathan	Marcel Lotz	Olav Müller	Ryan Good	Teresa Oswald
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Aviv	Cyrano Jones	FelTK	Jason	Joseph Formoso	Markus Schoenlau	Paul Baldowski	Scott Greenleaf	Timo
B. Bredthauer	Dain	Florent Poulpy Cadio	Jason Bean	Josh Rensch	Marley Griffin	Paul Olson	Scott Krok	Timothy Seiger
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beket	Daniel Byrne	Frank Beaver	Jason Lund	Joshua Ramsey	Martin Terrier	Pete	Scott Theede	Torolf de Merriba
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Caleb Fighgers	Denis Ryan	Huston Todd	John Bucezek	Lester Ward		Robert Daines	Stephen Holder	
Carl McLaughlin								

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*writing & adventure
design by*

PAUL STEFKO

development by

**BRIAN ENGARD and
ROB DONOGHUE**

editing by

JOHN ADAMUS

art direction by

MARISSA KELLY

layout by

FRED HICKS

*interior & cover
artwork by*

MANUELA SORIANI



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www.evilhat.com • feedback@evilhat.com
@EvilHatOfficial on Twitter
facebook.com/EvilHatProductions

Psychedemia

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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in
this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, academics, alien
species, psychic individuals, or brilliant talented youngsters trying to
achieve interstellar peace, is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

CONTENTS

- Introduction 2**
- The Academy 3**
 - History.....3
 - Admission 4
 - Facilities.....5
 - Faculty6
 - Instruction.....8
 - Security.....8
- Companies..... 11**
 - Alpha Company.....12
 - Bravo & Charlie Companies13
 - Delta Company14
 - Choosing Delta’s SCom.....14
- Characters.....18**
 - Aspects18
 - Skills20
- Psychic Aptitudes.....22**
 - ESP22
 - Psychokinesis24
 - Telepathy.....25
 - Conditions.....26
- The Realm.....27**
 - Regions.....28
 - Formatting.....28
 - Entering and Exiting the Realm29
- The Residents.....30**
 - Weavers.....30
 - Spindles.....31
 - Choir32
 - Wandoon.....33
- Adventure34**
 - Suggested Issues35
 - Discovery36
 - Exploration.....41
 - Reckoning46
- Going Forward49**



INTRODUCTION

In the face of inscrutable and terrifying alien neighbors, teenagers with nascent psychic abilities are sent to a secret military Academy for training, in preparation for an inevitable interstellar war. In *Psychedemia*, players take the role of these teenagers, forced to choose between their instincts and their orders.

At the Academy, hidden in an asteroid in a distant system, the students discover something their instructors couldn't imagine. They tap into a realm of thought inhabited by the very aliens they are taught to hate. In this other world, they become part of a wider society where no other humans have joined.

The military built them to destroy. The Residents show them a way to peace. Can these young people build a bridge between these worlds? Or will their elders storm the Realm and bring their war with them?

Psychedemia presents a science-fiction setting and adventure for *Fate Core* that combines military school pressures with the exploration of mental powers in psychedelic dreamscapes. It raises the questions: What is the price of peace? Can we learn to understand what we fear, or are we doomed by our own prejudices?

THE ACADEMY



The Academy is an installation for the training of young individuals with innate psychic abilities to serve in the military fleet tasked with protecting humanity's interests in deep space. It is the most diverse and truly international effort in our planet's history, and everyone responsible considers the Academy program to be the most important endeavor humanity has ever undertaken.

History

Humanity's expansion into space is several generations old, but compared to our neighbors, we have barely stepped out the front door. We settled a number of worlds, first by sublight ships on decades-long journeys, then much more quickly following the invention of faster-than-light propulsion.

Soon after humans developed FTL drives, the starship *Procyon* encountered the first known alien species, who we called the Weavers. These beings were either unable or unwilling to communicate. Instead, they sought to cocoon the Earth ship in diamond filaments. *Procyon's* captain saw no choice but to fire missiles, disabling the Weavers and allowing her vessel to escape.

Following contact with the Weavers, humanity encountered two other species: the scavenger Spindles; and the enigmatic Choir. First contact with the former also ended in violence, while the latter launched a crippling cyberattack that forced the human ship to flee.

For the decades since, we've engaged all three races in repeated battles. While the Weavers avoid us whenever they detect us, their ships are far more powerful and numerous than ours. The Spindles seem intent on taking apart any technology they come across. There are even rumors of them abducting human crews for dissection. And whenever we encounter the Choir, they bombard us with senseless data and overload our systems. Standing orders are to close all communications channels and drive them off.

The threat of aggressive aliens limiting our expansion into space prompted the formation of a Unified Fleet combining the space forces of the major nations. The Fleet escorts merchant traffic through disputed areas, investigates reported alien sightings, and when necessary, engages in space battles to protect human interests.

It was only in the last generation that science discovered three psychic aptitudes and created tests to identify young people with latent ability. Data exists suggesting that the aliens possess psychic ability themselves. It is hoped that a force of human psychics, trained in the latest tactics and equipment, can prove sufficient in securing human space from our enemies. The Academy was formed as a training center for these young paragons.

OUR PALE BLUE DOT

The details of Earth's political and economic situation are left to you and your players. The Academy's location and security keep it locked tight, making the asteroid base the totality of human space as far as the characters are concerned. If a player wants to make Earth or another colony world important, they are free to do so through the aspects they choose for their character.

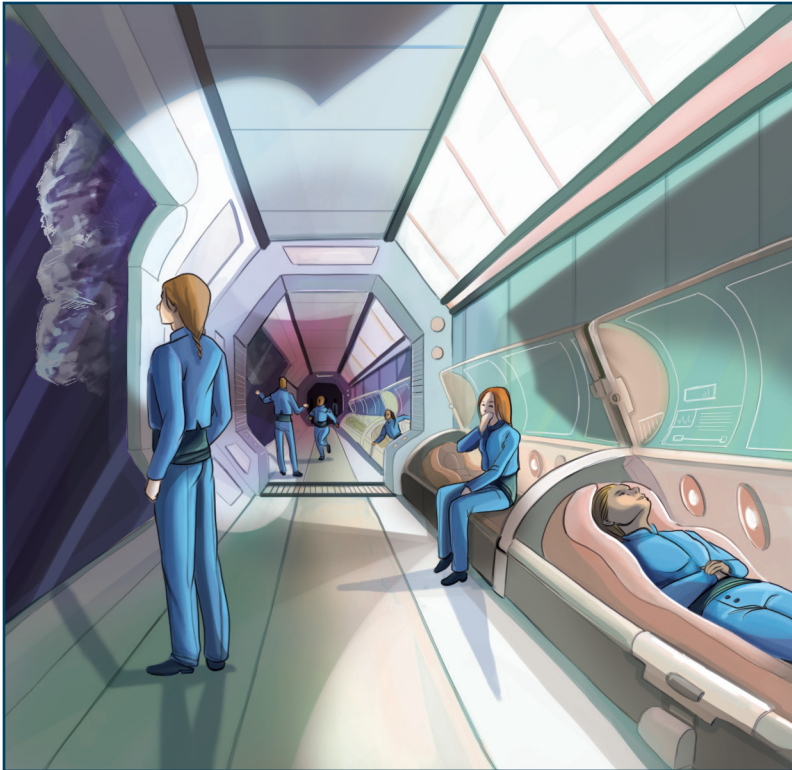
Admission

While the precise genetic basis of psychic ability is not known, there are markers that indicated a predisposition. Governments test children at birth for these markers, and report the results to the United Fleet. (Rumors of certain governments withholding this information are surely exaggerated.) During their early education, potential recruits are given aptitude tests, and any that show psychic ability are flagged for the Academy.

The admission process consists of a battery of physical tests, an academic exam, neurological scans, and a psychological evaluation. The Fleet is looking for fit, intelligent students with high psychic potential and above all, a stable mental condition. Recruits not meeting these criteria may still qualify for other Fleet positions, but most wash out entirely.

All new students receive a battery of chemical and retroviral treatments that increase endurance, sharpen focus, and protect the body against the dangers of space such as zero-gravity atrophy, radiation, and known terrestrial and extraterrestrial microorganisms.

The Academy's exact location is so highly classified that all navigational records are encrypted and anyone traveling to the Academy does so in suspended animation. The first glimpse students get is through a window as their ship glides toward a nondescript gray asteroid.



Facilities

The Academy was constructed to withstand any conceivable enemy attack by putting a kilometer of asteroid between most critical areas and the space outside. The tunnels and chambers were dug out by automated equipment, whose insect-like AI developed a structure that prompted the facility's nickname, the "Ant Farm."

At the core, a fusion reactor provides energy to the complex. In an emergency, large solar arrays can be unfolded from within hangars at either end of the asteroid. Cramped service conduits carry water, heat, and artificial gravity.

The tunnels and chambers were dug out to no set design, the dumb bots taking the path of least resistance around pockets of tougher materials. As such, there are no clear levels or decks in the facility. Corridors curve or slant at strange angles, and although the gravity field allows occupants to maintain a vertical orientation, the sensation can be disorienting. It takes students a few weeks to acclimate to the Academy environment, and some upperclassmen still get sick when forced to run the halls during PT.

The broadest organization scheme the Academy uses is the *cluster*: commonly repeated groups of similar chambers that are each utilized for a specific function. Each Company has a barracks cluster, for example, while another cluster serves as the base's medical bay. Clusters are outfitted with appropriate equipment, though everything is modular, allowing clusters to be reallocated as necessary. With no practical way to number them, clusters are referred to simply by function: "Alpha Company cluster," or "Mess cluster," for example.

The two largest clusters are the academic classrooms and the training bays. A dozen identical classrooms are arrayed along a cross-shaped pair of corridors. Each classroom has terminals for 20 students and an instructor's station with full holographic interface. The training bays are huge and high-ceilinged, and they are used for fitness training, marksmanship (with both projectile and particle weapons), tactical exercises, and vehicle simulators.

Shuttles dock in a hangar at one end of the asteroid, and passengers take a magnetic carriage to the security cluster. All arrivals are scanned for contraband and interrogated briefly by a duty officer with an aptitude in telepathy. The Academy does not allow personal weapons, alcohol or other intoxicants, or any devices capable of recording and storing audio, video, or holograms. Recorded communications from the outside are screened by the staff. Most messages to and from students are not passed on.

Faculty

Commandant Renate Stein

While Commandant Renate Stein holds an official Fleet rank of Commander, her 20 instructors and staff are civilians. They include the top minds in fields ranging from astrophysics to military history, linguistics to chemistry.

Renate Stein has a background of building immensely successful companies by fostering innovation and personal growth in her employees. With her personal wealth, she created several organizations devoted to improving the lives of children and the impoverished. When the United Fleet was looking for an administrator for the Academy project, she was at the top of their list. They were lucky she said yes.

Stein was given a commission with a rank of Commander and named Academy Commandant. She was also granted top security clearance, giving her access to nearly all information on known alien species and military engagements, and all scientific data on psychic abilities.

Once she read the reports, her first condition was that she runs the Academy her way. Discipline would be tight, but she would not allow the military to terrorize the students. Stein wants to mold the children into the best versions of themselves, not turn them into automatons.

Renate Stein is a tall, striking woman in her late 50s. She dresses impeccably in civilian business wear. She wears her pure white hair in a coil atop her head.



Renate Stein

Aspects: *I've Seen the Reports; These Kids Are the Future; Tough as Nails*

Skills

Great (+4): Friendships

Good (+3): Influence

Fair (+2): Academics, Will

Average (+1): Athletics, Perception

Stunts

Presence Fills the Room: She can make mental attacks with Influence against any number of targets in her zone.

Stress

Mental ☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐

Ishiguro Kiyonori

Ishiguro Kiyonori studied meditation with Zen masters and vision-seeking with entheogen shamans before turning to neuroscience to understand the physiological effects of these same practices. With the development of psychotronic sensors, Ishiguro moved into the neurological study of psychic aptitude, and he's now the acknowledged expert in the effects of psychic powers on the brain.

Ishiguro's official role at the Academy is to monitor the students' neurological development and offer scientific suggestions for developing their psychic aptitudes. However, he also teaches classes in meditation and biofeedback techniques that can have profound effects on some students. He often serves as an unofficial counselor to the highly stressed.

Ishiguro Kiyonori is a stocky, average-looking man in his late 30s. He dresses in a standard-issue jumpsuit during duty hours, but favors looser clothing in his downtime. He keeps his hair cropped very short.

Ishiguro Kiyonori

Aspects:

Student of World Philosophies; Spiritual Neurologist

Skills

Great (+4): Academics

Good (+3): Will

Fair (+2): Friendships

Average (+1): Influence, Perception

Stunts

Guided Meditation: He can lead characters in meditation, allowing them to roll the higher of his Will or their own Will to recover emotional consequences or psychic conditions (*Fate Core*, page 164).

Stress

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐

WHERE ARE THE PSYCHIC ADULTS?

With the exception of the Fleet Psychics (page 10) the default Academy has no adult psychics in residence. The students are emblematic of the new generation of psychics being both more powerful and more numerous.

You are free to place a psychic faculty member in your campaign, but you should tailor them to fit your PCs. They can serve as a mentor to the students, teaching them discipline and flexibility over raw power.

Instruction

A student's day begins with an hour for hygiene and daily Company briefing followed by an hour-long morning meal in the Mess. There are 6 80-minute sessions of classroom instruction and training, with a 60-minute period at midday for meal and individual study. After an hour-long evening meal, students have 4 hours for extracurricular activities and free time before the call for lights out.

Instructors are hand-picked to provide an intensive, interactive curriculum that involves the students at the highest levels. Classes use holographic projections, AI expert systems, and databases that include the sum of all human knowledge correlated in an evolving index.

The presence of at least minimal telepathic ability in every student renders traditional testing methods useless. Instead, classes rely on discussion, debate, and critical analysis. Objective testing is administered by computers without direct teacher input, to remove the possibility of a student potentially teasing the answers out of the instructor's mind.

Security

Colonel Jean-Vincent Prudeaux

Colonel Jean-Vincent Prudeaux is head of the Academy's security detail of 30 trained marines and 5 adult psi officers. Their responsibilities are two-fold: maintain the physical and digital security of the Academy; and instill proper military discipline and ideology in the students. Some at Fleet Command doubt that Commandant Stein has the mindset to produce military leaders. Colonel Prudeaux is tasked with ensuring that the young people destined to lead mankind in war are able and (more importantly) willing to do so.

Jean-Vincent Prudeaux is a 30-year veteran of military operations. He transferred from the European Space Defense Force to the new United Fleet's Marine Corps at its inception and rose quickly through its ranks. Prudeaux is the most highly decorated officer in the Fleet Marines, and he may be the most experienced human being, period, when it comes to encounters with alien species.

The story everyone hears about Jean-Vincent Prudeaux involves the loss of the *Charles de Gaulle*. This Fleet carrier was ordered to investigate a disruption in the signal from a space telescope in an outlying system. When they arrived, they discovered three Weaver ships cocooning the device. Prudeaux issued the standard warning hail, but the Weavers didn't respond. His standing orders were to drive off any Weaver ships he encountered, so he ordered his fighters to engage.

One Weaver ship was crippled within minutes, but the others responded with increasing firepower. The *Charles de Gaulle's* primary engines were destroyed, her communications systems were down, her command crew was dead, and she had only her seven nuclear missiles left. In the end, Prudeaux sacrificed the ship to take out the Weavers. He set an automated course, armed the missiles, and ordered all hands to evacuate. The other crewmen in his escape pod say he shed a single tear when the carrier blossomed so briefly into nuclear fire.

Jean-Vincent Prudeaux is an extremely fit man in his early 60s with tan skin and white hair cut nearly to the scalp. His height (only 5'3"), muscular build, and aggressive personality cause some to call him "Colonel Pitbull" behind his back. He never lets anyone see him in anything but his Fleet Marine uniform.

Jean-Vincent Prudeaux

Aspects: *Cigar-Chomping Roughneck; Eternal Vigilance; The Many Before the Few*

Skills

Great (+4): Combat

Good (+3): Athletics, Will

Fair (+2): Friendships, Mechanics

Average (+1): Academics, Infiltration, Perception

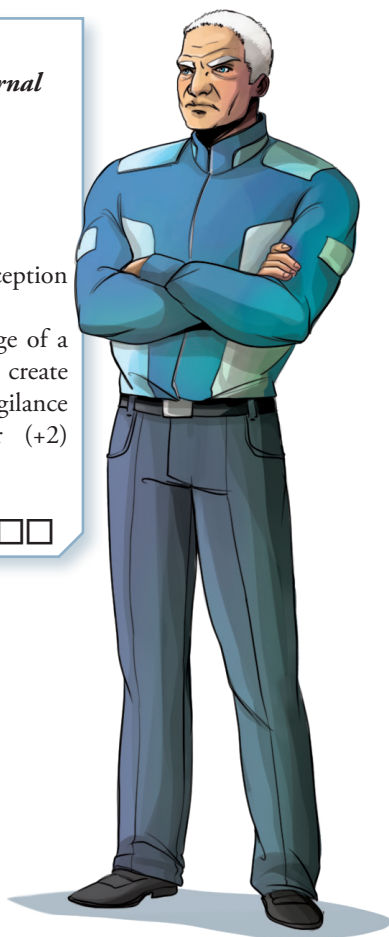
Stunts

Lock and Load: Before the first exchange of a physical conflict, he can make a free create an advantage action on his Eternal Vigilance aspect using Combat with a Fair (+2) opposition.

Stress

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐☐



Fleet Marines

The Marine platoon assigned to the Academy has full privileges to the training bays, superseded only by Alpha Company. They are armed with energy weapons that are kept on a nonlethal setting unless the Academy is on battle alert.

Fleet Marine (Good)

Aspects: *First Into Fire; Last One Standing*

Skills: Good (+3) Combat; Fair (+2) Athletics;

Average (+1) Infiltration and Perception

Stress: ☐☐

Fleet Psychics

The United Fleet has several hundred adult psychics in service, but none have the potential measured in even the lowest rated Academy students. However, they have trained intensely with their individual abilities and in ways to use their powers together. The five psychics assigned to Academy security are the most experienced in the Fleet.

Note: When using the Fleet psychics together, assume that there is at least one member that has any of the psychic aptitudes at Good. All of them have at least Average (+1) in all of the aptitudes, so they can all contribute using teamwork.

Fleet Psychic (Good)

Aspects: *Training Trumps Power*

Skills: Good (+3) Combat and one psychic aptitude; Fair (+2) Perception, Will, and one psychic aptitude; Average (+1) Athletics, Influence, and one psychic aptitude

Stunts: Gestalt. Once per scene when a group of psychics with this stunt can see or touch each other, they may all take an action to form a psychic link. This creates a **Gestalt** aspect which the group can invoke for free once for each member, but no more than once on any roll. While in this link, members can take stress for other members as pain and mental trauma bleed through the gestalt.

Stress: ☐☐

COMPANIES

The Academy is divided into four Companies. Each Company is comprised of students who tested similarly during the admissions process. Alpha Company is the best of the best, while Delta Company includes students who nearly washed out of testing. Testing is unreliable, however, and measures only brute output. It cannot account for factors like flexibility, intuition, or resolve. Students from all Companies can and do perform outside expected limits.

Companies are assigned a supervising instructor, but day to day they're run by a student commander (SCom, pronounced "ess-com"), an upperclassmen in their final years of training. SComs plan training schedules, oversee supplies, and maintain Company discipline.

FELLOW STUDENTS

Other students who do not warrant a more complete write-up can be run as nameless NPCs. Most will be Fair, with an additional Fair skill in one of the three psychic aptitudes. If you are using a mob of such students, assume all three psychic aptitudes are Fair among the group.

SComs and other named students follow special rules for determining stress. See page 18 for details.



Alpha Company

Alpha Company are the elites, with highest measured psychic aptitude as well as mental and physical capability. They receive the best equipment, the most intense training, and all the comforts a student could want.

Janel Cosgrove

Janel Cosgrove stalks the corridors of the Ant Farm like a queen. Alpha Company tests highest, is given the best training and equipment the Academy can provide, and should be kowtowed to by the other Companies (and by the faculty as well, in Janel's perfect world). That is the natural order, and anyone who steps out of line must be reminded harshly.

Janel is a stunning young woman of mixed Afro-Caribbean heritage. She wears her hair in tight braids and has multiple piercings in her ears that are technically against Academy regulations. Her grey eyes fall on everyone around her like the cold touch of steel. She wears the student uniform adorned with multiple commendation medals at nearly all times.



Janel Cosgrove, Alpha SCom

Aspects: *Best of the Best of the Best;
Whatever It Takes*

Skills

Great (+4): Influence, Will

Good (+3): Psychokinesis, Telepathy

Fair (+2): Academics, Combat,
Friendships

Average (+1): ESP, Mechanics,
Perception

Stunts

Imperius Regina: When she succeeds with style on an attack with Influence, in place of a boost, she can reduce her shifts by 1 and gain a situation aspect with a free invoke.

Bravo & Charlie Companies

Bravo and Charlie Companies are the middle children of the Academy. Bravo strives to stay relevant in the face of Alpha's advantages. Charlie just keeps its head down and passes unremarkably.

Jordan Logue

Jordan Logue is devoted to seeing his Bravo Company defeat Alpha Company whenever possible. Somehow, he has avoided a blood feud with Janel Cosgrove, keeping their grudge matches confined to intramurals. Logue ignores Charlie and Delta Companies, except to give them the occasional tips to use against Alpha in an upcoming competition.

Jordan is an unassuming young man with copper hair worn in a spiky crop. His uniform is worn crisp but unadorned. His most distinguishing feature is his silver prosthetic eyes, replacements for his natural ones lost in an accident as a boy.

Jordan Logue, Bravo SCom

Aspects: *Fight Hard, Fight Fair, Just Business*

Skills

Great (+4): Friendships

Good (+3): Academics, Perception

Fair (+2): Athletics, Telepathy

Average (+1): ESP, Influence

Stunts

Danger Sense: Jordan's cybernetic eyes give him the benefit of this stunt from *Fate Core*, page 117.

Tomas Alves

Tomas Alves was a rising star in Brazilian football when his name came up for Academy admission. He excels at physical training, but his scholastics and especially psychic talents are passing at best. He has only recently been promoted to SCom of Charlie Company.

Tomas is the epitome of "tall, dark, and handsome." His wavy black hair is somehow perpetually masking one blue eye. He smiles freely, and he often is followed by a throng of attendant students (and the occasional instructor). He wears his uniform dashingly unkempt.

Tomas Alves, Charlie SCom

Aspects: *Every Game Has Rules To Be Broken, Superstar*

Good Looks

Skills

Great (+4): Athletics

Good (+3): Friendships, Psychokinesis

Fair (+2): Academics, Influence

Average (+1): ESP, Telepathy

Delta Company

Students assigned to Delta Company scored just high enough to qualify for the Academy. If Fleet had more choices, they would have turned the Deltas away. As it is, they take what they can get. Instructors are supposed to look for any excuse to wash a Delta out of the program. Most of the civilian staff pities them, and many minor infractions go unreported.

Delta SCom

Aspects: *We Can Show Them*; two other aspects (see below)

Skills

Good (+3): Friendships

Fair (+2): Academics, Will

Average (+1): Combat and Influence

Notes

Psychic aptitudes vary (see each option below).

Choosing Delta's SCom

When creating your campaign, the players should decide on which of the following three possible SComs they want to have in command of Delta Company. Each has a distinct style of command. One wants to be the Company's best friend and get everyone through the program without serious harm. One is a tough but competent leader who wants to show the rest of the Academy that Delta can be the best in its own unconventional ways. And the third is a moderate, neither too harsh nor too familiar.

Choosing your SCom helps set a tone for the Academy-side parts of your campaign. Gideon provides a place of comfort to escape both the pressures of Academy training and the potential strangeness of the Realm. Jane, meanwhile, is just another source of stress, emphasizing the Academy as a place of hardship and the Realm as a possible sanctuary. Hyun-woo's moderation makes him more flexible, letting you to tailor his reactions to the ups and downs of your game.

Gideon Makumbe

Zimbabwe is one of the proudest nations when it comes to identifying children with potential psychic aptitudes. The state sponsors entire villages to house these young people, and their lives are coordinated by officials who see them as a bright symbol of humanity's future and redemption for sins of the past.

Gideon Makumbe grew up in one of these communities, and he fully embraces the utopian spirit of the Zimbabwe program. He sees the students of Delta Company as his surrogate siblings, and he will do whatever he can to help them cope with the pressures of Academy life. The other Company SComs think he coddles Delta, but Gideon can't help himself. His is a nurturing spirit.

Gideon is tall, lean, and handsome, with very dark skin and hair. He smiles almost constantly, and he is quick with a joke to defuse a tense situation. He only wears his uniform when it is absolutely required by regulations, enjoying comfortable, colorful civilian outfits the rest of the time.

Gideon Makumbe

Aspects:

Let Me Help;

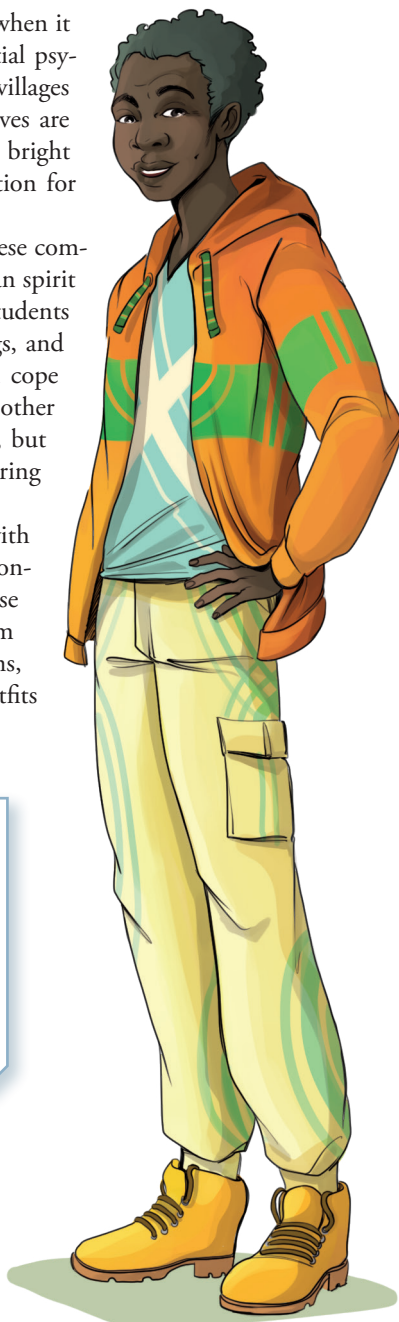
We Protect Our Own

Skills

Good (+3): Telepathy

Fair (+2): ESP

Average (+1): Psychokinesis





Jane St. John

Jane St. John's parents are actors in the Sydney holonovela industry. Their work kept them away from home for months at a time. When they were there, they brought their work friends around, and Jane grew to resent the fake laughs and plastic smiles. She pushed herself toward her natural talent for athletics, instead, becoming a national champion at gymnastics, swimming, and fencing.

While her physical testing was exemplary, her scores in academics and psychic potential relegated her to Delta Company. However, she quickly rose to the top and was named Delta SCom after only 2 years.

Jane St. John is an attractive but severe young woman. She plays up the classic "drill sergeant" persona, barking orders and pushing her fellow students to see just how far they can go. She keeps her auburn hair shoulder-length, and she wears her uniform slightly loose to allow for ease of movement.

Jane St. John

Aspects: *You Will Not Fail;*
Hardest On Herself

Skills

Good (+3): Athletics, Psychokinesis

Fair (+2): Telepathy

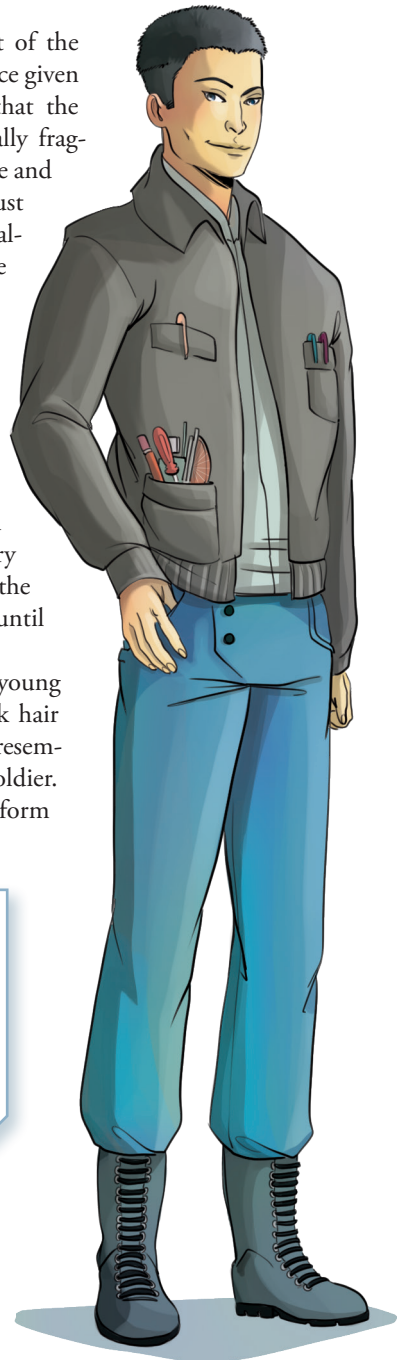
Average (+1): ESP

Park Hyun-woo

Park Hyun-woo wants to impress the rest of the Academy with Delta Company's performance given its reputation. But he also understands that the students under his command are potentially fragile, having been shuttled across known space and possessed of strange powers they are all just learning to control. He does his best to balance a rigorous training schedule with the downtime his students need to adjust to their experiences.

Park is guarded with his fellow students, but those who show him respect and perform well can earn his friendship. In his less guarded moments, Hyun-woo talks about his partner, Min-jun, and how homesick he is for their apartment in Incheon. The two were planning to marry before Hyun-woo received his call to the Academy, and Min-jun said he could wait until Hyun-woo graduated.

Park Hyun-woo is an average-looking young man with a slim build. He keeps his black hair cut in the recommended Fleet style. He resembles an engineer or teacher more than a soldier. He usually wears a duty jacket over his uniform and fills the pockets with odds and ends.



Park Hyun-woo

Aspects: *One More Drill;*
Tough But Fair

Skills

Good (+3): ESP

Fair (+2): Psychokinesis

Average (+1): Telepathy

CHARACTERS

Characters are members of Delta Company, students assessed as “marginal” in the Academy entrance examination. The other students view them as rejects and liabilities. The faculty is waiting for them to wash out. They must rely on each other, draw strength from their shared hardships, and prove themselves to an unkind universe.

CHARACTER CREATION OVERVIEW

- **Aspects:** High Concept, Trouble, Breakout, Conditioning, Muster
- **Mundane Skills:** Start with one Good (+3), two Fair (+2), and two Average (+1).
- **Psychic Aptitudes:** Start with one Good (+3) and two Average (+1) skills.
- **Refresh & Stunts:** Starting refresh is 3. Choose up to three free stunts.
- **Stress & Consequences:** Start with 2 Physical stress and 2 Mental stress, plus a mild, a moderate, and a severe consequence. These are not adjusted for skills.

Aspects

Every character begins with a High Concept that reflects their psychic potential and placement at the academy. One student might be a *Tactical Telekinetic*, while another is a *Clairvoyant Scout*. The High Concept can also define the character’s hopes or beliefs: *Warrior for Peace*, or *Looking for a Bug Hunt*.

As the dregs of Delta Company, players can have their pick of Troubles. Deltas face prejudice from instructors and ridicule from peers. They receive the oldest and worst maintained equipment. They have to fight for privileges like entertainment and communications from family. And soon they will enter an alien world, utterly alone among the other races.

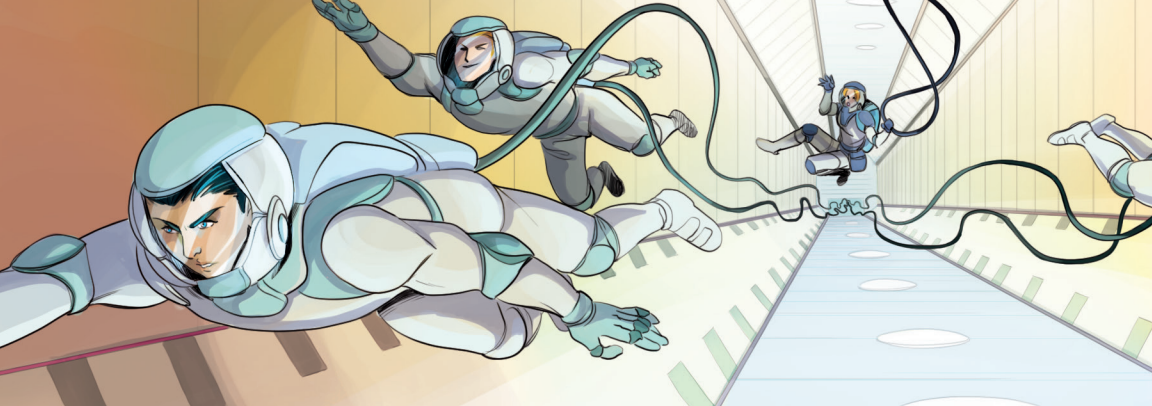
Since the characters are newly minted students, they don’t have the benefit of sharing past experience. Instead, the Phase Trio in *Psychedemia* consists of Breakout, Conditioning, and Muster.



In the Breakout phase, the player describes the character's first experience with their new powers. For many, this involves some kind of trauma that shocks the mind into new paths. This can leave scars that never heal, especially in the high-pressure environment of the Academy.

The Conditioning phase involves the character's examination and admission to the Academy, followed by a battery of genetic tweaks and military indoctrination. The government wants to rebuild each student as a weapon, but the process is never perfect. What happened to your character during this time that leaves them different from other students?

Finally, Muster details your induction into Delta Company and your first experiences with your squadmates. This phase most resembles the traditional *Fate Core* phases, though you don't have time for the back and forth of that process. How does your character feel about the others? Do you have any immediate first impressions that strongly define a relationship with any of them? This could be a rivalry, a bond of loyalty, or a physical attraction, but the aspect you create should tie you to at least one other member of Delta Company.



Skills

Psychedemia compresses the standard *Fate Core* skill list from 18 skills down to 9. The consolidated skills are:

- **Academics:** This is simply Lore, renamed.
- **Athletics:** This skill combines Athletics and Physique. It cannot defend against firearms or energy weapons.
- **Combat:** Combines Fight and Shoot.
- **Friendships:** Combines Contacts, Empathy, and Rapport. Use as Contacts is limited by the nature of the setting and the general inability to communicate with anyone back home.
- **Infiltration:** Combines Burglary and Stealth.
- **Influence:** Combines Deceive and Provoke.
- **Mechanics:** Combines Crafts and Drive.
- **Perception:** Combines Investigate and Notice.
- **Will:** As in *Fate Core*. Use of this skill is greatly expanded in the Realm.

At creation, characters have one skill rated at Good (+3), two rated at Fair (+2), and two at Average (+1). The campaign skill cap begins at Good (+3).

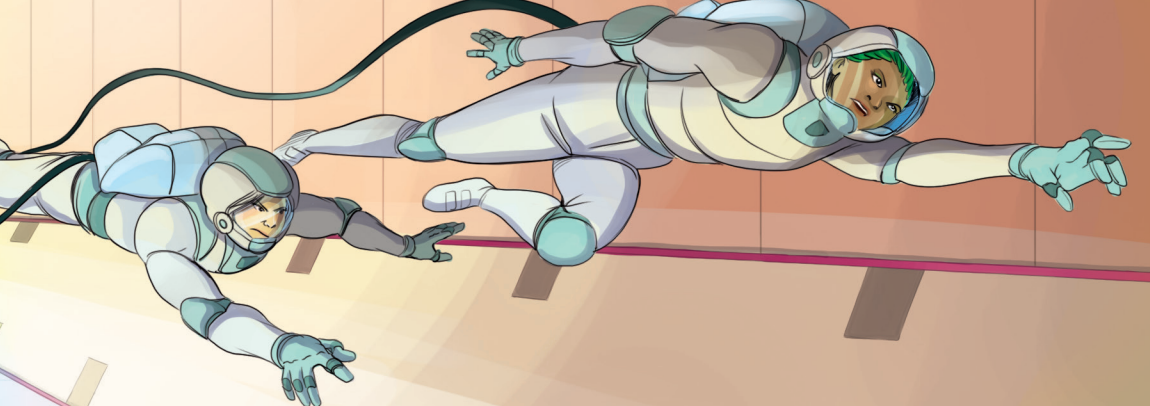
High skill levels do not affect a student's stress tracks or consequences. Characters have two boxes of physical stress, two boxes of mental stress, and the standard three consequences. (Adults, even those with psychic aptitudes, follow the normal rules for stress and consequences, with Athletics substituting for Physique.)

Stunts

Characters can take up to three stunts without lowering their refresh. Many of the stunts in *Fate Core* work in *Psychedemia*, taking into account the condensed skill list. The following new stunts are also available. (See the psychic aptitude descriptions for more stunts tied to those skills.)

Eidetic Memory (Academics): You automatically recall anything you have studied or experienced. If there is any doubt that you have studied something, you get +2 to any Academics roll the GM requires. You do not get this bonus to actually apply your knowledge to a practical purpose.

Microgravity Training (Athletics): You get +2 to Athletics rolls in areas with gravity significantly below Earth normal. (Areas of the Realm may be formatted with variant gravities.)



Threat Assessment (Combat): Before the first exchange in a physical conflict, you can make a free create an advantage action using Combat, opposed by the highest Combat or Influence among your opponents. On a success, in addition to a free invoke, the GM will tell you the highest Combat skill among them.

Teacher's Pet (Friendships): When you use Friendships to create an advantage based on your relationship with a teacher, treat a tie as a success. If you attack another student mentally by leveraging your relationship with a teacher, on a tie you can choose to take the boost or to inflict a 1-stress hit.

Ninja Vanish (Infiltration): Once per scene, if it's possible to find cover or concealment, you can hide without taking an action and create an appropriate advantage with a single free invoke. Anyone trying to find you must overcome a Good (+3) opposition (or your active opposition, if higher) to remove this advantage.

Lackeys and Stooges (Influence): You forge bonds through coercion and deception, rather than developing healthy relationships. You can use Influence in place of Friendships when performing any of the actions associated with the Contacts skill in *Fate Core*.

Intuitive Inventor (Mechanics): In the fluid reality of the Realm, you can create any machine you can imagine. You can use Mechanics in place of Will when formatting a region to create a machine-related aspect or when defending against another character attempting to remove such an aspect.

Quick Reaction Time (Perception): When you become aware of a hidden threat, you respond with lightning speed to overcome that danger. When you defend against a create an advantage action using Perception and succeed with style, you create a situation aspect with a free invoke instead of gaining a boost.

Private Domain (Will): You carved out and “formatted” your own section of the human construct, creating an area where you have final (although never total) authority. When you take this stunt, and again at each significant milestone, you can establish a permanent formatting aspect for your domain. You get a single free invoke of each such aspect. If anyone tries to alter (“reformat”) your domain, you can roll active opposition with Will, even if you aren't present.

PSYCHIC APTITUDES

The three psychic aptitudes are represented by three new skills: ESP, Psychokinesis, and Telepathy. Characters begin with one psychic aptitude at Good (+3) and the others at Average (+1). When advancing, these skills do not fall under the normal skill column rules. They are still subject to the campaign skill cap.

Each psychic aptitude includes a few common methods that anyone with the aptitude can use. In addition, a number of stunts for each aptitude expand their use and represent natural talent or practiced technique.

ESP

Extra-Sensory Perception is the ability to extend the consciousness beyond the physical body, allowing the psychic to perceive things a normal human couldn't, to sense the past, and to view remote locations or even project a fully realized mental form.



ESP can overcome obstacles a normal human's senses simply couldn't. No normal human can see through a wall without technological assistance, but a psychic can. ESP can only extend your senses in one particular way at a time. If you are remotely viewing a location, you cannot also hear and smell that place.

ESP is not a catch-all replacement for Perception. Roll your mundane skill for anything a normal human could sense.



ESP can create a variety of advantages. The ability to sense possible ambushes with psychometry or scout a location through remote viewing can set up wide-ranging aspects.



ESP cannot be used to attack.



ESP can defend against attempts to create an advantage by affecting the senses, such as technological or psychic illusions, sensory overload, or concealment like smoke or white noise.

Astral Projection

Astral projection is the ability to send a fully conscious mental form from the psychic's body. This form can travel anywhere at great speed, but it is invisible and intangible. The psychic cannot interact with anything and can only be perceived by other psychics actively scanning for projectors. While in this astral form, the psychic can use their normal senses as well as ESP and Telepathy but not Psychokinesis.

Normal remote viewing provides limited information (one or two senses at most) and does not allow the psychic to use additional psychic aptitude, but it is far safer as they are not "there" in the same way they are when projecting. Just as a projector can use ESP and Telepathy, other psychics can use those powers on them.

Psychometry

Psychometry is the perception of past events based on the impressions left behind on objects by conscious beings. When a psychic uses this ability, they witness a vision of the past, but this vision is colored by the thoughts and emotions of the people involved. Events with more participants and greater emotional impact will be easier to “read” but much harder to interpret.

There is no corresponding ability to perceive the future as there are no psychic impressions of an event that hasn’t happened.

ESP Stunts

Aura Reading: You perceive energy fields around conscious beings that fluctuate with mood. You can use ESP in place of Friendships or Telepathy to get a read on someone’s emotional state.

Poltergeist: You can use your Psychokinesis aptitude while projecting. If you do, you become visible to psychics, even if they are not actively scanning for projectors.



Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis is the ability to manipulate energy by thought. You can impart kinetic energy to objects, causing them to move. You can bend light, creating illusions or making yourself invisible.



Psychokinesis can overcome any kind of physical obstacle by moving it or bashing it down. It can also overcome any opposition that relies on energy, such as electronic security systems.



Photokinesis can create advantages based on light. More broadly, psychokinesis can create advantages by moving objects or characters.



With Psychokinesis, you can attack anyone you can see within two zones. By default, this requires something to throw (but see the Personal Laser stunt).



Psychokinesis can defend against physical attacks (including firearms) as well as energy weapons.

Electrokinesis

This is the ability to manipulate the flow of electricity in an area. A common use of Electrokinesis is to interface with a computer without having to touch it. When you work with a system this way, you use the lower of Psychokinesis or the appropriate mundane skill (Academics for research, Mechanics for programming, etc.). You can affect any computer you can see within two zones.

Photokinesis

This is the ability to control photons, allowing the psychokinetic to shape light. Photokinesis can be used to create advantages like Invisible, Uncanny Illusion, and so on. A simple effect like invisibility or tinting the light in a room to a single color requires no concentration. Complex illusions that react to viewers take your full attention, however.

These manipulations affect sight only. Anyone who would come into contact with it can automatically discern an illusion.

Psychokinesis Stunts

Personal Laser: You can focus light into a deadly beam, allowing you to make energy weapon attacks without a weapon using the higher of Psychokinesis or Combat.

Sonokinesis: You use psychokinesis to impart motion on the air. You get +2 to rolls to create an advantage when making illusions that would be more believable with sound.

Telepathy

Telepathy is the ability to sense another being's thoughts, read their emotions, and otherwise receive signals from their mind. It does not allow a psychic to transmit thoughts or otherwise alter another's mind. Communication is possible if both parties agree to read the other's surface thoughts.



You can use Telepathy in the same ways you could use the Empathy skill in *Fate Core* (and in place of the Friendships skill in these rules). In combination with Influence, it enables efficient interrogation (see Mind Probe below).



Reading someone's thoughts can take the form of an aspect representing the information you gained or even the surprise you instill in your foe by knowing it. This can give you an advantage in many situations.



Telepathy cannot be used to attack.



Telepathy can be used to defend against other telepaths reading one's mind as well as against attempts to deceive with Influence.

Mind Probe

A psychic cannot use Telepathy to forcibly reveal hidden thoughts or memories. Instead, they must browbeat or trick the subject into recalling the information, which the psychic can then read.

This takes the form of a Contest between the psychic and the subject. The interrogation usually progresses through a series of Influence or Telepathy rolls by the psychic to manipulate the subject and read their responses and Influence, Telepathy, or Will rolls by the subject to misdirect the interrogator and resist their scans.

If the interrogator wins the Contest, the subject gives up relevant information. This doesn't mean the subject talks; instead, the interrogator reads the subject's surface thoughts as they drift toward areas the interrogator wants.

If the subject wins, they stymie the interrogator. If the interrogator wants to proceed, they will need to take more drastic measures (pushing the scene into a full Conflict).

Telepathy Stunts

Aggression Sense: You instinctively read violent thoughts and can sense when someone is going to attack you. You can use Telepathy to defend against physical attacks by intelligent beings that are directed at you alone.

River of Thoughts: You ease another mind's psychic trauma by letting it flow into yourself. You can spend a fate point to immediately recover another character's mental consequence. If the consequence was moderate or severe, you must absorb it. Either take a similar consequence one level lower or check off a Telepathy condition: Uncontrolled for moderate or Burnt Out for severe.

Conditions

In addition to a skill, each psychic aptitude includes two conditions: Uncontrolled (sticky), and Burnt Out (lasting). These work as described in the *Fate System Toolkit*: you can check off a condition to absorb stress from a successful attack, 2 stress for Uncontrolled or 4 stress for Burnt Out. While a condition is checked, it serves as an aspect on your character like any other.

In addition to absorbing stress, you can also check off a condition for extreme effort on a roll. This gives you a bonus to a roll, +2 for Uncontrolled or +4 for Burnt Out.

Checking off a condition indicates that you have taxed your psychic aptitude to produce the desired effect. If you are absorbing stress, this means your power mitigated the attack in some way. Psychokinesis can blunt a punch, while telepathy gives you insight into the pain fueling a bully's taunt. In the same way, extra effort implies the use of psychic aptitude to aid in another action. ESP can boost your normal Perception when you're searching a room, for example.

However, pushing your aptitude in this way leaves it strained. An Uncontrolled condition can be compelled to make your aptitude flare up at the worst moment. While one or both Burnt Out boxes are checked off, you cannot use that skill at all.

Recovering from a condition takes time. You can focus yourself through quiet meditation to remove an Uncontrolled condition. You or another character must overcome Great (+4) opposition with Will or the same psychic skill to recover the first box of a Burnt Out condition, though it still takes another session for the second box to recover. You cannot check off or recover an Uncontrolled condition if either box is checked on the corresponding Burnt Out condition.

THE REALM

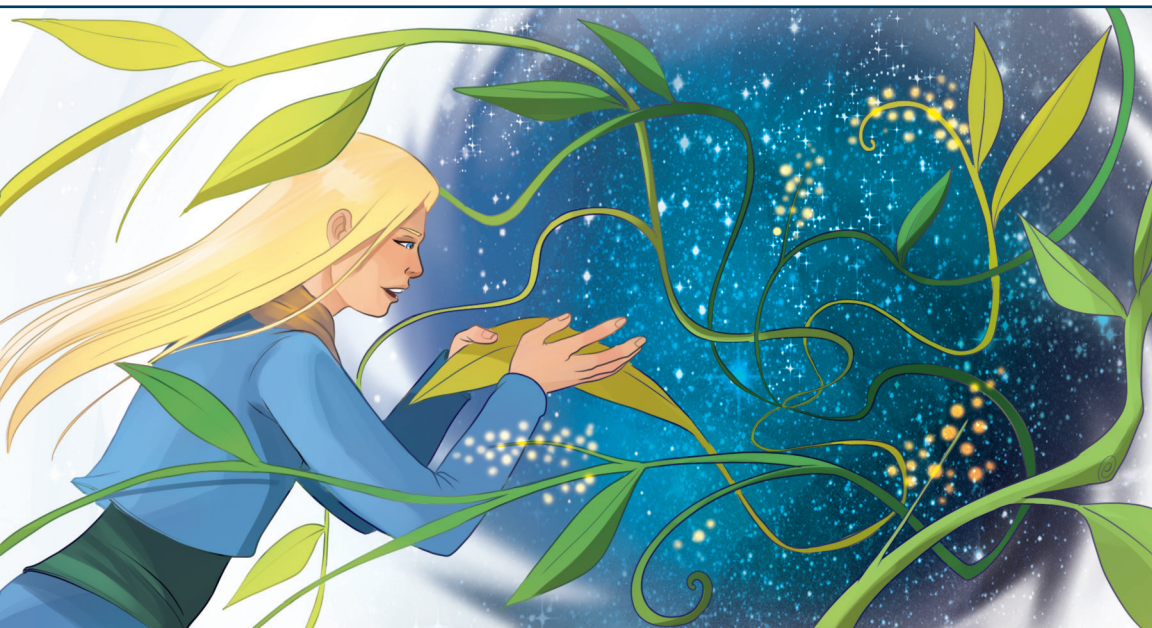


The universe exists on uncounted dimensions beyond the four our minds are evolved to perceive. But as the human mind expands to include such things as psychic powers, it touches on these higher dimensions, shaping a fragment of hyperspace into a higher dimensional membrane.

This membrane can be perceived by those with psychic aptitude as a physical construct accessed in dreams or meditation. The psychic's body still resides in our normal space-time, while the mind experiences the construct as a real, solid environment. Anyone in the construct can focus their thoughts and shape its reality, given sufficient will. Where individuals' visions contradict, they can choose to peacefully blend together or violently expel each other.

Humans are the youngest in a collection of species in our galaxy to reach the evolutionary threshold and enter one of these constructs. Several other races all went through the same process of formatting their membrane into a familiar world. They pushed the boundaries of these constructs until they overlapped in hyperspace. As whole constructs interacted, the races smoothed out their differences along the borders. The result was a single continuous construct that faded from one species to the next. They called this the Realm, and the various races became Residents.

Humanity's construct has not yet expanded naturally to touch on the Realm. And yet, the students of the Academy stumble onto connections between our world and the greater one. The Residents have opened roads that only the young and open-minded students can traverse.



Regions

A region consists of one or more zones that have been formatted together. A construct begins without regions, being an featureless volume of space. As soon as an inhabitant formats a section of the construct, they form a region. Every region has at least one *formatting aspect* (see Formatting below).

Regions do not inherently share a spatial relationship. Anyone can create a link between regions by formatting both. The link takes the form of a physical path, such as a road or bridge. The formatting of both regions mingles along this path, blending from one to the other. You arrive at your destination without a sense of crossing a border.

This blending of regions is the foundation of the Realm itself. At the center is the Hub, where all of the Residents original constructs have blended together into a gathering place for all species. The farther out from the Hub you travel, the deeper you go into an area that is suited to one race in particular.

Formatting

The process of shaping the reality of a construct is known as *formatting*. This requires clear vision and the will to force the construct into its new shape. Existing changes and the presence of other beings with opposing vision make formatting more difficult.

Formatting is a create an advantage action using Will. Any other character present can roll active opposition using Will if they choose. Multiple characters use the teamwork rules. If no one opposes, the roll is against a Mediocre (+0) obstacle. A success creates a permanent *formatting aspect* on a single zone, multiple zones, or the entire region, as desired. The character gets a free invoke as normal for create an advantage. A tie still produces an element in the scene that can provide a boost, but it is not significant enough to form an aspect. For simple formatting like creating a mundane tool, no roll is required and no boost or aspect is generated.

Regions possess inertia that makes formatting more difficult as features become more complex. Opposition to formatting (active or passive) increases by +1 for every formatting aspect already on all zones to be affected. Creating truly alien environments is even more difficult, as the inhabitant cannot easily imagine them. If a formatting aspect differs so completely from the creator's experience, increase the opposition by an additional +2.

Forming a link between two regions works the same way. In the absence of active opposition, determine passive opposition for the more complicated region, and then add an additional +1 for each formatting aspect on the other region that directly contradicts, as determined by the GM.

Formatting aspects represent the unique physical properties of a region. Any feature that a human would consider normal does not need an aspect, including light, temperature, and gravity within the range of human comfort. Instead, formatting aspects should be reserved for the most dramatic and interesting features of the region.

For example, a tech-savvy psychic may format a zone into an *Industrial Playground*, creating machinery, tools, and spare parts for tinkering. Her friend, at home in orbital habitats, formats a region with *Microgravity* and *Hatches & Airlocks*, recreating the station she grew up on.

Objects created through formatting work identically to those in the real world, even if the person making them does not have a perfect technical understanding. The process of formatting accesses deep knowledge gathered subconsciously through the low-level intuitive ESP of every inhabitant. In this way, it's possible to create guns, computers, or airplanes through formatting.

Objects without any real-world analog, even physically impossible things, can be created in regions that support them. Depending on the nature of the creation, it may earn the +2 to opposition for being alien.

FORMATTING LIFE

It is possible to format a region with seemingly independent beings. Simulated animals make a region feel more realistic. You can even create facsimile humans or other sentient beings, but these are automatons. They follow simple scripts instilled at formatting. A guard, for example, may try to stop anyone that isn't authorized. Facsimiles cannot answer questions or provide information that is outside their programming. They make poor companions, unless you have very limited interests.

Entering and Exiting the Realm

Whenever a psychic accesses the membrane, they appear in a place of comfort and familiarity. For humans, this means a region in the human construct. For Residents, individuals are allocated “awakening” zones in their species’ home region. A psychic appears clothed however they’d like but with no functional tools or equipment. It is possible to format objects into existence, and you can leave formatted objects behind before you leave the Realm.

A visitor can leave the Realm at any time with a thought, unless they are fully restrained or anchored to a spot. Handcuffs are not enough to keep someone from “waking up,” unless the victim’s arms are around a fixed pipe, for example. Chained to a wall, hanging from a tree, or buried up to one’s neck in quicksand: all are sufficient to block escape. The visitor must overcome whatever obstacle is holding them before they can leave the Realm.

THE RESIDENTS

The Realm is inhabited by four alien species, coexisting more or less in peace. In physical space, these races are spread out over roughly a quarter of our galaxy. In the Realm, of course, they each have “territory” formed from their original membrane constructs.

Humanity has encountered three of the Resident species in physical space: the Weavers, the Spindles, and the Choir. The others are unknown until the characters arrive at the Hub. Each species description includes three aspects that are common to members; a given alien may have one or two of these aspects at a time.

Weavers

Better, Stronger, Faster; Constructive Critic; Everything Has a Weak Point

The core of Weaver psychology is the drive to *improve*. They are engineers and craftsmen because they simply need to make things better than they already are—more efficient, more durable. All social interaction involving Weavers includes at least one moment where each party is assessed and weaknesses identified. If possible, the Weaver offers solutions to mitigate them.

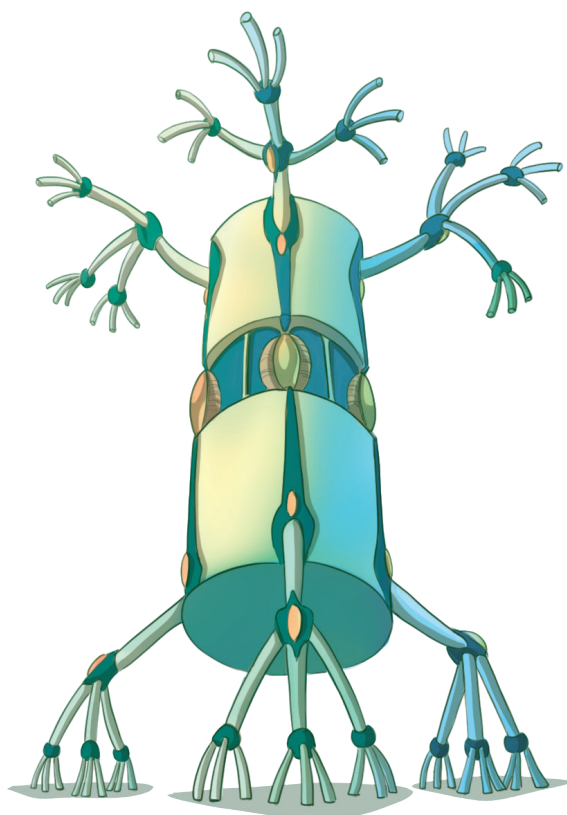
When the Weavers first encountered a human ship, they sent standard greeting protocols. Unfortunately, the humans’ communication systems could not receive the message. This was an obvious failure of design, so the Weavers offered an upgrade. The first step in any Weaver upgrade in a vacuum is to spin a construction lattice out of artificial diamond filaments. The humans

misinterpreted this as an attempt to trap their ship and opened fire. Several dozen Weavers were killed before the humans escaped.

While not a naturally aggressive species, the Weaver’s ability to analyze weaknesses makes them a formidable opponent. As the human Fleet launched engagements against Weaver outposts, the Weavers collected data. Eventually, they formulated efficient ways to combat their attackers with minimum casualties to both sides.

Physically, Weavers resemble upright, tailless scorpions. Four limbs serve as legs, while two more limbs end in grasping manipulators and two in muscular gripping claws. Many Weavers possess cybernetic implants that extend their natural capabilities.





Spindles

See All, Hear All; There Is No Down; What Does This Do?

Spindles are defined by one thing: curiosity. Whereas the Weavers analyze things to improve them, Spindles just want to see how they work. They aren't foolhardy, though. If something is obviously dangerous, they'll collect as much information as they can from a safe distance. Spindles do a brisk trade with the Weavers for protective equipment, however.

Humanity first encountered the Spindles while the aliens were picking over a derelict human ship. The responding Fleet captain assumed that the Spindles had crippled the ship and were scavenging it. He opened fire, and the Spindles were forced to flee. After that, Spindles were more likely to flee aggressive humans than to fight.

Spindles are radially symmetrical, with six thin limbs around a cylindrical core. Three limbs at a time serve as legs in normal gravity, while three other limbs are free to manipulate objects. Each limb branches into three sub-limbs that each end in three "fingers." Spindles have no natural "upright" direction; they can invert themselves without discomfort. A ring of sensory tissue around the middle of their core allows for 360 degrees of vision and audio reception. Spindles are asexual and prefer the pronoun "it."



Choir

Perpetual Cassandra; Voice of the Metatron; We're No Angels

The Choir know something. The mathematical models are pure, unassailable. Their devotion to this knowledge borders on the religious, and they desperately want to share it with others. But the information is too complex and the Choir's language too dense for their knowledge to be easily transmitted.

Still they try, whenever they encounter a new race. When they do, the message floods all available bandwidth. When humans first encountered the Choir, they sent us their message, too. We could only decode a minor audio component, which sounded like discordant singing through our protocols. The rest of the data overloaded the ship's computer, disabling communication, weapons lock, and sensors. The captain was forced to retreat, assuming the transmission was prelude to an attack.

Their inability to express the fundamental truth of their culture has a depressing effect on the Choir when they interact with other species. Many Choir appear dour or overly serious, while

some are condescending to other races who are incapable of understanding the deepest truths of the universe.

A small faction of Choir believes the truth should not be shared with those obviously unprepared to receive it. These zealots hunt down anyone who has glimpsed even a part of the truth and eliminate them. They claim this is for the good of the entire universe.

No human has seen a Choir in the physical world. When the students encounter them in the Realm, they appear as tall, attractive, blond humanoid with an unidentifiable *otherness* about them. It's unclear if this is their race's true appearance or a result of the Choir formatting themselves to better interact with humans.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE CHOIR?

Who knows?

Seriously, the Choir are presented as enigma to be explored as your group likes. They don't play a crucial role in the default adventure. Whatever their secret knowledge may be is up to you, but realize that if you can summarize it for your players, the Choir could do so in the setting.

Wandoon

Short Fuse; Sneak Attack!; Willing Warrior

The Wandoon are more naturally aggressive than the other Residents, but they possess an inclination toward secrecy and stealth as well. They learned of humanity from the Weavers and Spindles before encountering us in physical space, and they decided to hide until they could formulate a strategy to defeat us.

The Wandoon were shocked by our propensity for violence, however, and they now see humanity as the biggest threat to a peaceful galaxy they have ever known. They have been calling for war for a decade, but the other species have urged them to be calm. So far, it has worked.

In the Realm, the Wandoon are openly hostile toward humans, but they will not start a fight unless provoked. Unfortunately, Wandoon are easily provoked. Should violence break out, other Residents will quickly try to stop it, but serious harm could be done to both sides in the meantime.

A Wandoon looks like two muscular, grey quadrupeds were fused together at their spines. They walk on four squat legs, and hold their four manipulating limbs above them, tucked against their body when not in use. They stand about four feet tall at the “shoulder.” A crude face rests in the fold between the two sets of limbs, consisting of a mouth, a single wide nostril, and four round black eyes.



ADVENTURE

The default *Psychedemia* adventure sees the characters first entering the human membrane construct, learning to format, and later exploring the wider Realm and interacting with the Residents. In the process, they discover that the Residents want peace but don't understand humanity and cannot communicate with us. Many fear us as aggressors, even barbarians, and some few Residents are willing to follow our lead into all-out war.

The leadership of the United Fleet becomes aware that the students are able to access a deeper level of mental space than even their most advanced adult psychics. If they can unlock the secret, they would gladly march into the Realm and burn it down.

In this section, the text speaks directly to the GM. **Obviously, players may spoil the adventure if they read ahead.** If that's you, know that your GM has plenty of ways to switch things up if you make her.

THE ADVENTURE AT A GLANCE

Here is an outline of the key points of the default *Psychedemia* campaign. You can use this box if you need to condense the adventure into a handful of sessions.

1. The characters arrive at the Academy and join Delta Company. They meet their SCom, the instructors, Commandant Stein, and Colonel Prudeaux. They experience a typical day of instruction and training.
2. Either in dreams or during guided meditation with Ishiguro, the characters first experience the human membrane construct and learn basic formatting.
3. While experimenting in the construct, the characters stumble upon the bridge to the Realm. They are met by a Weaver named Tensor and encounter members of other species.
4. The students must balance their daily routine at the Academy with their visits to the Realm. Instructors like Ishiguro will eventually learn of the students' connection. The characters help set the tone for how the adults deal with the Realm.
5. Meanwhile, the characters encounter factions within the Realm who are not as welcoming as Tensor's. Conflict can occur in mental space just as readily as in physical.
6. The Fleet decides to utilize the students' connection to the Realm. Prudeaux and his marines try to recruit the characters as spies against the Residents.
7. Alpha Company fortifies the construct. When Prudeaux learns of the Realm, he recruits the Alphas as spies. This sparks a counter-attack by the anti-human faction of Residents.
8. The characters must resolve the crisis. The choice between peace and war is in their hands.



Suggested Issues

A typical *Psychedemia* game might have the following current and impending issues. Of course, your group may see other possibilities in the setting you would like to explore.

- Humanity's inability to listen and relate to our neighbors is driving us to destroy them out of fear of what we don't understand. (*A Failure to Communicate*)
- The characters are teenagers or young adults without a full grasp of the motivations either of their elders in the Fleet or the alien Residents they meet. (...*When You're Older*)
- When the hawks in Fleet command learn of the Realm and the potential intelligence to be found there, they will use the students as spies or guerillas against the Residents. (*An Emerging Battlefield*)

Discovery

The first part of the campaign establishes the twin settings of the Academy and the Realm. Initially, focus on the physical world, establishing human NPCs and playing up the underlying push toward competition and judgment driving Academy life. Once the students discover the construct and the Realm, emphasize the freedom mutable reality brings. Temper that freedom with the barely concealed distrust they elicit from members of the alien society.

They should develop allies and rivals in both worlds. The characters are not the only students who gain access to the Realm, so relationships they form in the Academy do carry over. That makes humans more important during this phase of the adventure, but that could very well switch in the second act.



Arrival

All visitors are shipped to the Academy in suspended animation to preserve the security of its location. Students are decanted an hour before arrival and instructed to change into their uniforms. Regulations and student guidebooks are downloaded to their personal computers, and they are told to familiarize themselves. Most students ignore the materials as the facility comes into view: the irregular gray body with a few obvious artificial features around its surface.

The transport ship docks at a hangar bay on one end, and the students board directly onto a magnetic shuttle to the security cluster. All students are scanned by marines and interrogated by a Fleet Psychic. If a player decides to resist, run a mind probe contest to introduce the concept. Once they are cleared by security, students are escorted to the Assembly Hall, where all faculty and current students are waiting.

Commandant Stein and Colonel Prudeaux welcome the incoming class and explain the basics of Academy routine, though they leave the bulk of details to the materials downloaded earlier. Play up the differences between the two authority figures. Stein is stern, commanding, but ultimately someone the students can look up to. Prudeaux is as friendly as a surface-to-air missile.



Making Friends & Enemies

The first days at the Academy are about learning the rhythm of daily life: class-work, training, meals, free time. This is also the time to establish important NPCs among the faculty and students. A few critical NPCs are written up for you, but you should tailor a few more characters to serve as allies or rivals to your particular group of player characters. You may do this on the fly, promoting some nameless fellow students as you go, or come up with some good choices before play begins.

Conflicts are likely during this period as the characters adjust to the new pecking order. They should run into opposition from Janel Cosgrove and her Alphas who seek to put the Deltas into their expected place. The Delta SCom may help the students acclimate, but they can only do so much.



Intramurals

A large part of the Academy experience revolves around competitions between squads and entire Companies. With the wide array of training required of all students, these competitions can range from athletic trials to tests of theoretical and practical knowledge or even simulated combats. Physical activities can take place under nearly any environmental conditions.

If you want to incorporate these competitions into your campaign, start with the team's preparation and training. This can be run as a challenge. Important skills during this phase include: Academics or Athletics for actual training (depending on the competition); Influence to psych out the other team; ESP or Infiltration to gain clandestine knowledge of the other team's strategies; and the team captain's Friendships for an inspirational speech.

Let each player choose an action during the challenge. One character may just hit the gym, while another fast-talks a teacher into giving up some inside information, and another pores over footage of the opposing team's previous matches. Success means that character is in top form for the competition. Failure should instead be turned into success with a cost, the cost being a setback for the whole team.

After the challenge comes the actual competition. In most cases, this will be a contest with two (or more) sides and everyone on a side rolling together using the Teamwork rules (Athletics for a physical contest or Academics for a scholarly one). In the case of simulated combat, however, use the conflict rules. Just remember that all weapons are nonlethal, so any consequences or conditions for being taken out should reflect embarrassment or at most a few bumps and bruises.

Examples of intramural competitions include:

- **Academic Lightning Rounds:** Participants are quizzed on history, sciences, humanities, and all other topics taught at the Academy. Questions get progressively harder, and as the rounds advance, participants must split their attention between multiple topics at once. The winner is the last student eliminated.
- **Field Engineering Trials:** Students must diagnose and repair a malfunctioning vehicle or other piece of equipment. Scores are based on time to completion and efficacy of the repairs. (This contest uses Mechanics, rather than Academics.)
- **The Grand Arena:** Once each term, the entire training bay cluster is turned into a sprawling battleground. Each Company is assigned a home base with a field computer, automated defenses, and an array of nonlethal weaponry. The goal is to sneak into an enemy's base and hack their computer, turning their automated defenses against them. The first Company to control all four computers wins. The competition does not end until a winner is declared; some Arenas have lasted days when Companies dug in rather than attack.



Entering the Construct

The characters' first experience with the human membrane construct should come as a surprise. While some students may enter the construct while dreaming, players may be tempted to write the experience off if it occurs under what amounts to "GM fiat." Instead, have the player characters enter the construct during a session of guided meditation with Professor Ishiguro.

As Ishiguro leads them into the meditative state, he instructs them to clear all conscious thought and drown out all stimuli. However, the students soon find themselves in a shared space, conscious of each other but not of any physical features around them. In fact, there are no such features until one of them focuses on one. The initial formatting should occur as the players ask about the nature of the space. "Is there ground?" Yes, there is now. This doesn't require rolls, at least not at first.

Anything more complicated than establishing the initial physical parameters of the space, however, and you should introduce the formatting mechanics. Since there are no actual regions and therefore no inertia against formatting, the rolls will be easy at first. The players will discover that formatting becomes more difficult as aspects build up in a region. Soon, they will want to expand the borders into new regions.

For their first "trip," they won't encounter any other students. On future visits, and especially when they format new regions, you can introduce other students into the construct. Some of these others enter the construct through dreaming or by self-directed meditation. Some of them will be your players' rivals. And they will have created their own regions, including:

- Janel Cosgrove and Alpha Company construct a multi-zone region modeled on a Caribbean merchant port ala Port Royal, Jamaica, in the 1680s. Having formatted a harbor, market, and Governor's mansion, she is turning her attention toward construction of tall ships bristling with guns with which to conquer other regions. *Aspects: **Long Live the Queen; Relaxing Beaches and Gun Emplacements.***
- Tomas Alves has recreated the historic Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. He mostly uses the field to impress his admirers and to enjoy the adulation of 75,000 simulated fans. *Aspects: **Screaming Crowds.***
- A small group of students regularly formats new zones into fantasy realms inspired by centuries-old literature and games. They create puzzles, traps, and interactive "monsters" and challenge other students to compete in tournament-style "raids." Aspects vary from one "dungeon" to the next.



The Bridge

During a later visit to the construct, the characters notice that a section of their region is attenuating, fading out into a featureless pathway or road. At first, this path blends in with the region's formatting, but as it goes, the surrounding space fades away until there is nothing but a smooth bridge in a gray void.

Following the bridge, the characters can soon make out a lone figure coming toward them: the carapaced, scorpionoid form of a Weaver. The Weaver halts at a safe distance and gestures passively. He introduces himself as Tensor, a diplomat for his people and others living beyond the bridge. He is here to welcome the characters as the first humans to visit the Realm. He says he is impressed by the amount of formatting they and other students have done in so short a time, and he offers to show them how to format more efficiently if they'd like.

Tensor leads the characters across the bridge. As they travel, he explains that in addition to the Weavers, Spindles, and Choir as humans know them, there is a fourth race among the Residents, the Wandoon. He warns that many Wandoon—and also some among the other species—may be hostile to them at first, but not to worry as violence is strongly prohibited in the Realm. He also explains that while each of the Resident species has areas of the realm formatted to their comfort, the central Hub region is maintained at a baseline that humans should find acceptable.

Tensor

Aspects: *Beset on All Sides; Constructive Critic; Diplomacy is the Best Policy; Humans Are Intriguingly Flawed*

Skills

Great (+4): Academics, Friendships

Good (+3): Mechanics, Telepathy, Will

Fair (+2): Athletics, ESP, Perception

Average (+1): Combat, Influence, Psychokinesis

Stunts

Aspect of Good Will: When he uses Friendships to create an advantage representing trust or good will against another psychic, he treats a tie as a success and can roll Telepathy as active opposition against anyone trying to overcome the aspect.

Lie Detector: When he succeeds with style while defending with Telepathy against attempts to misdirect or deceive with Influence, he gets a full situation aspect with a free invoke instead of a boost.

Stress

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐



The Hub

Just as the bridge fades out from the human construct into a void, it soon fades back in to a columned space that resembles a cross between an international airport and a Greek temple. Hundreds of beings of all four alien species bustle about or stand in small groups conversing. The closest groups stop at the sight of the characters, clearly shocked at seeing humans for the first time.

The Hub is an unusual place, even compared to the fanciful regions the students may have created in their construct. Right away, the characters see Spindles walking up columns to stand on the ceiling, a pair of Weavers taking turns destroying and then rebuilding a complicated sculpture, and a group of Choir humming to each other and sounding uncannily like an old-style telephone modem.

Soon, Tensor is approached by a small group led by a Wandoon. The Wandoon speaks an alien language, but the characters can easily tell that it is addressing Tensor angrily. None of the Residents in this group make any aggressive moves toward the characters. In fact, they take pains not to even look at the humans. Tensor exchanges a few words with the Wandoon in the same language, and the group turns and walks away bristling.

Tensor explains that the Wandoon, a warrior named Girram, opposes his bringing humans to their Realm. It would be wise for the characters to stay out of his or his followers' way. Still, Tensor claims that Girram represents a very small minority among the Residents, and that he hopes the characters can fit in well here. The Realm is a place of peace, communication, and exchange among the species, and he dreams of the day that humans can enter into his society.

THE HUB

An It Harm None Do What Ye Will; Take Your Fight Outside

Physics in the Hub is fluid on a wholly personal level. An individual can decide how they are affected by gravity, inertia, etc., and change those "settings" whenever they wish. The only limitation on this comes in the event of physical violence. If a fight breaks out in the Hub, all participants are immediately subjected to standard physical laws and guards are alerted to remove the violators to their respective home regions.



Exploration

Having taken their first steps into the strange world of the Realm, the characters are now free to explore it and learn about the alien Residents. However, things quickly grow more difficult as rivalries at the Academy and tensions in the Realm combine to push them to their limits. On top of everything else, the instructors learn that students can access this new reality—and the military will figure it out sooner or later.

Much of this section of the adventure will be defined by what your players find interesting. This is the time for exploration, of the physical structure of the Realm as well as the politics of both the Academy and the Residents. Only a few scenes are provided. It's up to you to dangle lines in front of your players and see which they bite.



The New Kids

As the first humans to enter the Realm, the characters face a lot of uncertainty and even fear from many Residents. A few aliens are curious enough about them to approach—mostly Spindles and a few Weavers.

Jinawen, a gregarious young Spindle, can serve as a friendly recurring NPC. Short of physically attacking it, there's not much the characters can do to discourage Jinawen. It will chatter at them about its own life and ask them questions about their homes, hobbies, and studies at the Academy. There's nothing sinister about Jinawen. It's just an inquisitive example of a naturally curious species.

Jinawen's best friend is a Weaver named Tau who tries desperately to act serious and dignified. This is very hard to do when you have a Spindle without any kind of social filter as your constant companion. Tau tries to get Jinawen to calm down and think things through, but he is nearly always disappointed. He is secretly just as curious about humans as his friend, hoping to see if we have any superior technologies to Weavers. He's especially interested in cybernetics, as he wears a primitive artificial pincer himself.

Jinawen

Aspects: *See All, Hear All, Your New Best Friend, Yep Yep Skills*

Good (+3): Friendships

Fair (+2): Perception, Telepathy

Average (+1): ESP, Infiltration, Psychokinesis

Tau

Aspects: *Better, Stronger, Faster, Terribly Grown-Up Skills*

Good (+3): Mechanics

Fair (+2): Academics, Friendships, Psychokinesis

Average (+1): Combat, ESP, Telepathy

Stunts

Cyber-Claw: The strength of his clumsy prosthetic claw lets him grip beings or objects and hold them with crushing force. He gets +2 to Combat rolls to create an advantage when grappling an enemy or to attack an enemy he has already grappled. A grappled enemy cannot exit the Realm until they escape the grapple.



Schoolyard Brawl

Inevitably, the characters will earn enemies among their fellow students. Perhaps they show up an older or more accomplished team at an Intramural competition. Perhaps the Alphas just want to assert their assumed dominance. One way or another, the characters find themselves in an empty corridor or cluster, set upon by a group of rivals.

Along with whatever named NPC is appropriate, the characters face a mob of nameless NPC students of a size equal to the number of players. One rival (either a named NPC or one of the nameless foes) should have Combat one level higher than the highest level among the characters.

The fight lasts long enough for one or both sides to get a few good shots in. No one is looking to seriously harm anyone else, but a few bruises or a bloody nose is a proper lesson learned. If any fighter takes a moderate consequence, have the rivals concede and run off, crowing about their victory or vowing revenge.



The Commandant's Office

While young people think they can keep secrets from adults, especially teachers, many just can't. The instructors know soon enough that something is going on with the students. Most, like Professor Ishiguro, want to help. Since the characters are at the center of the experience with the Realm, they are among the first called in to speak with Commandant Stein.

Kind is not a word to describe Renate Stein, but she does care about her students. She wants the characters to know that whatever they tell her will remain in confidence unless it presents a clear and present danger to the Academy. Only then would she be required to inform Colonel Prudeaux of anything.

However, she will not tolerate deception. If she thinks the characters are lying to her, the steel comes out. She will threaten any character withholding information with the strictest punishments, up to and including revocation of all free time and communications with anyone outside of the facility. The resulting Mental conflict could be one of the more brutal in the adventure.



Step Into My Parlor

While other students eventually travel to the Realm, the characters remain the most high-profile humans to many Residents. Girram believes they are spies for the human military. He orders his followers to draw the characters away from the Hub to a region on the edge of Wandoon territory where he can have “a chat” with them. To accomplish this, a pair of Wandoon named Kla and Kip decide to strike at them through their friends.

One day while exploring the Hub, the characters see a small purple crystal flying toward them. It stops a few feet from one character and emits a brief flash. The characters are surrounded by a hologram placing them in a large darkened room. Above them hang Jinawen and Tau, enveloped in a sticky gray web or net of some kind. The pair struggle against their bonds but cannot escape. Around them, they can hear crackling and see the occasional arc of electricity.

When the image fades, it is replaced by a message hanging in midair. “Tell no one. Come alone. The crystal will show the way.”

It is obvious none of the Residents around them could see what the characters saw. When a character touches the crystal, they see a purple arrow leading them out of the hub in the direction of the Wandoon region.

Wandoon territory resembles a vast, dry cave system with walls carved or eroded with countless handholds on every surface. As soon as one is out of sight of the Hub, it is necessary to climb to access any region.

Following the crystal, the characters eventually arrive at a large, dark chamber like the one in the hologram. As they saw before, Jinawen and Tau are hanging from the ceiling. However, they see no sources of electricity until they enter the room.

Once the characters are inside, Girram formats the doorway out of existence, leaving the characters *Trapped Inside*. Then he, Kla, and Kip each activate a pair of shock batons, illuminating the chamber with a purple glow.

Girram plans to mind probe one of the characters to learn what the human military is planning. If the characters relent and agree to the probe, run the Contest as normal. Characters may lie and roll Influence, or they can try to convince Girram of their honesty and roll Friendships. They can use Telepathy to simply block his probe, of course.

If Girram wins the Contest or is otherwise convinced of the character’s honesty, he is mollified. He accepts that the characters are not involved, but he still believes the humans are planning something. If the character lies or blocks him, Girram is furious. He is willing to use force against Jinawen, Tau, or any of the characters to get the information he is convinced they are withholding. The only option is for the characters to cut their friends down and fight their way out.



Girram

Aspects: *Always Have Another Plan; Only I Can Save the Realm; Willing Warrior*

Skills

Great (+4): Combat, Telepathy

Good (+3): Athletics, Influence, Will

Fair (+2): Infiltration, Mechanics, Psychokinesis

Average (+1): Academics, ESP, Perception

Stunts

Heavy Hitter: *Fate Core*, page 111.

Lackeys and Stooges: Page 21.

Stress

Mental ☐☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐☐

Kla and Kip

Aspects: *Loyal Lieutenants; Short Fuse; Sneak Attack*

Skills

Good (+3): Combat, Psychokinesis

Fair (+2): Athletics, Infiltration, Perception

Average (+1): ESP, Telepathy, Will

Stunts

Ninja Vanish: Page 21.

Kla's Stress

Mental ☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐

Kip's Stress

Mental ☐☐☐

Physical ☐☐☐

Reckoning

The stage is set for a final conflict when Fleet psychics finally succeed in accessing the human membrane construct. They can't perceive the bridge to the Realm, so Colonel Prudeaux recruits Alpha Company to infiltrate the Realm and gather intelligence.



Spies and Saboteurs

It's easy to see why Janel Cosgrove is a bad choice for covert activity against a supposed enemy that already thinks humans are arrogant, aggressive expansionists. When she finally crosses the bridge, she approaches the Residents not with humility and respect but with the assurance that they have more to gain from knowing her than she ever could from them.

Ultimately, her bluster serves as a useful smokescreen for the rest of Alpha Company, who slip into the Realm and begin asking simple, subtle questions. The Weavers and even the Choir are surprised and pleased at the respect they show, and they happily answer whatever they can.

To the characters, it should be obvious that Alpha Company is prying into anything of strategic significance, especially information about the Resident's infrastructure and organization in real space. They also try to acquire any formatted technology they can, in the hope of disassembling it in the human construct and bringing knowledge of it out through Eidetic Memory. If the characters interfere in any of Alpha Company's activities, the Alphas will report it back to Colonel Prudeaux.



The Colonel's Office

Once he has recruited Alpha Company, Prudeaux quickly pieces together a lot of information on the Realm and the students' time spent there. He is very interested in the characters, as they were the first approached by the Residents. He has them brought in for "an informal evaluation."

Once more, like Commandant Stein and Girram before him, Prudeaux wants to know what the characters know. And like Girram, he has a clear idea in mind ahead of time what that knowledge may be. He is convinced that the characters are collaborating with Tensor and the Resident species not just in the Realm but in physical space as well. He is beyond caring for proof of anyone's innocence. He will only accept a full confession.

Whether they tell him what he wants to hear or not, Prudeaux offers the characters the same deal he has with Cosgrove. They can return to the Realm and gather information the Fleet can use to plan strikes against the enemy. If they accept, they are free to go, although Alpha Company will keep an eye out for signs of their betrayal. If they refuse, he escorts them under armed guard to the neurology lab.



Ishiguro's Lab

At the lab, Professor Ishiguro is watching over several members of Alpha Company who are projecting into the Realm. He is running a number of scans to analyze their brain activity and pinpoint what lets the students access the bridge between the construct and the Realm when adult psychics can't.

Prudeaux believes the characters can be useful in this endeavor, as they may have been the first contacted because they have the strongest link to the Realm of any student. He orders the characters to enter the Realm while Ishiguro scans them. If they refuse, he will do whatever he must to make them, up to and including executing some of them for treason.

Prudeaux is accompanied by two mobs of Fleet Marines both equal in size to the number of players. If the characters engage him, the fight may go in their favor, but it will be costly. Ishiguro can do little to help them, but he may easily become a casualty in the crossfire.

If the characters give in and do what Prudeaux wants, Ishiguro will quickly discover a way to open the minds of adult psychics to the bridge and grant them access to the Realm. But it will not be the Realm the characters know.



The Coup

Once Prudeaux's final plan is put in motion, Alpha Company switches from gathering intelligence to disrupting the Realm itself. They launch a series of guerilla attacks on the Hub and attempt to reformat as much of the Realm as they can manage before pulling back across the bridge to Janel's fortified Port Royal region.

Girram takes the attacks as the excuse he needs to launch his own action against the humans. Any students left in the realm following Alpha Company's attacks are hunted down and imprisoned. Tensor and other leading Residents decry Girram's answering violence with violence. He has them detained as well.

Any students who escape the Realm and return to the Academy report that a force primarily composed of Wandoon is preparing for an invasion across the Bridge. Prudeaux (or Stein, if the characters took Prudeaux out) orders any remaining Fleet Psychics to enter the construct to support Alpha Company. The call is sent to Earth to send trained psychics in as well. Physical distance is no hindrance in the Realm.



The Siege

On an eternally sunny day in Port Royal, the siege begins. A dark storm cloud parts to reveal Wandoon aerial attack ships. The port's gun emplacements respond by shooting fighters out of the sky. Wooden sailing ships trade fire with steel-hulled troop transports. The sides are evenly matched, and the fighting continues throughout the day.

When the characters re-enter the construct, they can hear the sounds of battle as if from a great distance. If they travel to Port Royal, they will be caught in the battle at least for a little while. It is unlikely they will find a way to end the siege from there. Both sides are led by determined, zealous fighters—the Residents following Girram on one side, and Earth forces deferring to Janel Cosgrove through sheer force of personality on the other.

A better plan might be to infiltrate the Realm and free Tensor and the other Resident leaders. The characters could work out a tentative peace agreement and use that as leverage against the armies in Port Royal. Most Residents want peace. It is likely that humans would too, if they knew of the struggle at all.

If their attempt at peace fails, the final option is to destroy the bridge between the construct and the Realm. This will forever doom the chances for peaceful integration of humanity into the galactic community. Earth's leaders could be convinced to expand in other directions and avoid an all-out war with the Residents, but that would be the work of another campaign.

This adventure cannot speak to how your characters might act in this scene. Let them make whatever plans they want, and then respond appropriately. The fate of a half-dozen species may rest in their hands.



GOING FORWARD

If your characters end the siege of Port Royal, they convince the Residents that humanity can work in peace with its neighbors. In the coming years, relations open with the other races: communications are standardized; trade routes are established; and exchanges of technology open up new frontiers. More and more humans develop psychic potential, and eventually our construct is fully integrated into the Realm. A new Golden Age dawns in our arm of the galaxy.

If your characters fail, the most likely outcome is war. Sadly, humanity is on much better footing in the physical world in this regard. Our military-industrial machine has been working for decades, building ships and bombs. The Wandoon put up a fine fight for many years, but they will eventually be wiped out. The Weavers call desperately for peace throughout the conflict, but they will be overwhelmed and set up into a puppet state to mine for technology. The Spindles and the Choir flee before the human onslaught, seeking new mysteries to solve elsewhere.

Whatever happens, the shape of history for centuries to come is determined by your characters.

TRAINEE RECORD

Name	Refresh
Description	Starts at 3

MUNDANE SKILLS

Rating	Skill
Start with one Good (+3), two Fair (+2), and two Average (+1)	

PSYCHIC ABILITIES

Rating	Aptitude	Uncontrolled (2)	Burnt Out (4)
	ESP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Psychokinesis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Telepathy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start with one Good (+3) and two Average (+1)			

STRESS & CONSEQUENCES

PHYSICAL	1	2	MENTAL	1	2
Mild	2		Moderate	4	
			Severe	6	

PSYCHEDEMIA

ASPECTS

High Concept
Trouble
Breakout
Conditioning
Muster

STUNTS

Choose up to 3 free stunts.
