PRISM

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PRISM

A WORLD OF ADVENTURE FOR

FATE™
CORE SYSTEM

Prism

CONTENTS

Take a moment. Find a pattern or sequence around you. The arrangement of tiles on the floor. The rise and fall of book spines on a shelf. The lines of words on this page.

Then close your eyes, breathe, and look again. Did anything change?

Are you dreaming?

Are you sure?

INTRODUCTION

A plethora of websites and books promise the secret to lucid dreaming and advocate the practice for self-improvement and decision-making. In dreams, you can do anything: fly, remember your high school French classes, or get personal closure.

For many, their adventures end there, but lucid dreaming is only the first step to a much larger world. All dreams connect together, and those with the will to try can wander out of their mind to the fringes of strangers'. For a long time, that was as far as anyone ventured, but then a few managed to bring a color from their dreams into their waking lives.

When anyone looked through glass tinted with that color, they saw a world that never was. Now the Lucid comprise everyone who understands that this world, the one we're all awake within right now, is just one of many. Whole worlds layer over our own. The colors hidden in dreams—the lucid colors—unlock these realities, allowing us to glimpse what might have been and what could never be. Becoming Lucid means abandoning the certainty that all we experience is all that exists. More is waiting.

Fairyland. A modern world in which Europe never invaded. A wasteland. A dragon's nest. A nightmare of gaping mouths. The possibilities are endless. And, with the power of special gear, the Lucid can open and walk through doors that don't exist, climb ladders only they can see, and talk with those who were never born.

The lucid colors are also tightly connected to the emotions and memories that formed them within the dreams. Those who spend too much time around a painting, window, dress, or other object that has been tinted with a lucid color become influenced by those emotions and memories. They may turn inexplicably happy, melancholy, uninhibited, or angry. If the memory is particularly powerful, they find themselves playing it out over and over as though possessed.

Naturally, such power draws those who wish to control, exploit, or study it. Over the years, factions have formed within the Lucid, each with its own agenda. Who is in the right? Who can say? Right or not, these factions are powerful allies and terrible enemies.

Most of the world has no idea about the possibility surrounding them. Will you remain among the sleepers, or will you join the Lucid and discover just how amazing and dangerous life can be?

About This World

Prism is a Fate World and Adventure that adds layers of reality on top of our own and provides tools to characters so they can use these layers without exiting their own world. Characters also work and interact through dreams, which adds a good dose of the fantastic to the game. Some illustrative films and TV shows include *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016), the *Yo-kai Watch* anime, *Inception* (2010), *The Dresden Files* series, *Shriek: An Afterword*, *Paprika* (2006), and *Night Watch* (2004). Each of these involves using a secondary world to traverse a primary world, using a device to see otherwise invisible actors in the primary world, or using dreams to affect the waking world.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

Julieta's Discovery

Julieta Alvarado dreamed she flew over a vast and churning ocean.

When she awoke, the color of that frothing sea-foam twisted around her hand like a tentacle. Julieta smeared the color across her bedroom window and saw towers and mountains of shiny buttons in all shapes, sizes, and colors.

How Julieta brought the lucid color into the waking world on her own is a mystery yet to be replicated. Her discovery, though, led to additional exploration, the development of prism goggles, the poltergeist ring, the rise of the many groups trying to exploit or control the lucid colors—her discovery created the world the Lucid now know.

The Lucid today operate in three spaces: dreams, other realities, and the non-dream reality they call home, also known as their base reality or the waking world.

In dreams, the Lucid meet together at the Nexus, the point where all dreams meet, and explore strangers' dreams. They use their will to shape the dream around them and seek out colors—the lucid colors—that only exist in dreams and, despite best efforts, defy true description.

In other realities, the Lucid explore alternative histories, encounter the fantastic, and take advantages of stairs, doors, walls, and paths that exist outside the base reality.

In their base reality, the Lucid bicker and compromise over what their discoveries mean for the world at large. New factions rise up every year, each with its own solutions.

Amidst all this is a growing realization: as more people cross realities and blend dreams with the waking world, the fabric of reality thins.

The Problem of Lucidity

The Problem of Lucidity is the series of ethical debates many within the Lucid argue repeatedly and feel pressured to solve. The lucid colors, the Nexus of dreams, the other layers of reality—all world-changing, and the Lucid are the only ones aware of their possibility and danger. By default, the Lucid, a population of relatively few people, must make decisions that could affect the world.

A Public Danger or Social (and Personal) Benefit?

The colors can subtly influence those who view them, even those who are not Lucid, and can be used to upgrade stealth tech, break into locked rooms, and more. They can be extremely valuable or give access to valuables. While many would like to use the lucid colors to their own and others' benefit, others argue that the colors open doors to dangerous worlds and manipulate emotions in ways too easy to misuse.

Who Rules a New Frontier?

The Nexus, the lucid colors, and the other layers of reality are too new and still too secret to be bound by the rule of law. Or can current laws stretch over these new facets of the world? Which boundaries command what seem to be limitless dreams and realities? Some argue that the only regulations that matter are the ones you can enforce. A few groups have tried to control access to other layers of reality to varying degrees of success and bloodshed.

Can the World Ever Know?

How secret should the Lucid world be? Why is secrecy important or not? Should the information be public to everyone? The Lucid do not live within a vacuum. World events matter. Politics matter. What if an alternative reality has developed cold fusion or could offer asylum to refugees? What if someone is using lucid colors to influence the mental states of key political figures? What role do lucid colors and other realities play in base reality? What role *should* they play? Does the world have a right to know about the possibilities and dangers the lucid colors represent?

What About Spectrum Relations?

Many other realities are full of people and other sentient beings, some friendly and others not. Some other realities are on the verge of apocalypse. How should the Lucid interact with these other layers of reality? Do we need formal relations, treaties, and the like? Should the other layers be viewed with suspicion? What about the Lucid in other realities? Should each person negotiate their own relationships? Should people be able to pass through other layers freely without consideration of any larger regulation? Should entities in other layers of reality be allowed to pass into our base reality? What if they are about to die? What if their world is about to end? Does a reality have any obligation toward the other realities?

Bickering Factions

Partially thanks to the Problem of Lucidity and partially thanks to the natural reaction to a new and unclaimed power, many factions have risen in the Lucid community.

The factions cooperate and clash as they each try to realize their vision for their city or the world. The following list is not exhaustive, just a starting point. Create factions that engage your players or that generate stories that interest you. For rules on creating and using factions, read *The Factions of Prism* (page 26).

The Annex

This passionate, somewhat overzealous group is devoted to guarding base reality against the dangers of lucid colors and invasion of other realities. Members of the Annex, when "on business," dress all in brown. They tend toward vigilantism and see themselves as a necessary extension of the Department of Spectrum Management. The DSM enforces the rules, while the Annex gets shit done.

The Annex is very pro-safety for others and wary of too much regulation. Maintaining secrecy and minimizing interactions with other realities are critical goals. The faction is less united on their opinions of exploration, though. Some believe exploration courts danger, while others believe exploration is the only way to prepare for the dangers their base reality might one day face.

The Builders

The Builders augment their lives with lucid colors. Colors promoting calm are painted over their bedroom walls. They embroider school uniforms with colors that encourage focus. Dye roses to inspire passion. The Builders argue that they create better lives through their creative use of colors. Builders tend to focus on optimizing their use of the lucid colors rather than hunting for realities that could provide new and interesting technology or medical cures.

The Builders think that safety should never stand in the way of progress. Likewise, secrecy constricts the spread of benefits and is therefore problematic.

The Department of Spectrum Management (DSM)

The DSM originated in a police department after a detective learned to dream lucidly and quickly battled his way to the Nexus. The DSM stretches, adapts, and interprets current legislation to meet the problems posed by lucid colors and other realities. For example, the DSM tends to treat lucid colors as hallucinogenic drugs. They are also apt to use obscure or minor laws to prosecute so-called criminals in the absence of lucid-color legislation.

The DSM promotes regulation and safety above all. They are divided over the issues of secrecy and other layers of reality, however. Secrecy enhances safety but prevents true regulation. Other layers of reality are potentially dangerous, but fall outside DSM jurisdiction.

The Mallorys

The Mallorys watch out for the Mallorys. Over the years, this ruthless crime family has bought and bribed their way into respectability. They've gotten a name among the Lucid community as being generous patrons of dream and alternative-reality exploration. Just be sure to return their investment; debt collection is an ugly business. Rumors are spreading that their current matriarch, Granuaile (GRAW-nyu-wail) Mallory, is looking for something, though only those closest to her know for what.

The Mallorys like secrecy since it limits competition, and they promote liberal exploration of and relations with other realities. Profit is, of course, important, but strangely does not seem to be their primary goal.

The Alvarados

Named for Julieta Alvarado, this loose group from all over the world meets up in the Nexus to share their stories of ill-advised experimentation and exploration. Only among the Alvarados would you find people who have willingly spent days in another's mind or tested lucid dreaming while in other realities. The Alvarados hypothesize the existence of a Nexus Nexuum, a place where all dreams across all realities meet, and seek it out relentlessly. Others in the faction are preoccupied with understanding the nature of the multifoliate universe. The question goes: a prism splinters a beam of light into a rainbow; if the spectrum of realities, colors, and emotions is the rainbow, and the moment of existence the prism, what is the beam of light? Some have even emigrated to other realities as they continue their research of their myriad theories and wonderings. If there is a question to ask or a boundary to breach, the Alvarados are present and active.

This group does not care about safety or regulation; they just want to know how far they can push. Many Alvarados also advocate for teaching others how to reach the Nexus. Discoveries aren't meant to be secret.

CHARACTER CREATION

Creating a character in *Prism* isn't much different from *Fate Core*. Characters have a high concept, a trouble, 3 additional aspects, a skill pyramid, stunts, and 3 refresh. The primary differences are some changes to skills and the phase trio.

Skills

Prism introduces two new skills: Factions and Streets. To compensate for these additions, Contacts and Drive are no longer skills.

For Contacts, the two new skills cover most uses. If your character has a specialized knowledge base through which they'd have contacts with like-minded people, you can take a stunt to allow you to create contacts with that skill.

"We need to get into that school when the kids aren't around." Tanya looks over her character sheet. "I have high Athletics. I reach out to someone at my gym—no, in my rec basketball league—who knows the school's gym teacher."

Lex nods. "All right. Roll Athletics to see if you have a way to contact the gym teacher. We'll say this is an overcome roll against Good difficulty, +3."

Tanya rolls and gets a Great (+4) result. "Sweet."

"Perfect," Lex says. "You reach out and get a phone number for Daniel Luna, the gym teacher at Mitchell Elementary. What do you want to do now?"

As for Drive, the assumption is that everyone can get around one way or another. For chases, the important skill isn't control of the vehicle, but knowledge of the surroundings, represented by Streets.

In addition to the two new skills, Burglary has been renamed Theft to clarify that it includes pickpocketing and other forms of thievery. Crafts and Will have the same names, but they now include tasks related to being Lucid.

Crafts includes using Lucid colors to create pigments and tint glass, paints, and dyes.

Will is definitely a power skill in *Prism*. It allows characters to shape and control dreams and to interact with or enter other realities. PCs can also create advantages with Will in dreams that augment their other skills and being, making them stronger, faster, more persuasive, or better at whatever they need. When a Will roll fails in a dream, strange things happen.

The Skill List

Athletics	Fight	Provoke	Streets
Crafts	Investigate	Rapport	Theft
Deceive	Lore	Resources	Will
Empathy	Notice	Shoot	
Factions	Physique	Stealth	

Factions

The Factions skill gives knowledge of factions and contacts within them. You can use this skill to help obtain information, spread information (or rumors), find someone who can do a thing, and learn the strengths and weaknesses of a specific faction. If you try and fail to use your faction to achieve something, your actions may draw unwanted attention. Succeeding at a cost could involve owing a debt to the faction.

STUNTS

In with Mallorys: You are a member, full or honorary, of the Mallory family. Add +2 to Factions when working with the Mallorys.

On the Annex Shit List: The Annex *hates* you. Whenever you work with someone who is also on poor terms with the Annex, you can roll Factions in place of Empathy.

Streets

Streets is knowledge of the city and the ability to both get around it through shortcuts and public transport and hide within it. Streets also allows you to find out the latest news and gossip about anything not related to a faction and to spread information and rumors through non-faction affiliated networks.

STUNTS

Hidden Tunnels: You know the locations of all the discontinued subway tunnels throughout the city. Add +2 to your roll when using one of those tunnels.

Bolt Hole: You have a place in the city—a locker, a helpful café, a study carrel—where you can rest safely. When you are in your bolt hole, you cannot be found. The first time you reach your bolt hole between significant milestones, roll against Fair (+2) difficulty. If you succeed, the bolt hole has something you need. If you tie, the bolt hole has something you can use, but it may be broken, out-of-date, or require creative application. If you fail, the bolt hole does not have anything special in it. You can have up to three bolt holes in the city, each allowing a roll between significant milestones.

Phase Trio

The phase trio in *Prism* is very similar to the *Fate Core* version, but the questions are slightly different.

Phase One: Everyone who manipulates the layers of reality or recovers colors from dreams has a poltergeist ring, which bridges dreams and reality. This ring is composed of seven memories, both happy and painful, that shaped you as a person. What is one of those seven memories? How has it continued to affect you? Write an aspect that reflects the outlook or philosophy that this memory engendered in you.

Phase Two: Eventually everyone who deals with lucid colors meets up with at least one of the factions. How did you get tangled up with a faction? What did you do or who did you convince to help you get untangled? Or did you join up? Write an aspect that summarizes your relationship with one of the factions or a member within a faction.

Phase Three: The first time you all worked together was a bit of a mess. Collaborating with the other players around the table, answer the following questions and then write an aspect that reflects your attitude toward the team as a whole or a specific person within it.

- What were you trying to accomplish?
- Who hired you?
- What happened that you were unprepared for?
- How did you get out of it?

LUCID DREAMING

When your character sleeps, they can control their dreams. In dreams, they perceive themself as they are. They use their skills normally, but they can also fly as easily as they can walk or run while awake. If you want to engage in some tricky flying, a race, or some other athletic action requiring a roll, roll Athletics.

Controlling Dreams

When you want to shape the dream or augment one of your skills, you do not change your skill ranks, but instead roll Will to create an advantage. The advantage lasts until you declare it canceled or your character wakes up, whichever comes first, and allows them to do more than they can awake. For example, you could roll Will to create the advantage STRONGEST MAN ALIVE or A MAGICAL PORTAL TO WHERE I NEED. These aspects are only true in the dream and only for however long the dream lasts. When your character falls asleep again, they'll have a blank slate.

Waking Up

Since your character is in their mind, you cannot use your physical stress track, and every consequence they take must be something mental that lingers after they wake up.

A character can wake up in one of three ways.

- **First, something external, planned or unplanned, can startle them out of sleep.** If the characters set an alarm before going to sleep, the players can declare when the alarm sounds and awakens them. The GM can also force the characters to wake up by sudden loud noises, a surprise attack, or anything else they can imagine.

- **Second, they can awaken by getting taken out or by conceding.** If a character is taken out while asleep, they wake up. If they concede, they wake up, but something has definitely gone wrong. The players and GM should negotiate the cost. Perhaps a color drained out of their ring or they wake up surrounded by enemies. As with any concession, the player gets a fate point for conceding, plus another fate point for each consequence they'd sustained.

- **As a last resort, if they absolutely have to wake up, they can kill themself in the dream.** In addition to the rolls required for their actions, the cost is a moderate consequence, or a severe one if they already have a moderate one. This cost is required, even if they succeeded with style on the rolls to kill themselves. Dying in dreams might not mean dying in real life, but that doesn't mean the characters escape unscathed. Additionally, they'll have to regain access to the Nexus by fighting a nightmare when they next fall asleep.

Complications of Awakening

If a character wakes up and didn't get what they'd needed from the dream world yet, they can try to go back to sleep. However, once asleep, they start back in their own mind and without any of the advantages they may have created for themselves the last time they were asleep. Also, the dreamer whose mind held the colors they'd needed might have awakened in the meantime, leaving the characters either without their color or having to start their search over.

Any consequences that a character took while in the dream world persist in the waking world. If those consequences don't already focus on the mental effects, the player should revise them. The character could have a sudden, debilitating fear or a conversion disorder, such as losing one of their five senses even though they are physically fine, developing an inexplicable tremor, having difficulty speaking, or experiencing seizures or paralysis.

Wherever the characters are in dreams, their own or strangers', or at the Nexus, when they awaken they wake up back in their minds and bodies. This is not the case if their slumbering host awakens before they do.

If characters are exploring a stranger's dream and the stranger begins to wake up, the characters must race back to the Nexus as quickly as they can. This race is a contest of the character's Will against the dreamer's Will to wake up. If the dreamer's Will has not yet been established, roll four dice. The dreamer's Will rating equals the sum of ➕ and ➖. So, if you roll ➕⬜➖➖, the dreamer's Will is Good (+3).

If the characters do not make it, they are trapped within the dreamer's mind, and their bodies remain comatose. When the dreamer falls back asleep, the characters can return to their own minds and bodies, but each sustains a mental consequence—a phobia, anxiety, conversion disorder, or troublesome drive they picked up from the dreamer's mind.

The Nexus of Dreams

All characters begin dreaming in their own minds. If they want to meet up or travel into someone else's dreams, they must first travel to the Nexus. The Nexus is a large meeting point that looks different from night to night, though its theme—being a place where many things come together—is always constant. The Nexus might be an airport, a telephone switchboard, a busy seaport, or a thundercloud.

Each Nexus is unique to the reality of its waking world. Some Lucid, especially those among the Alvarado faction, believe that a Nexus Nexuum exists connecting the Nexus of each reality together. The first time anyone travels to the Nexus, they must battle through one of their nightmares. After that first time, the dreamer can reach the Nexus easily.

The Nexus has the setting aspects Crossroads of Dreams and Where Imagination Thrives.

Nightmares

In all dreams lurk nightmares. Characters may encounter their own nightmares, especially when trying to reach the Nexus, or they may seek out or come across others' nightmares as they travel through their dreams.

A nightmare may take many forms, either a single entity or a location. In either case, it is always working against the characters. Nightmares have an aspect that describes their manifestation, Will of at least Great (+4)—this is their only skill—and four stress boxes (4, 3, 2, 1). They have no consequences.

The nightmare shapes the dream around them. Nightmares can also create advantages that attach to characters and supersede the advantages characters had created for themselves in the dream world. If your character made themselves Faster than a Thought, they might suddenly be Stuck in Slow Motion. Until they overcome this aspect with their Will, they cannot use the aspect that gave them speed. The difficulty to overcome the aspect equals the number of unmarked stress boxes that the nightmare has.

Nightmares can also attack in a way befitting their form. If the nightmare is The Monster from Under Your Bed, it can attack with teeth and claws. If the nightmare is a Dank Swamp of Despair, it can attack with sucking mud, hope-sapping darkness, and hidden alligators.

Each nightmare is tied to a dreamer's fear. If characters defeat a nightmare, they can use their Will to discover the fear that spawned the nightmare and create an advantage. The PCs can use this advantage both in their dreams and waking life. This means that seeking out the sleeping mind of someone they wish to understand better and fighting one of their nightmares is a way to gather information on that person.

Dream Spectrum

After the discovery of the Nexus, the next greatest revelation was learning that lucid dreamers could harvest colors from their dreams. These colors blend the imagination, echoes of other layers of realities, and emotions. As with the spectrum of the waking world, the lucid colors exist in an infinite number of shades, though they tend to congregate around a more limited variety of effects. Some hues inspire joy, others jealousy or generosity or rage. Much variation exists within those effects, though. The rage that inspires blustering misjudgment is very different from the rage that cools into overly rational ice.

With close proximity and an act of Will against at least Good (+3) difficulty, a character can draw the color from its object. The weaker the emotional connection in the dream, the less vibrant the color and therefore the more difficult the roll. Emotional dreams are the sort that linger. They remind dreamers of treasured or painful memories or they get the heart racing. These sorts of dreams are brighter and stronger, making the lucid colors within them likewise bright and strong. A bright, strong color is easier to detect, isolate, and collect. Therefore, it is to characters' benefit to seek out emotional dreams with vibrant colors.

Once a color has been drawn from a dream, a character may hold it within their poltergeist ring. The poltergeist ring, crafted from memories that still affect the waking world, exists in both dreams and the waking world. It provides a bridge to bring the dream color, more commonly called the lucid color, into the waking world.

Once in the waking world, lucid colors begin deteriorating; they must be preserved in a pigment within a few hours or else they dissipate. This is a Crafts roll against a difficulty that depends on the quality of their pigment powder and binder and on how quickly after waking they fix the color. The longer they wait, the more difficult the roll. Even fixed within a pigment, the colors' effects do not last forever. All dreams eventually fade.

In the waking world, colors have two effects. First, objects created using the colors tend to affect and even manipulate the emotions of those around them. Second, when used to tint glass—such as for goggles, bulbs, or mirrors—the colors reveal other layers of reality.

All lucid colors have the following statistics: name, description, emotion aspect, and revealed reality. The emotion aspect and revealed reality do not have to be related in any way. Here is an example:

Rosz

Description: Pink like a blush blended with a happy yellow, but not orange-like at all
Emotion Aspect: Giddy and Daring as a Stolen Kiss
Revealed Reality: A world in which megafauna still thrive

When color-hunting, you might seek a color whose emotion aspect you know ahead of time, but you may simply capture whatever color you think is interesting. If you capture a color, the GM can ask the players to create the emotion aspect together based on the circumstances of the dream in which their characters caught the color. If the characters know the aspect, they will need to search through dreams to find one with the right emotional content. The revealed reality can wait until the color has been used in the waking world to determine.

Every color reveals a different reality, and no two colors reveal the same reality. A revealed reality may create opportunities and challenges. An opportunity might be a door where one does not exist in the base reality, and a challenge might be a battle or a monster.

AN ARRAY OF REALITIES

At the very moment of being, the universe splintered into a wide spectrum of possible realities. Each of these realities is a vibrant and diverse world all its own. While the realities match spatially—moving six feet to the right in one moves you six feet to the right in all of them—whatever exists at each given point differs, often wildly.

Consider a box of building blocks. The most basic ingredients are the same, but the resulting creations rarely are. Some may have a difference as small as a single color change, while others seem to have nothing in common at all. Likewise, some other realities may seem very similar to characters' home base reality—they may even encounter doppelgangers—while others will not. One small change, one decision that went a different way, or an entire cascade of differences.

Each reality is tied to the emotion aspect of the color that revealed it—this emotional tie is what enables the reveal. That said, each reality is so full of life, this emotion is undetectable. The vast and strange wastelands are the lone exceptions.

A wasteland is what happens after a reality loses all stability (page 20). The unstable reality enters a state of chaotic flux that spans waking life and dreams, as well as other realities. Eventually, the reality seizes on some element that resonates with the emotion of that reality and remakes itself. The template—the planets, mountains, stars, oceans, suns—remains the same, but this resonant element covers everything: for example, a universe of glass beads, pulsating planets of tightly swarming drones, everything eyeballs. The wastelands are almost always empty of native, sentient life, making the reality's emotion the strongest, if not the only, one present. The feeling resonates.

Prism classifies realities into three main types, even though others may exist:
- "A world in which…" (many changes)
- "What if…?" (one main change)
- "A wasteland of…" (wastelands)

Each reality has a descriptive phrase, an opportunity or challenge, and a stability rating (page 20). If it's not a wasteland, it can also have an issue, either impending or current. If the characters return to the non-wasteland reality frequently, add another issue and keep track of major NPCs and locations. Elaborate as needed. If characters just slip in and out of a reality, a description and a stability rating will suffice.

The following section describes the three types of reality, gives some relevant prompts, and provides an example for each.

> ## OTHER REALITIES AS TESTING GROUNDS
>
> If you want to test new mechanics, but you don't want to break the consistency of your campaign's reality or suspend your current campaign to try something new, other realities are a great place to try mechanics out. Other realities can work differently from the base reality, allowing for mechanical changes and different or additional rules.

A World in Which...

These realities have some unexplained element or elements that are normal to that world. Major changes early in the reality's timeline or many changes later on led to a world with recognizable elements in fantastic or unimaginable configurations.

Examples

- A world in which the dead rise as zombies
- A world in which the earth has been replaced by a space station
- A world in which everyone dies at age 25
- A world in which fairies are real

A world in which the Earth has been replaced by a space station

Color: Veslyn, an explosive and glittering blue

Emotion: Regretful happiness

Issue: Encroaching Asteroids of Massive Size

Stability Rating: 21

Opportunity/Challenge: Teleportation. Teleporting devices link the various space stations, enabling characters to travel great distances in a short amount of time.

Description: Humanity lives on large space stations. The remains of former planets have drawn together in treacherous and increasingly erratic asteroid fields. To the people of this world, living on a planet is unimaginable. Their stations are warm, brightly colored, and cozy.
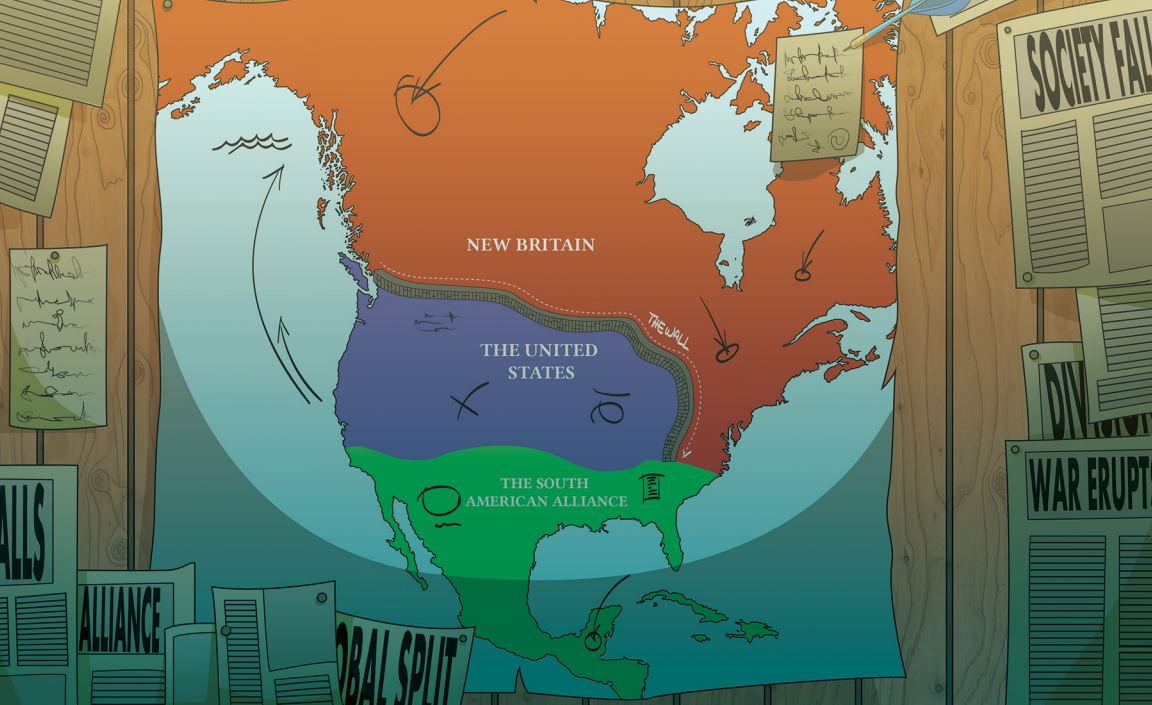
What if...?

These realities share many traits with the base reality, and any differences stem from one major difference. Something went the other way. These are the realities most likely to throw up doppelgangers. Even so, doppelgangers pose no threat beyond the general awkward questions that the unexpected appearance of someone identical would present.

Examples

- What if the Americas had not been colonized?
- What if Napoleon had never invaded Russia?
- What if China had won the Second Opium War?
- What if the Persian Empire had won the Battle of Marathon?

> ## What if China had won the
> ## Second Opium War?
>
> **Color:** Bepala, the color of a palindromic prime number
> **Emotion:** The anxious breath before a safe landing
> **Issue:** One Last Election for Unity...or Complete Dissolution
> **Stability Rating:** 15
> **Opportunity/Challenge:** Mandarin is the lingua franca of the world. Those who aren't bilingual are looked down upon.
> **Description:** China is the seat of political power and social influence in the world. The United States is a struggling nation, divided among a large south united with Mexico, a strongly British-influenced northeast, and the US government in the Midwest and west.

A Wasteland of...

Wastelands are empty realities dominated by a single strange element that resonates with the emotion aspect of the color that reveals the reality. Wastelands do not have issues, but the color's emotion aspect can be invoked anywhere in the reality. Wastelands, despite having formed in chaos, tend to be very stable.

Examples

- A wasteland of spiral staircases
- A wasteland of floating, gaping mouths
- A wasteland of living shadows
- A wasteland of keys

A wasteland of keys

Color: Hecitar, the Golden Chime of the First Day of School
Emotion: Persistent Suspicion of Someone Lurking
Stability Rating: 25
Opportunity/Challenge: Every key opens a lock somewhere.
Description: Keys upon mounds of keys, all sizes, colors, and materials. A giant keyhole burns as a sun in the sky.

The Stability of Reality

The impending issue for a campaign set within *Prism* is that increased Lucid activity is destabilizing reality. Reality's stability is represented as a stability rating of 0 to 25. At 0, reality is up for interpretation. At 25, everything works as expected.

This rating is the local average. Different cities will have different stability ratings. Additionally, reality in any given place within a city may be five points higher or lower than the city average.

Characters do not have a way to measure reality's stability for certain; they can only observe the effects. The factions concerned with this issue—such as the Annex, the DSM, and the Alvarados—have their own ways of estimating. They do know that they can strengthen reality, though they can only estimate the effect of their efforts.

At the beginning of the game, the stability rating for the PCs' locale is 20. As the rating rises or falls, the following aspects become or cease to be true.

25 points: Up Is Up and Down Is Down
Everything in the city operates as expected. The other layers of reality do not affect the base reality.

20 points: Glimpses of the Impossible
Normal people report ghosts, UFOs, fairies, and other evidence suggesting that they're seeing flickers of other realities.

15 points: Party in the Porous Reality
People and monsters from other layers of reality slip into base reality with varying degrees of solidity and visibility and people in the base reality slip into other layers.

10 points: Worlds Collide
Another layer of reality merges fully with the base reality; the GM chooses a layer that the characters have used either frequently or recently.

5 points: Haunted by Dreams, Hunted by Nightmares
The boundary between dreams and the waking world is nearly nonexistent.

0 points: Reality Is Debatable
Nothing is certain. If a player succeeds on a roll, the GM can offer a fate point for the player to instead fail, and Will can affect the waking world.

Destabilizing Reality

The GM may lower reality's stability rating by 1 to 3 points as a minor or major cost on a roll. Also, players and the GM may opt to *spend* stability points, reducing the stability rating. Spending 1 stability point can soak 3 stress, add +3 to a roll, allow another use of a gear item, or reroll any or all four dice.

When players destabilize reality to help their characters, they weaken the wall between them and the fiction. For the characters, this intervention appears as sudden and strange luck. They do not know the price paid. Even once they see the effects of the players and GM helping them, they do not know their own complicity.

When you spend stability points, the GM incorporates a detail about you into the game. Perhaps a location the characters need is near where you work in real life, or maybe the next NPC shares your first or last name. The point is: you've inadvertently left a mark.

Stabilizing Reality

There are two ways to increase reality's stability rating. At a significant milestone, you can forgo gaining a skill rank for your character to increase the stability rating by 2. Any number of the players can do this.

You can also stabilize reality by cutting off access to a layer of reality. Doing this increases the stability rating by 6, but it is *not* an easy task. First, you must find and collect all instances of the lucid color that reveals the layer of reality you want to cut off. This includes all pigments, goggle lenses, paintings, dyed cloths—everything. Once everything is collected, the characters use their willpower to force all of the lucid color to fade at once, a Will roll against Epic (+7) difficulty. You cannot use the color again unless it is reintroduced to the city by an NPC. Reintroduction does not undo your work in stabilizing.

GEAR FOR THE LUCID

Lucid dreamers who want to collect colors or interact with other layers of reality have specialized gear that enables their work and exploration. The most important are the poltergeist ring and prism goggles. Characters can create other gear by using a lucid color as a pigment for tinting paints, dyes, or glass. Possible pieces of gear include mirrors, bulbs, windows, paint, and clothing. This gear can sustain damage or be lost.

Poltergeist Ring

A ring created with seven memories that hold weight in its wearer's day-to-day life. Each memory has deep emotional significance for the wearer. No two emotions in a wearer's ring can be the same.

In general, the ring is a bridge and an anchor. As a bridge it helps its wearer connect dreams to waking life and one reality to another. As an anchor it allows its wearer to be real wherever they are.

In dreams, anyone wearing a ring can will a color they can see into the ring. The color will travel with the ring into the waking world. There, the wearer can drain off the lucid color and bind it to a pigment for use. A ring can only hold one color at a time.

In the waking world, the ring allows its wearer to interact with another layer of reality, but only while the wearer can perceive that layer.

Each character created their own ring in their dreams. The ring is formed through a braid of seven formative and emotional memories. It is always present. In dreams, the ring is solid, but in the waking world, it is ghostly. To avoid questions, many of the Lucid wear a real ring in the same place as their poltergeist ring.

Using the Poltergeist Ring

Permissions: The ring can capture one lucid color from a dream and transport it to waking life, enable its awake wearer to touch elements of another reality, and enable its wearer to enter another reality.

Use: Activating the ring requires an act of Will. Capturing a color requires overcoming Good (+3) difficulty. You must be close to the color you want to collect. A ring can only hold one color at a time.

Working with another layer of reality requires perceiving the reality, typically accomplished by looking through prism goggles, and then rolling Will to create an advantage or overcome. The GM decides how difficult the task is.

Any advantages you create in another reality are accessible as long as you can perceive that layer—seeing is believing. If you wish to access an advantage from a reality you cannot perceive, you must first make an act of Will against Fantastic (+6) difficulty—sometimes believing is seeing. If the roll fails, you can still access the advantage, but one of the memories in your ring fades, and you will have to replace it before you can use your ring again.

Finally, entering another layer of reality requires an act of Will against Great (+4) difficulty. Your character can enter another reality as an intangible poltergeist or as a solid entity; tell the GM how you want to enter the reality.

- **If you succeed with style**, your character enters the other reality as intended, and you may declare a story detail about the other reality or take a boost.

- **If you succeed**, your character enters the other reality as intended.

- **If you tie**, your character enters the other reality, but they are solid when they wanted to be ghostly or ghostly when they wanted to be solid. Also, they enter into a safe situation or their purpose for entering the reality is not compromised.

- **If you fail**, your character enters the other reality, but they are solid when they wanted to be ghostly or ghostly when they wanted to be solid. Also, they enter into a dangerous situation or their purpose is compromised.

If characters enter another reality as a solid entity, they do not need to continue wearing the prism goggles. However, in order to return home, they will need lenses that reveal their own reality.

Space traveled is constant across realities. If a character steps into an alternate reality and walks across town, when they return to the base reality, they will be across town. They do not automatically return to where they initially shifted into the alternate reality.

Costs: Using the ring requires an act of Will. The ring is also most real in dreams, which means that wearers can potentially lose them while dreaming, either by accident or by theft.

To repair a ring that has lost one of its memories, your character must, the next time they are dreaming, describe a memory strongly related to one of the following ten emotions: joy, trust, wonder, love, certainty, regret, grief, rage, contempt, guilt. Each emotion should only appear once in each ring. Also, each time the ring loses a memory, replace it with one you have not yet described—that way you'll explore all of your character's emotions.

As you repair your ring, keep track of which seven memories and emotions have formed their ring. Recalling this memory freshens it for your character, so you must change one of their aspects *other* than their high concept, to reflect the memory and the emotion it inspires.

WHAT IF YOUR CHARACTER CAN'T SEE?

Sight is not a requirement for being one of the Lucid. Instead of prism goggles, those without sight have special headphones with interchangeable plates that slide into the ears. The emotions associated with the colors filter sound around them, allowing them to listen in on other realities.

Prism Goggles

These goggles have interchangeable lenses, each tinted with lucid colors. By looking through the lenses, the viewer can see another layer of reality. The goggle case also has room to carry two additional pairs of lenses. When you wear the goggles, you are wearing goggles—other people, including those who aren't Lucid, can see them.

Each pair of lenses has two effects: it reveals a specific world, and it incites a certain emotion. Those who look through the lenses can see the world, but they are also vulnerable to the emotional influence.

Using the Prism Goggles

Permission: You may see the layer of reality that coordinates with the lenses currently in your goggles. You may carry up to two extra pairs of lenses with you at any given time.

Cost: You must create the lenses by first finding a color, creating a pigment, and then using Crafts to create the lenses and Crafts again to tint them. NPCs can create lenses and tint glass, but the PCs must convince them to do so and be willing to pay whatever NPCs charge—money, favors, or a specific lucid color.

Wearing prism goggles also puts characters in close proximity to a lucid color, making them vulnerable to its emotional effects. When your character is wearing prism goggles, the GM can compel the emotion aspect of the color of the goggles' current lenses.

Finally, lucid colors always fade in the waking world. A pair of prism lenses has three uses before the colors fade and the lenses become plain glass. You cannot use the lenses for viewing other realities until you tint them again.

Creating Other Gear with Lucid Colors

Anything that can be colored can be turned into gear—glass, cloth, paints, and more. Creating gear requires rolling Crafts to overcome. If you succeed or tie, you can choose one of the following permissions. If you succeed with style, you can either add another use before the color fades or ensure the gear does not malfunction on its final use.

Color: Which lucid color are you using to create the gear?

Object: What are you creating?

Permissions: The gear gives its user or wearer one of the following permissions.

- Use free invokes of the color's emotion aspect to their advantage—an example might be a dress that inspires trust or a toy that inspires intense fascination as a distraction. Each invoke counts as one use.

- Perceive another layer of reality—an example might be a light bulb that reveals another layer when lit, or a window into another world

- Conceal something from one reality by hiding it in the color of another reality. The object must be opaque, such as a painted lockbox or a camouflage coat. However, the object or person appears as an apparition in the other reality, drawing attention.

Costs: The gear carries all of the following costs.

- While you are wearing, carrying, or otherwise near the gear, you can be compelled by the color's emotion aspect.

- The gear draws attention from either another layer of reality or from a faction that is interested in its effect or wants to regulate the use of lucid colors.

- Each piece of gear can be used three times. On its last use, the gear malfunctions as the color fades, and something interesting happens.

THE FACTIONS OF *PRISM*

Factions in *Prism* are an issue and an extra.

As an issue, factions represent a challenge to the status quo. Each faction has a vision for how it would like to change how the city the characters live within operates. Some factions' vision will be broader, even global in scope. Each faction also has at least one Face associated with it. This Face is the NPC who makes the faction matter for the players. It may be someone who is trying to escape the faction or the person in charge.

Unlike in *Fate Core* with current and impending issues, players in *Prism* do not have to worry about every faction and design a plan for confronting each. Each faction is one of many. Over the years they mostly balance each other out. However, players may not like what a faction is doing and so counter them, possibly upsetting the balance of power. As factions rise and fall in importance, the players can decide how deeply they want factions to affect their game.

As an extra, factions are groups that affect the world, change, and allow membership. A faction has aspects, stress and consequences, stunts, and—for those who wish to join up—permissions and costs. Factions also advance at milestones.

A faction has a name, 5 aspects (reputation, a value statement, a conflict approach, a vision, and a current goal), a stress track, and stunts.

Aspects

The **reputation** is how someone might describe the faction to an outsider. For example, the reputation of the Annex is Wannabe Cowboys. Not quite the phrasing the Annex would use themselves, but that's all right. Few factions are powerful enough to control their reputation.

The **value statement** is the faction's stance toward the Lucid and everything involved with being lucid. The Alvarados' value statement is Push Every Boundary. For them, exploration is paramount.

The **conflict approach** is how the faction prefers to handle opposition. The Department of Spectrum Management (DSM) prefers to operate within the confines of the law. Given the lack of legislation concerning the Lucid currently, they are apt to find and trump up minor charges and interpret laws exactly to maximize their control. Their conflict approach is Throw the Whole Damn Book at Them.

The **vision** is the faction's long-term and currently unachievable goal. It's their pie in the sky. It does not have to be broad in scope; it just has to be currently impossible. The vision of the growing Mallory crime family is City on a String. They want to control everything in the city.

The **current goal** is what the faction is trying to achieve right now. The Builders are wanting to create a therapy room whose walls are painted with lucid colors to incite reflection, acceptance, and calm. Their goal statement is Create a Therapy Room. A goal statement doesn't have to be clever, and it will change often over the course of the game. Short and accurate is more important than punchy and fun.

Tasks and Setbacks

The current goal aspect is also interesting because it includes three unnamed **tasks**, the steps that the faction must take to complete their goal. Active factions mark one task box at each minor milestone that the characters reach.

A session may include opportunities to thwart the factions. In this case, the GM describes what task the faction was trying to complete. If the players stop the task from being completed, the faction instead gets a **setback**. The players can also cause a faction to take setbacks by forcing them to mark Thwarted consequences.

After a setback, the faction can try the same strategy over or they may move to a new tactic. If a faction gets three setbacks before they can complete their goal, they have to give up on the goal and start over with a new one.

Stress and Consequences

Each faction has a stress track with three boxes, along with six prenamed consequences. Faction consequences fall into three categories: Endangered, Undermined, and Thwarted. At creation, give the faction two consequences from each category to mark off during play. You can give them consequences from the lists below, or you can create your own consequences as long as they fit within one of the three categories.

Endangered
- An important member is jailed
- A member is killed
- A safe house is compromised

Undermined
- Damaging lies are spread
- True intentions are revealed
- Access to a person or location is restricted
- An important object is stolen

Thwarted
- A goal is lost, no matter how much progress had been made
- Mark two goal setbacks

Marking and Clearing Consequences

A faction can mark a consequence to soak **all** of the stress that it suffered during a single exchange in a conflict. Factions are not easy to beat. The consequence's effects do not have to take place immediately, but must happen by the end of the session. Work the consequence into the narrative.

Factions can only clear consequences at significant and major milestones. When a faction has marked all of their consequences, it dissolves at the next milestone. Forcing a faction to mark all of their consequences is how you defeat it.

Players can invoke any marked Endangered or Undermined consequences, while the Thwarted consequences immediately affect the faction's goals when marked.
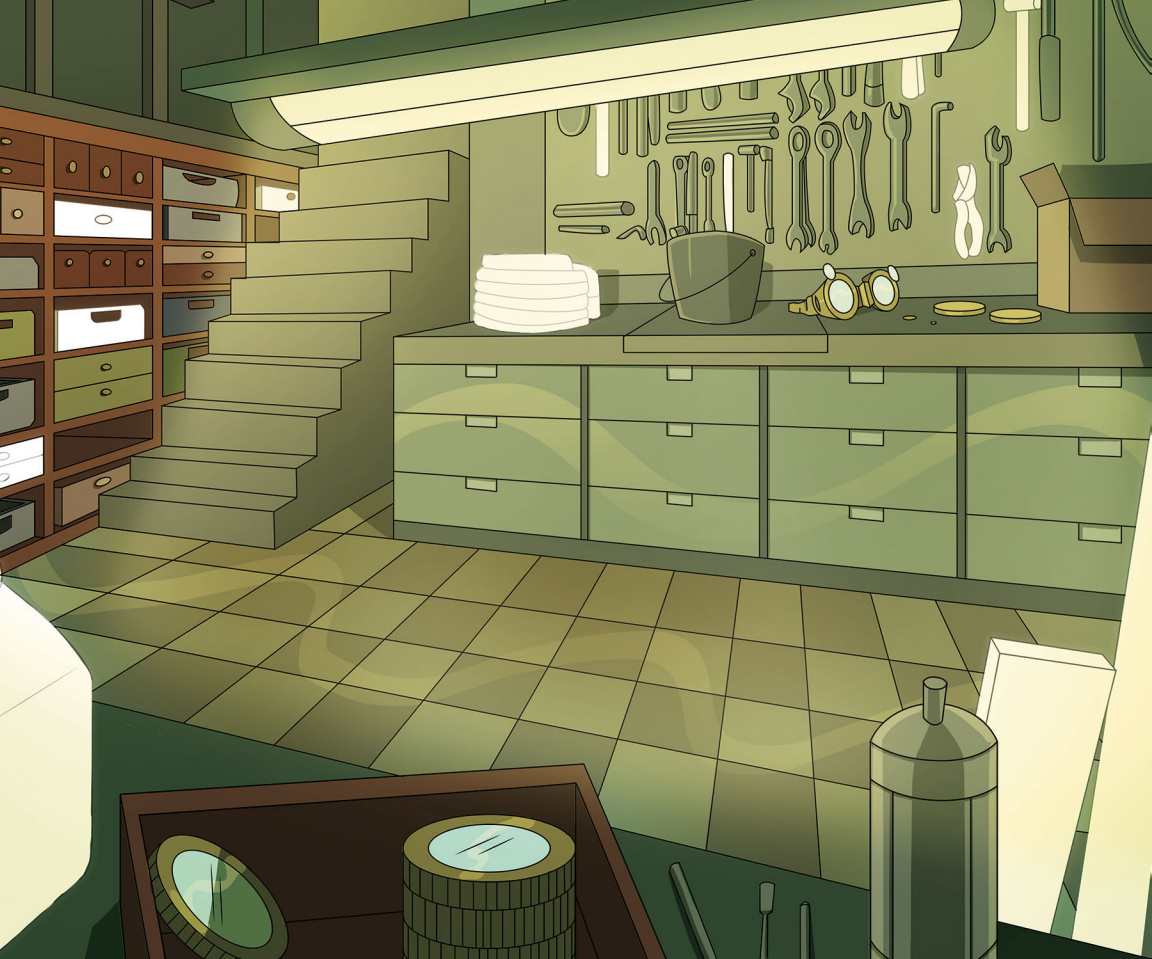
Skills and Aspect Ratings

Factions don't have skills. Instead, each of the faction's aspects has an **aspect rating**. Whenever a faction is taking action related to or affirming one of their aspects, they add the matching aspect rating, otherwise they roll at Mediocre (+0). A faction may not invoke the aspect they are currently using as a skill.

When you create a faction, give an aspect rating of Average (+1) to Superb (+5) to each of its five aspects. Give a different rating to each aspect—one will be Average (+1), one will be Fair (+2), and so on.

Changing Aspect Ratings

During faction milestones (page 30), you may get the opportunity to change a faction's aspect ratings. You may increase the rating of any aspect, but you cannot increase an aspect rating to more than two points higher than the next-highest rating.

The rating of an aspect reflects its importance to the faction. The ratings are, in many ways, the faction's priority list. No aspect can move too far from the others, however, since all are of importance. If an aspect were left behind or surged ahead, the faction would be different.

Stunts and Refresh

Each faction has 3 refresh and 2 stunts. A faction may purchase additional stunts by spending its refresh one-for-one. The stunts focus how the faction operates. Any faction member can use the faction stunts. If a player is a member of a faction, they must spend a fate point to use a faction stunt.

Here is an example stunt for each faction:

The Annex

Wherever We're Needed: The Annex is talented at finding their way into official events and investigations. Once per session, a faction member can create credentials to get into wherever they want to be. Roll a die. On a ⊞, the credentials are good and will cause no problems, this time at least. On a ▣, the credentials are good at first glance, but won't pass closer scrutiny. On a ⊟, the forgery is discovered shortly after you get in. You'll have to move fast!

The Builders

Personal Workshop: Builders are always tinkering and have their own workshops and laboratories full of potentially useful items. When in their workshops, faction members get +2 to Crafts.

The DSM

Friends on the Force: The DSM has good relations with local, state, and federal agencies. Once per session, a faction member can call upon one of those agencies to aid them in a fight. Roll 4 dice. The agency sends one person to help for each ⊞ or ▣.

The Mallorys

A Network of Favors: The Mallorys have many people who owe them. A faction member can roll against Fair (+2) to check if an NPC owes the Mallorys. On a success, the NPC does. On a success with style, the NPC owes a *big* favor or they have a very good relationship with the Mallorys in spite of what they owe.

The Alvarados

Commander of Dreams: The Alvarados know dreams better than anyone. Faction members gain +2 to Will while asleep.

Faction Milestones

Factions advance and grow just as characters do. Every time the players reach a **minor milestone**, the active factions also reach a minor milestone. At a minor milestone, a faction can do **one** of the following:

- Mark a task for a goal
- Clear a setback

When a faction marks all three task boxes for a goal, they achieve the goal, and at the end of the session, the faction reaches a **significant milestone**. At a significant milestone, a faction can do **all** of the following:

- Revise an aspect or add a stunt, piece of gear, or other resource to reflect the completion of their goal
- Clear all setbacks
- Set a new goal
- Clear a consequence
- Increase an aspect rating by one step

Factions receive a **major milestone** at the same time the players do. At a major milestone, a faction can do **all** of the following:

- Clear 2 consequences
- Gain 1 refresh
- Distribute a total of 3 skill ranks among faction members. Each PC member can only receive one point; each NPC member can receive up to all three.

Remember, a faction cannot increase an aspect rating to more than two steps higher than its aspect with the next-highest rating.

Joining a Faction

Joining a faction requires convincing the faction to let you join or establishing membership when you create your character. Membership costs 2 refresh.

Once you join a faction, you can do the following:

- Spend a fate point to use a faction stunt
- Spend 1 refresh to take a faction stunt for your own, which allows you to use it without spending a fate point each time
- Receive additional skill points from your faction at major milestones

You also gain these two stunts:

- Once per session, while awake, if your action affirms any of the faction's aspects, you can add +4 to your roll.
- Gain +2 to Resources while consulting your faction for help or connections.

Playing a Faction

When a faction is involved in the story, they are likely either trying to achieve their current goal or trying to stop another faction from achieving theirs. A faction affects the game through its faces, faction leaders, minor NPCs, and as an organization.

Faces are NPCs important to the story, to the faction, or both. A face has a full character sheet and can use all faction stunts for free. In most cases, a face's statistics will be similar to those of the PCs.

A **faction leader**, however, will have an apex skill one rank higher than the highest apex skill among the PCs. So, at the start of a game, a faction leader will have one skill at Superb (+5), two at Great (+4), three at Good (+3), four at Fair (+2), and five at Average (+1).

Minor NPCs, either as individuals or a group of mooks, use their faction's aspect ratings and mark stress on the faction's sheet. They are the eyes, ears, and hands of the faction. When they act, they are doing so as the faction.

Finally, a faction is an organization. It has buildings, resources, allies—all of which are vulnerable. Players can attack a faction by attacking its property, convincing an ally to turn against it, or stealing its resources. The faction actively resists by rolling with one of its aspect ratings, and weathers the attacks by marking stress or consequences.

THE PLOT ENGINE

Three main elements drive the plot in *Prism*: factions, lucid colors, and jobs. While a single session could focus on just one of these three, the best arcs involve all three. An engine runs best when fully assembled.

Each of the three elements focuses on a different level and arena of play. Faction plots focus on people and agendas; the play tends to be low-key and long-term with short bursts of action when developing plots or investigations collide. Lucid color plots take one of two forms: a quest or an immediate response. The quest plot can occupy a session, maybe two, and involves hunting through dreams for colors. The immediate response plot is a quick reactive encounter—either a color is influencing people negatively or the layers of reality have thinned and something has slipped through or otherwise gotten lost. Sometimes these thin points are accidental, but other times they are related to some larger scheme. Job plots focus on investigation with a few key encounters. They span one to three sessions and have a clearly defined end goal.

Factions
Assembling the Plot

Begin by looking through the factions involved in your game and with the PCs. What does each faction want? Choose one of the goals and construct a scheme the faction can follow to achieve the goal. The schemes can be as elaborate as you like, but give each at least two or three breakpoints at which something could go horribly wrong, points where the PCs can intervene. Each breakpoint is usually a major step in the scheme—breaking into a location, stealing a certain item, tracking someone down, building a hot-air balloon. These are big actions and opportunities for encounters. You can determine the details at the table.

These points also help you, the GM, determine what the faction is doing in the background. If one breakpoint is impersonating a certain librarian with access to rare books, then the players could encounter members of the faction spying on the librarian or purchasing clothing similar to the librarian's.

Involving only one faction is great for a shorter-term plot, but the game is more fun and provides more options to the players when multiple factions are in play. Once again, choose a faction and one of its goals. After you decide on a scheme, try to align at least one of the scheme's breakpoints with one of the other factions. Either the factions' need or reason should align. For example, both factions could want access to the rare books. One faction, however, might want to steal some books about a rare lucid color, while the other faction might want to destroy all the books in the collection. Alternatively, both factions could want to destroy the collection, but one wants to do it very sneakily, while the other is assembling a flashy bomb.

Hooking the Players

During the course of a game, the PCs should learn about either a full scheme or the planning around one of the breakpoints. This does not, however, ensure their involvement. For that, you need to either use the PCs' faction ties and debts owed to pull them in or set the scheme or breakpoint against a PC goal. For example, the PCs might need one of the books the factions are planning to steal or destroy. Alternatively, a job could require that the PCs consult the very same librarian that the factions are impersonating. Stopping the impersonation then leads to stopping the theft or bomb.

Another way to hook players into a faction plot is to align PC goals with a faction scheme. Such strange bedfellows can give opportunities for some interesting roleplay and chances for the PCs to incur or earn debts with the faction.

Lucid Colors
Assembling the Plot

Quest plots are fairly straightforward. A specific color or effect is needed, so the PCs must travel through dreams to locate and retrieve the color. The difficulty arises either from the rarity of the color or from the dangers of the dream around it, such as attacking monsters or an unstable landscape. In the course of a job or working for or against a faction, the PCs can need a certain color they do not already have. This then triggers the quest. The need also exerts a sense of urgency and even a timeline.

Immediate response plots vary a lot. A color causes problems or the layers of reality thin. Here are some possibilities:

- A lucid color was mixed into someone's home paint. Now anyone who sleeps in the spare bedroom falls into a coma.

- An up-and-coming painter used lucid colors in their latest work. Those who spend too much time in proximity to the painting lose their inhibitions.

- Children have been telling stories of seeing small fairies or hearing singing at the edges of a park calling the children into the woods. One child has gone missing.

- A monster, visible only through goggles with the right lenses, is lost and attacking a bridge. News crews report a strange, localized earthquake. Many civilians are in danger.

Basically, just read over the colors in play and ask yourself, "What's the worst that could happen?" The answer would likely make for an interesting plot.

These problems can tie to other plots, but they can also occur on their own. PCs will then have to decide between continuing to pursue their original goal or following a detour to fix a more immediate problem but allow their rivals to get ahead of them.

Hooking the Players

Present the problem and, if necessary, endanger an NPC or location the PCs care about. Otherwise, you can compel their aspects so that they cannot ignore what is happening. Plots about lucid colors make great hooks for faction and job plots. Just encourage your players to ask *why* the problem happened, *who* is behind it, or *what* the real goal was.

Also, whenever the PCs solve a problem, always look for the twist. For example, the PCs find the lost boy and then strengthen reality, sealing the fairies away back in their own world. The twist is that they actually brought back a changeling. This creates a hook for a job plot—contain the changeling and rescue the child. Or, the PCs destroy the painting that was affecting everyone around it. Consequently, they're now the subjects of a police investigation. The twist is that one of the detectives is Lucid and a member of a rival faction. This creates a hook for a faction plot. Not every solution needs a twist, but it's a good way to tie plots together or create a hook for the next plot.

Jobs
Assembling the Plot

Jobs are short investigations and often share elements with a color plot. The difference is that the job has a client, someone who needs to be appeased. The PCs do not need to operate in any official capacity to receive and complete jobs.

To create a job plot, you can start either with the goal or the client. If you're starting with the goal, look first at the goals and schemes of the factions in play and choose either a goal or breakpoint to set the PCs counter to. For example, a faction wants to steal a diamond. The PCs could be hired to stop them, but they could also just be asked to do a security audit of the museum using lucid colors. Do any unguarded entrances appear in the right shade?

Another way to create a job plot is to start with the client. The client can be a friend, a former imaginary friend living within dreams, a faction calling in a debt, or anyone. The question then is: what would that person want?

The client can even be the PCs themselves. Their equipment does not last forever and can be lost or damaged, and on occasion they will need to make new gear or repair what they already have.

Hooking the Players

The hook for a job is obvious—someone asks for the PCs' help. If players refuse the hook, use some of the techniques discussed for color and faction plots to raise the stakes and reincorporate the plot.

First, ask yourself, what's the worst that could happen? This is your consequence of inaction. Then think through one or two ways the PCs could notice events moving toward the consequence and stop it from happening. These are your breakpoints. Use them in the background and for story fodder, just as you do with faction breakpoints.

And if the worst should happen? Well, it should make for an interesting session. Put the PCs in danger and play out each rippling consequence.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF KLARA BOSKO

This adventure will introduce you to each of the elements of the *Prism* world, from collecting lucid colors in dreams to tangling with factions to dealing with another layer of reality. The adventure is divided into three acts, and each act into two parts. If you don't want to be spoiled, I recommend leaving this chapter to the GM.

Act One: The Artist of Dreams

An Email from Klara Bosko

The email arrived late in the afternoon from a Klara Bosko. A quick online search revealed that Klara is a painter in the city whose fantastical paintings have been gaining a lot of attention. After her latest show was recently and inexplicably postponed, rumors have been spreading that she is working on something incredible.
The email read:

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Hello,

I heard that you have some useful skills.

Meet me where dreams collide tonight. I have a
proposition for you.

                            -Klara Bosko
```

Most people prefer to meet in a nice café, but artists are weird.
Night has fallen and you are now asleep and dreaming. All of you are in your own dreams. You will need to get to the Nexus for the meeting. When you first visited the Nexus, you had to pass through one of your worst nightmares. What did you fight?

Ask players to describe the nightmare their characters defeated and why it scared them. This is an opportunity for players to build up some backstory for their characters. Ask a couple follow-up questions about the characters to help you get a better handle on them. For characters who have never been to the Nexus, which is unlikely to be any of the PCs, run the battle with the nightmare to get Nexus access.

The Nexus is where all dreams and lucid dreamers meet. Its appearance fluctuates. What does it look like tonight?

Encourage your players to describe the Nexus. If they get stuck, some ideas for the space include a very large train station or an island at the center of a large river delta with rivers flowing out in every direction.

When you arrive, Klara Bosko is waiting for you. She is a short woman with a dark blue undercut, freckles all over—some of which she's connected into constellations—and a nervous smile. Brown and violet paint is stuck in her cuticles.

Klara talks with the PCs. She confirms that she is an artist and explains that she is hunting for a color that she calls Smauk. The color creates fear and awe—its emotion aspect is Terror and Majesty of Hurricanes. Klara will say, if asked, that she does not know what reality the color reveals. She wants the color for a painting. She tells the PCs to meet her back in the Nexus when they have the color.

Terror and Majesty

You need to find a dream where you can collect the color Smauk. You know the color's emotion aspect—what type of dreams would inspire fear and awe as hurricanes, great white sharks, and so on?

Let the players decide what kind of dream they want to explore. Follow their lead and describe what they find. Remember that they are walking through dreams. Describe the scene using concrete details beyond sight—sensations, tastes, smells, sounds—but that defy expectation. The wind tastes green. Fallen leaves smell like burnt caramel. Remind them that nothing is reliable, save for what they will to be so.

At some point during their hunt, introduce a nightmare. The nightmare should arise organically from the dream's descriptions, but should also be intimidating, even chilling. Smauk's emotion aspect should make this easier; the players are seeking out fear. The Nightmare uses only one skill, Will, but the way it fights matches its form. A shark uses its teeth. A claustrophobic space shuttle uses antagonistic computers and a looming star. Make this fight difficult and set the Nightmare's Will to Superb (+5).

Once the PCs find Smauk, ask them to describe the color. Collecting Smauk—or any color—requires close proximity. Ask your players how they plan on getting close enough to will the color into their poltergeist rings. If the emotional content of the dream is strong, collecting the color requires a Will roll against Good (+3) difficult. If the emotional content is weak, increase the difficulty.

When you return to the Nexus, Klara is nowhere to be found. Other dreamers remember watching her flicker and disappear. She must have awakened suddenly…

You can wait to wake up naturally, or you can force yourself awake by fighting nightmares and getting taken out or conceding the fight…or by killing yourself in the dream. Your call.

If the players decide to confront a nightmare, make the fight difficult so that players accumulate stress and can wake up. Remember, any consequences that the PCs earn in dreams also affect them in the waking world.

Nightmare
Encountered during the hunt for Smauk.

ASPECT

> *This aspect describes the appearance or nature of the nightmare; make it fit the dream the characters are exploring.*

SKILLS
  Superb (+5): Will

STRESS ☐☐☐☐

Act Two: All an Illusion

The Missing Artist

You awaken where you fell asleep. The Smauk in your rings will hold for a couple hours, but you'll have to stabilize it in pigment soon. Get your equipment or go to your workshop, and roll Crafts against Fair (+2) difficulty. Where will you all meet up and how will you find Klara now that you're awake?

Players can use Investigate or Resources to learn the location of Klara's studio. They may also learn that no one has seen Klara for a while and that the Mallorys have been seen at her studio, most recently a couple hours ago.

If the players check out the studio, they find it ransacked. Finished and incomplete paintings are stacked together against a wall. Along another wall is a large and elaborate painted glass window. Several of the window panes are tinted with dream colors. If the PCs look through them, they see fantasy worlds that match the paintings. If they go through Klara's notes, they'll find a lot of to-do lists and reminders. In her sketchbook, they'll find rough sketches of dragons heavily crossed out and notes about how she needs to get closer.

As the players investigate, an artist—Antoine Lewis—working in the studio next to Klara's comes over and asks the players to be quiet. If the PCs have not already learned about the Mallorys, he'll describe the people who came and grabbed a woman from the studio a few hours previous. If pressed about what the people looked like, he'll describe the woman the Mallorys took as an Asian woman with light peach-brown hair—definitely not Klara, but could be an important lead or an imposter.

He'll also describe a tall woman with short red hair, thick biceps, and a voice like a fallen angel—melodic and dangerous. If a PC has connections to the Mallorys, they will recognize the description of Tallula Connolly, a former boxer and now the well-respected, well-feared debt collector and enforcer of the Mallory family.

This section allows the players to flex their investigative muscles and interact a bit as a team outside of a fight or dream.

Debts to be Paid

After the PCs figure out where Tallula and her crew have taken Klara, they can decide to leave her to Tallula's tender mercies. If they do, skip to the Annex trying to stabilize reality and set it up for the players to help them (page 42). While collecting pigment from Klara's studio for the Annex, they discover she has gone to another layer of reality but forgotten to bring her lenses that show the base reality. This will get the players back on track to saving the real Klara.

For the full experience, though, encourage the players to track down Tallula.

Tallula manages a popular gym and boxing ring. When you arrive, a group of average women—mothers, a couple graduate students, office workers—is in the middle of a boxing class. Besides restrooms and exits, there are two important doors. One leads to an office, and the other leads to Tallula's soundproofed backroom.

If the PCs check the office computers, they'll learn that the Annex has reached out for help to "fix some of our damage."

In the backroom, Tallula is interrogating a seated Asian woman. Two men stand behind the woman, pushing her back into her seat whenever she tries to rise. Tallula calls her "Joelle." Tallula reveals that Joelle owes the Mallorys, is late on her payments, and has already tried twice now to outrun her debts. What precisely Joelle owes is not clear.

Joelle says that she has figured out a way to repay her debt, referencing her scam of posing as Klara. She found a reality where the city was zoned differently. The downtown area is all residential; easy access to multiple bank vaults. Turns out "Klara" knows exactly what type of reality Smauk reveals. Tallula starts to ask questions about the people in the Smauk reality in preparation for crossing into it.

If the PCs haven't yet been discovered, Joelle describes them well enough and by name that running would be a temporary solution. She suggests that Tallula hire them.

What do the players want to do? Do they turn over the color? Do they fight and free Joelle? Do they try to come to an arrangement with Tallula?

If they choose to fight, Tallula is a face NPC with her own stats. The two men in the room are minor NPCs and fight as the Mallorys faction.

The Mallorys

FACES

Tallula Connolly (Enforcer), Granuaile Mallory (Matriarch)

ASPECTS

Reputation: Collect on their Generosity (Rating: 2)
Value Statement: Mallorys Always Thrive (Rating: 5)
Conflict Approach: Shrewd Smiles and Sharp Knives (Rating: 3)
Vision: A City on a String (Rating: 1)
Current Goal: A Doppelganger for the State's Attorney (Rating: 4)

TASKS ☐☐☐

SETBACKS ☐☐☐

STRESS ☐☐☐

CONSEQUENCES

Endangered
☐ An important member is jailed
☐ A safe house is compromised

Undermined
☐ Access to a person or location is restricted
☐ An important object is stolen

Thwarted
☐ A goal is lost, no matter how much progress had been made
☐ Mark two goal setbacks

STUNTS

A Network of Favors: The Mallorys have many people who owe them. A faction member can roll against Fair (+2) to check if an NPC owes the Mallorys. On a success, the NPC does. On a success with style, the NPC owes a *big* favor or they have a very good relationship with the Mallorys in spite of what they owe.

Taught by Tallula: Tallula teaches her students how to attack weaknesses and end fights. Once per scene, a faction member can add 2 stress to a successful attack in a physical fight.

Tallula Connolly

DESCRIPTION

A tall woman with short red hair, thick biceps, and a voice like a fallen angel—melodic and dangerous.

ASPECTS

High Concept: Respected Enforcer of the Mallorys

Trouble: Can't Resist a Good Fight

Other Aspects: Endless Patience

SKILLS

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Athletics, Will

Fair (+2): Physique, Provoke, Streets

Average (+1): Deceive, Notice, Investigate, Shoot

STRESS

Physical ☐☐☐
Mental ☐☐☐☐

CONSEQUENCES

Mild (2):

Mild Mental (2):

Moderate (4):

Severe (6):

Act Three: Lost in Possibilities

Anything for Art

The players learn from Joelle that Klara has been missing for a month now. At least, that's how long Joelle has been using her studio. If she is alive and not in need of emergency medical attention, Joelle asks the players to escort her back to Klara's studio so she can get her stuff. As payment for the Smauk, Joelle will give the players a pair of lenses she lifted from Klara's studio.

If the players did not rescue Joelle, you have a few options. The Mallorys can hire the PCs or send Joelle to hire them. This can drop the clue about Klara's absence or can lead to a completely different adventure—such as breaking into a vault. You can also prompt the players to investigate by asking them: if Joelle is Klara, then where is the real Klara? If they return to Klara's studio, Antoine will know how long Joelle has been using Klara's studio. Also, in this case, Joelle never lifted the lenses, allowing the PCs to discover them.

The lenses are tinted with Vorsta, a very dark blue-black and well-known color. The PCs will recognize this color. Vorsta's emotion aspect is THEY'RE WATCHING. The lenses reveal base reality. They are how you get back home if you have traveled to another layer of reality.

Remind the players about their earlier investigation in the studio and about Klara's notes about needing to get closer.

A knock comes from the door of the studio. A man and woman in almost matching brown suits ask permission to enter. They have come to confiscate some paint.

The Annex has arrived. They are trying to stabilize reality by cutting off access to a dangerous layer of reality infested with dragons. To this end, they are collecting all of the Weir-Nuñez in the city.

The big thing for your players to discover right now is that Klara Bosko has used Weir-Nuñez to step fully into another layer of reality and that she left her Vorsta-tinted lenses behind, which means that she cannot see the base reality anymore and so cannot return home. If the Annex cut off access to Weir-Nuñez's reality, Klara will be stuck.

From this point, the players have a lot of options. They can try to reason with the Annex. They can find some Weir-Nuñez in dreams or steal some from the Annex stockpile in the waking world.

Play out whatever they decide to do. If they want to save Klara, they will need enough Weir-Nuñez and Vorsta for all of them. If a player wants to pay a fate point, they can declare that they already have Vorsta lenses.

Traveling to the Weir-Nuñez layer of reality will take an act of Will against Great (+4) difficulty.

Stopping the Annex from collecting all of Weir-Nuñez or from destroying it once they have it would cause the faction to suffer a setback.

Weir-Nuñez

Description: The color that appears when you lay green and gold next to each other and cross your eyes

Emotion Aspect: Hopped Up on Caffeine Jittery

Revealed Reality: A world in which dragons reign

Vorsta

Description: Dark blue-black

Emotion Aspect: They're Watching

Revealed Reality: Base reality

The Annex

FACES

Zuri Walker (Agent), Cooper Jacobs (Agent)

ASPECTS

Reputation: Wannabe Cowboys (Rating: 2)
Value Statement: Our Lives for Theirs (Rating: 4)
Conflict Approach: "If you can, do. If you can't? Improvise!" (Rating: 5)
Vision: Stability and Prosperity for All (Rating: 3)
Current Goal: Close Access to the Weir-Nuñez Reality (Rating: 1)

TASKS ☐☐☐

SETBACKS ☐☐☐

STRESS ☐☐☐

CONSEQUENCES

Endangered
☐ An important member is jailed
☐ A member is killed

**Undermined**
☐ Access to a person or location is restricted
☐ Damaging lies are spread

Thwarted
☐ A goal is lost, no matter how much progress had been made
☐ Mark two goal setbacks

STUNTS

Wherever We're Needed: The Annex is talented at finding their way into official events and investigations. Once per session, a faction member can create credentials to get into wherever they want to be. Roll 1 die. On a ➕, the credentials are good and will cause no problems, this time at least. On a ◼, the credentials are good at first glance, but won't pass closer scrutiny. On a ➖, the forgery is discovered shortly after you get in. You'll have to move fast!

Guardian: You protect people. Gain +2 whenever you defend someone else by using Athletics or Fight.
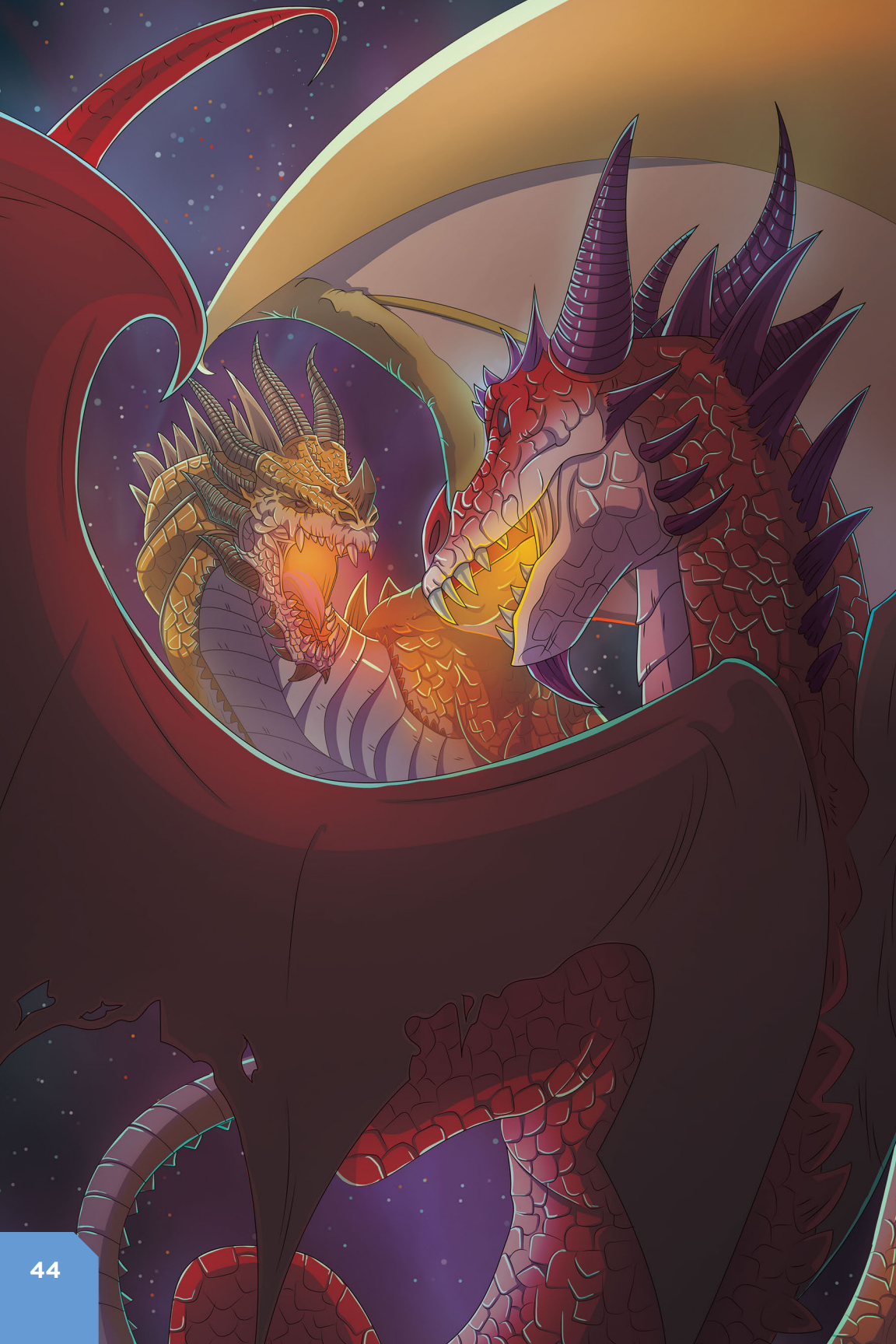
The Realm of Dragons

Tree stumps, poking up like jagged teeth, smoke. Overhead, two massive dragons are tangled together by their tails. They drag bloody claws through each other's scales and roar. Across from the burning forest is a cave with what looks like a strategic arrangement of branches and stones over the entrance. You have entered the realm of dragons. What do you do?

The Weir-Nuñez reality has the following aspects:
- Draconic Battleground
- Humanity on the Edge

This is a world where dragons rule the air, the land, and the waves. Humans scrape by in cave systems too narrow for the great dragons to enter. Within the caves, human society can be as simple or as complex as interests your players. When humans are at the edge, they might scrap and scramble by as in a post-apocalyptic survival story. Or they may create elaborate ceremonies and hierarchies and cling to protocol. Ask each player to describe a custom or ritual observed by the people they meet in Weir-Nuñez.

You can also decide if dragons always existed or if they rose at some point, due to experimentation, a sudden mutation, or extraterrestrial interference.

The important point is that this is not a safe place.

Whatever strategies your players employ to find and rescue Klara, be sure they fight a dragon. At least once.

Klara, when she is found, is relieved to return home and very possessive of her sketchbook. The sketchbook is full of highly detailed drawings of dragons and the people who survive alongside them. Klara has the following aspects: "I have to paint this!" and Forgetful Is an Understatement. Klara will not join any fighting. When running, she keeps pace with the PCs.

When the PCs and Klara return to her studio in the base reality, Klara immediately starts setting up a space to start painting and doesn't seem to notice the disarray of her studio. She mentions that she wishes she had a lucid color to emphasize how terrifying and awe-inspiring the dragons are…

The Dragon

ASPECTS
Led by Instincts; Terrifyingly Large

SKILLS
Superb (+5): Fire-Breath
Great (+4): Flight
Good (+3): Claws
Fair (+2): Teeth

STRESS ☐2 ☐2 ☐3 ☐3

CONSEQUENCES
Mild (2):
Moderate (4):
Severe (6):