

Fading Suns Guide to Character Generation

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The page or pages of material that follow pertain to the Character Generation system for the *Fading Suns* science fiction roleplaying game. The following is a guide to the character generation process for the *Fading Suns* rpg that offers some tid-bits of advice, some warnings, and other information that players (and possibly GMs) might want to know before and during the character creation process. This set of guidelines and advice are quite subjective and are based entirely on my perceptions of the game and on the thoughts pertaining to this that I've heard from my players during the time that I've been running the game. Everything here should be taken with a grain of salt, and a liberal dose of coriander.

The sections to be found in this Guide to Character Generation include:

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The Character Concept

The character concept for a player character in *Fading Suns* is probably the most important element of the character when it comes right down to it. While it's important to know something of the background of the Fading Suns universe before creating the character, the concept that one comes up with will aid tremendously in determining some of the numbers and game-based mechanics that go into the creation of the character. Give plenty of thought to the character concept that you design for the game, since the richer and more detailed the initial concept for the character, the easier the game mechanics and numbers will fit into the concept.

While it is ideal to make the numbers fit the concept, and not the other way round, sometimes it will be impossible to manage this feat. A lot of the time, whether the ideas that you had for the character concept actually make it onto the character sheet and into play are at the discretion and/or whim of the GamesMaster. If you make the concept interesting enough that I want to see what happens with the character, or if you come up with a concept that I feel I can work with, expand on as the campaign goes on, and that I feel has enough material in the written section that I can work with (and sometimes use against the character) in the campaign, then I'm most likely to allow it, even if it goes against my better judgement at the time of character creation. I firmly believe this is true of all GMs. And the *Fading Suns* game system encourages this sort of thing.

Character Archetypes/Roles

It is likely that one of the most misunderstood aspects of the *Fading Suns* rpg is the nature and role that Character Roles and Archetypes play in the system and the character design process. While at first, the Character Archetypes (I prefer to call them this rather than Character Roles, since that doesn't strike me as how these are meant to be played) may appear to be Character Classes (harking back to the days of D&D and other such class- based games), they aren't. The Character Archetypes that are suggested are merely guidelines and a way of presenting the common characteristics of a type of character that you might wish to play in the game. The basic *Fading Suns* rulesbook presents some thoughts about the "stereotypes" of the various Power groups on the sidebars on pages 39, 44, & 52. This is a good basis on which to start.

The basic Character Archetypes found in the book present a series of generalities and guidelines for how to go about setting up a *typical* member of the given Noble House, Church Sect, or League Guild, but do not require the player to stick to these limitations. "Make the character archetype your own," is something I continually tell my players. While I'm flexible enough to allow a lot of different things to pass and go into the character sheet, it's important for the GamesMaster never to lose sight of the defined parameters of the House, Sect, or Guild in question. A character who is totally dishonest is not likely to be a member of House Hawkwood; a character who cannot use torture and coercion is not likely to be an Avestite. Common sense is the basic rule here, but it is not a hard and fast system. Each Archetype merely provides a few suggestions on how to spend the points that you've been allotted in character generation, but doesn't force the player to spend the points in this manner.

Alien Races and the Characters

One of the things that many players have noticed is that there are few guidelines for playing aliens in *Fading Suns*, although the basic rules do not preclude the playing of certain alien types, such as the Ur-Obun, the Ur-Ukar, and the Vorox. There are several other species mentioned in the game rulesbook, such as the Shantor, the Gannok, and others that one might wish to play, for which rules are not provided. Needless to say, it is not appropriate for the GM to allow the players to create Vau or Symbiot characters for the campaign, unless this is an element of the style of campaign that you, as GM, wishe to run in the Fading Suns universe. The game system is flexible enough to allow the GM to run this sort of campaign, but it's not the sort of campaign that I would encourage. Too little is known about the Vau, especially their technology and the like, at this time, although this will likely change in future *Fading Suns* supplements. As for the Symbiots, well...let's just say that that (a) the campaign wouldn't be all that long, and b) you deserve what you get, if you try this.

As mentioned earlier, there are other alien races that can conceivably be played by players like yourself who are looking to playing something more exotic than a Human. It is expected that HDI will be doing supplements that include the characteristics and archetypes for alien races (the **Player's Companion** includes a great many of the major alien races, and the **Children of the Ur: Obun and Ukar** supplement details these two as well); individual GMs will likely design additional races that can be played by players.

Of House, Church, and Guild

One of the most important elements in the game system is the structure of the Noble Houses, the Church Sects, and the League Guilds. Many of my players have expressed a strong feeling that, while it is desirable to play individuals who have no direct alignment to one of these three Power bases, it is advisable to either create a character that is part of or to join a House, Sect, or Guild. This is a matter of long-term survival and some back-up, since loners tend to be picked on, tend to have fewer resources available to them, and tend to make enemies much more frequently than those who are part of a larger Power base and organization. There are other advantages as well, and these are covered under the sections dealing with Benefices and Afflictions and Blessings and Curses below.

When it comes right down to it, the player characters *must* somehow fit in with the various powers that rule the *Fading Suns* universe. That usually implies one of the Noble Houses, the Church Sects or the League Guilds. The real key here is to choose your House, Sect, or Guild wisely. At this point and time, there is only the supplement that covers the Nobles (Lords of the Known Worlds, but we are expecting the book covering the Church Sects (Priests of the Celestial Sun) any time in June, 1997. The *Fading Suns* rulebook gives basic details on all of the Noble Houses, Church Sects, and League Guilds, and so far, Lords of the Known Worlds has done an admirable job; if the supplements covering the Church and the League are as good, there will be plenty of

guidelines and advice for players choosing their Power group. For now, this section will only cover the additional Houses that have been added to the Nobles category.

The Noble Houses provided in the *Fading Suns* rulebook are of the Ten; there are only five left, fortunes waxing and waning with the centuries and political manueverings of each House. There are numerous minor Houses that are available if you want to play a Noble, but none of the major Houses catches your fancy. The official minor Houses are:

House Juandaastas

A spiritual House, with a strong belief in equal rights for humans and aliens. They have powerful friends among the Hawkwood and al-Malik houses.

House Justinian

This is a House consisting of an extremely rigid, military family and lifestyle. Quite different han the Hazat. Their motto is "Loyalty unto Death."

House Keddah

A proud, honourable family with a strong hatred for the Decados, even though House Keddah is indirectly controlled by them.

House Masser

A House directly under the thumb of House Decados, they are a weakened family bound into war with the al-Malik.

House Shelit

While socially very dull, they are quite interesting from a historical basis, possibly heretically so. They are a new House allied with House Hazat, having broken away from the Kurga Caliphate (barbarians). Strangely enough, they have a much more technological basis, and are considered at odds with the Church.

House Than

A family of angelic looking, psychically powerful people from a previously Lost World. They have become a target of constant persecution from the Church.

House Torenson

One of the Houses that nearly became extinct, the Torensons have become a much sought after people due to their unrivaled expertise on matters of etiquette. They wield more power than many Nobles might think.

House Trusnikron

Once a nearly barbaric family, this House has a strong, if not somewhat odd, code of honour. They are close to nature and friends with Houses Hawkwood and Hazat.

House Van Gelde

This is a bitter and twisted family, due to its near destruction and the persecution to which they have been subject, who have become experts in espionage and assassination. Unsurprisingly, they are allied to House Decados.

House Xanthippe

This is a matriarchal family, small in stature but tough, and fiercly independent. They have survived through their cunning, trickery and wisdom. Mostly occupied as mercenaries. It should be noted that if you're an ambitious players, you can, in consultation with the GamesMaster, create your own Minor House. Or even Major House, for that matter... An equally important fact to note is that the majority of the major alien races (ie., the Ur-Obun, the Ur-Ukar, and the Vorox), even if imposed by Humanity, have nobility structures of sorts, and you can play an alien Noble or something along those lines as well.

While it might seem that as a player you're rather limited in regard to what kind of character you can play in *Fading Suns*, this actually isn't the case. There are plenty of Character Archetypes that aren't provided for various reasons in the game system; there will be more with every passing supplement, and the GamesMaster and her players are encouraged to create new Character Archetypes and character occupations.

Each of the Noble Houses, Church Sects and League Guilds have armies, and many of them have other internal organizations. Some of the more notable of these include the **Imperial Eye**, the Emperor's secret service and agents of espionage; **The Jakovian Agency**, the infamous espionage unit of the Decados, complete with its own very special stormtroopers; and **The Dervishes**, the Hazat's elite psychic troops (now offically disbanded, of course). Bear in mind that all Houses, supposedly, have secret sevices, although some are more secret than others.

Characteristics

Once you have determined the Character Role that you want to play, or created your own, it's time to start plugging some numbers into these things. The Characteristics of the player character consist of the Body characteristics (Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance), the Mind characteristics (Wits, Perception, and Tech), and the Spirit characteristics (Extrovert/Introvert, Passion/Calm, Faith/Ego, and Human/Alien). It's important during this step, and later on, to add points wisely into the character that one is playing, since each of the Characteristics has certain functions.

While the Character Role that you have chosen gives some guidelines as to which characteristics to emphasize, you must be true to your own vision of the character. If you don't want to play a military-oriented Hazat, don't necessarily put a lot of points into the Body characteristics. Similarly, if you want your character to practice Psi or Theurgy, bear this in mind for later in the character generation process, since Psi and Theurgy use some of the various characteristics and skills more often than others. See the section on the Occult below. Bear in mind that Endurance determines Vitality later on in the process, and that Wyrd points depend on Passion or Calm, Extrovert/Introvert, or Faith.

For the most part, the Characteristics that represent Body and Mind are really quite basic, and don't need any expounding. Several exceptions are noted here for these sets of Characteristics. Strength provides a character with a damage bonus, and this is a consideration that you should take into effect depending on the type of Archetype you chose for your character. Endurance, as noted above, acts to determine your character's Vitality levels later on. Tech is an unusual characteristic, and not one found in most rpgs.

The scientific method is by no means all that commonplace in the universe of *Fading Suns*. The Tech characteristic represents your knack and understanding of technology, aiding in repairing broken equipment and the comprehension of high-tech devices and sciences.

Spirit Characteristics

The Spirit characteristics are probably the most important in the game, since they define the basic psychological elements of your character. They are also the most difficult group of characteristics to understand and deal with, since they largely work on a situational basis. While the Faith and Ego Characteristics are oriented around the Church, and the Alien and Human Characteristics revolve around one's Humanity and Alienness (including how cybernetic devices fit into the psyche of your character), it is the Passion/Calm and the Extrovert/Introvert that most often are important to the overall interaction that your player character will have with others, notably the other player characters. (You remember them?)

The Extrovert and Introvert pair of characteristics are the simplest to work with and define, since many players can associate most closely with them. This pair of characteristics directly affects interpersonal relationships. The Extrovert tends to reach out to others, preferring social situations to sitting alone in a room reading a book. The Introvert is one who is more comfortable with herself than with others, and tends to avoid social situation that they cannot control. Neither characteristic implies social abilities - the Extrovert could be a nebbish nobody likes who keeps butting into others conversations, while the Introvert could be the famous author everybody flocks around, but who avoids parties.

Passion, and its opposing characteristic, Calm, represent two emotional extremes. As with most emotions, they have a tendency to govern the character as much as she governs them. Some people are hotheads (Passion) and find it hard to control their outbursts. Other people are laid back (Calm) and may actually find it hard to get excited about something. Both Passion and Calm have uses in the game that your character can take advantage of, but for the most part, this pair of traits is somewhat of a powderkeg waiting to be triggered by a person or situation with the right psychological match. You should choose your Passion and Calm values with caution, being faithful to the character concept that you have.

Faith and Ego are the two characteristics that relate to religious belief, or the lack thereof. It's actually more a matter of the soul and determining identity. Faith and Ego are rarely rolled by characters during the game, used most often when using Occult powers and weird Ur artifacts. Most characters go through life without ever having their Faith or Ego tested, but sometimes the characters will find situations that test their sense of identity.

The Human and Alien characteristics are certainly the oddest pair in the game. They are meant to emphasize both the isolation of humans in the wide universe and the strangeness of alien races and to set a series of benchmarks for transcending these differences. Evolutionary steps for humans or aliens, whether they are cybernetic or genetic, usually

require some level(s) in the opposing characteristic of this pair. It's important to realize that a Human with a high Alien trait does not turn into an alien being; she is simply farther from her racial or cultural norm. Likewise, the measure of an alien's strangeness or deviation from his racial or cultural norm is her Human trait, while her Alien represents how well she epitomizes her own culture.

As a basic guideline for the players who are considering creating characters for Fading Suns, make a few notes about the personality of the character you want to play before you get to this step and go into full gear on character creation, once your GamesMaster has described the nature of what these sets of Characteristics represent. If you have a firm view of your character, if you have a strong idea of what kinds of activities you tend towards, whether you're religious or self-reliant in your faith, whether you let your emotions rule you, and any or all combinations in between, this step in determining some numbers will go much easier for you.

Skills

Skills in the *Fading Suns* system take one of two forms, Natural and Learned. **Natural** skills are those innate abilities that all characters begin with; these include skills such as fighting and stealth. **Learned** skills are those skills that a character learns through training and/or experience; these skills include learning to work with think machines and the ability to debate a topic with someone. Certain skills in the system can only be taken by specific groups; for example, only the Guild characters can take Redemption (repair) skills, and only Church characters can take Academia. You can choose to have your character take a Benefice (more on this later) that allows you to pick up skills that you would normally not be allowed to take, but this decision is one that has to be weighed heavily by the player. Make sure that the skills that you take are relevant to the concept of the character that you've come up with, and that the character *needs* the skill(s) for a reason that makes sense.

Each of the Character Roles that you can choose from include guidelines when it comes to the skills that the character might have. You should weigh the merits of these skills, evaluating them in the context of the player character that you wish to create. The character is never obliged to be a stereotype of a given Character Role, and you should choose the skills that you **want**, not the ones that you *should* take or feel obliged to take, because the Character Role shows them to be typical. Having a basic section written up on personality, including some history pertaining to what the character does for a living will help significantly in determining what skills to have or not to have. The available histories of the Houses, Sects, or Guilds might make these choices somewhat easier for you, or might complicate your choices. The key here is to be faithful to the character Role that you have in mind, while still fitting it in with the Character Role that you've chosen, and with making the player character viable in the game universe.

Benefices and Afflictions

One of the most convoluted and rather mysterious aspect of Character Creations in the *Fading Suns* system for many players is the choosing of Benefices and Afflictions. Benefices are the elements that define the birthrights, monies, or other societal advantages that your character will have. Afflictions are negative Benefices, social handicaps that hinder your character to some extent. While it may not appear so at first, there is a distinct difference between Benefices and Afflictions and Blessings and Curses (which are covered later in this guide).

When generating the player character using the Character Generation rules, the player is permitted no more than ten (10) points worth of Benefices. Any number of points worth of Afflictions can be taken, since these points will be treated as Extra Points (see the next section of the Guide for more on this).

The guideline for choosing which Benefices and which Afflictions to choose is simple: Take Benefices and Afflictions which fit the concept for the character that you came up with. While some Benefices and Afflictions are noted as being the common ones that characters of the various Houses, Sects, and Guilds have, there is no forced imposition of these Benefices and Afflictions on your character. Indeed, your character can have Benefices or Afflictions that are opposites of those taken by your affiliated group traditionally, but this may make your character at odds with her House, Sect, or Guild during the campaign, something that may be more of a hindrance than anything else. This is a matter that you and the GM should resolve to your mutual satisfaction, but it's something that every player has to think about and every GM should caution her players about.

It is important to note here that some alien races begin with certain Benefices and Afflictions, and these generally do not cost the player when creating a character of the alien race in question. Sometimes, the Benefices or Afflictions are paid for out of the Extra Points (see below) that a character receives during the process. This section may or may not be revised, as more information on the *Fading Suns* alien races becomes available.

Extra Points

Once you have alloted the Benefices and Afflictions that you wish to place on the character, the Afflictions points are added to those available to the character for Extra Points. A player will begin with a total of forty (40) Extra Points that can be alloted to the character's abilities, plus the points that have been gained through the acquisition of Afflictions. A character also gains Extra Points by taking Curses, which can only be chosen during the time during which the player uses his or her Extra Points. (See the section on Blessings and Curses for more on this.)

You can use the Extra Points that you have to purchase abilities for your character, at the following costs:

Characteristics (including Occult) cost 3 points/level

Wyrd costs 2 points/level Skills have a cost of 1 point/level Benefices cost 1 point/point of Benefice Blessings cost 1 point/point of Blessing Occult Powers cost 1 point/level

The manner in which one chooses how to spend one's Extra Points varies from individual player to individual player, but there are several guidelines that can be offered.

First of all, you should consider incrementing those skills that you believe are an inherent part of your character, or to a series of levels that you deems appropriate. This should also take into account your character's affiliations, background, mannerisms, and goals in life and any other elements of personality that you can think of. Needless to say, by the time you reach this stage of character generation, you should have a bit more detail fleshed out about the character's history and personality, and this will simplify matters tremendously.

A major concern in spending the Extra Points that you have rests also upon whether you have chosen to be a Psi or Theurge. In this case, you will find that you're going to have to sacrifice points that might have gone into Skills or Characteristics to purchase the Psi or Theurgy Characteristic, as well as the actual Occult Powers that your character will possess. You're also going to require somewhat more Wyrd Points, since these are used in the use of Occult powers, and this should be another consideration.

The second guideline deals with the acquisition of Blessings for the character in question. Blessings (and Curses) are covered in more detail later in this guide, but you should consider the purchase of Blessings using some of the Extra Points you have simply because this will add a bit more depth to your character, and thus give you more motivation, more more background with which to work, as well as allowing the GM some means of giving you and your character some moral dilemmas, decision, and headaches (which are at the heart of the *Fading Suns* rpg.

It should be noted that while a player can spend Extra Points to purchase Wyrd points, the same is not true of Vitality levels. Vitality levels can only be increased at this point through the increase of the Endurance characteristic, and this is something that many players forget, concentrating more on the other characteristics.

The Occult (Psi and Theurgy)

The GamesMaster may have noted, on reading the *Fading Suns* rulesbook, that there appears to be a correlation between Occult abilities and the jumpgates. Ever since their first travels through jumpgates, Humanity and the other races have displayed Occult abilities to an increasing extent and level of power. Whether there is indeed any correlation between the two is a matter of conjecture, but the Occult is a matter of fact in the universe of the Fading Suns. Those who are religious can access Theurgical abilities,

others may have Psionic talents, and there is darker, third force of the Occult, called Antinomy that is not covered here and is not relevant to player character generation.

As a general rule, if you choose to have your character be an Occultist, you must take either the Psi or Theurgy characteristic. A side effect of this is that the value of the Psi or Theurgy characteristic determines the maximum level of any of the Occult abilities that your character may take. Thus, if your character has a Psi rating of 6, she can choose only Psi abilities that are Level 6 or less. All Occult abilities are powered by Wyrd, and have a cost in Wyrd points to use. Thus, you might wish to increase the starting value of your character's Wyrd points to reflect this additional need for such abilities. Three skills that you should consider taking for the character, in the event that you want to play a character with Occult abilities, are Stoic Mind, Empathy, and Focus; these three skills have benefits to Occultists that make them extremely worthwhile in taking, even if one has to sacrifice other, more mundane skills to do so.

Another element to consider when deciding whether to take Occult abilities is the *stigmata* that come with these abilities. The stigmata is a sign of the character's supernatural differences from normal Humanity, a physical manifestation on the user that is either always present or occurs when the character utilizes an Occult power. Psychic stigmas are more like mediaeval folk superstitions: nosebleeds; an odd birthmark; hair between one's eyebrows; hair on the palms of the hands; when looked at from the right angle, the person is obviously a werewolf. Theurgic stigmas tend to be more religious in nature: lash marks on the arms, tears run down the cheeks when not appropriate; sleepwalking; unnaturally long beard, which when cut, grows back in less than a day; clothing that is worn eventually stains red in a particular area. As a player, you have the right to choose a stigma for your character that you consider to be appropriate, but the player and the GM should work together to come up with something in this regard on which they can both agree.

In addition to the dark arts of Antinomy, there is also a dark side to the use of Psi and Theurgy abilities, called Urge and Hubris, respectively. Players should be very aware of both the Urge and Hubris side of their Psionics or Theurgy respectively, since this consideration adds tremendously to the roleplaying element of the game and also gives the character pause for the darker actions that she might contemplate. Urge is the dark side of Psionics; whenever a character fumbles a psi power role or an actual Psi role, the dark side of the psionics stirs. Ths dark side takes the form of a Dark Twin, that actively takes part in the life of the character, in a manner dependent on its level at the time. It is actually the character herself who is acting, because the ego has been split into two distinct personalities, one of which remains hidden in the unconscious. With more power (ie., Urge levels), this dark personality begins to grow, eventually becoming an entirely physical, separate person. Hubris, for those who practice Theurgy, is very similar to Urge, but takes the form of sin, in this case, sins that stay with the Theurgy user for the rest of her life until she has lost the level of Hubris which empowers them. Hubris is not a split personality or a dark entity growing in the character; it is the character's own human fallibility before the divine. Urge and Hubris are both powerful forces for roleplaying in the game, but they can also lead a character into situations that are very deadly, quite messy, and sometimes confusing.

As a player, you should give a great deal of thought to whether you wish to play an Occultist, and if so, the type of Occult character to be played. Many factors come into the decision as to whether to attempt to play a character with Occult abilities.

Blessings and Curses

As noted in the section on Benefices and Afflictions (see above), there is some confusion between the Benefices and Afflictions and Blessings and Curses, which are covered here. Blessings and Curses, unlike the other two, represent a character's psychological quirks or physical endowments and/or handicaps. Blessings add positive modififers to a characteristic or skill in a particular situation, while Curses subtract from a characteristic or skill in the same fashion.

When generating the player character using the Character Generation rules, you are permitted no more than seven (7) points worth of Blessing modifiers, and cannot choose more than seven (7) points worth of Curses. These traits are meant to emphasize a few select character quirks, not to detail every neurosis possessed by the player character. Cybernetics is an exception to this rule, but that is covered in its own section below.

It is important to note that Blessings and Curses cannot be bought or taken until the player has reached the point of spending the Extra Points that he or she has (see the section above for more details). A player who takes Curses during this part of character generation adds the value of the Curses to the Extra Points that he or she has to buy Blessings, Skills, and other game related variables.

The guideline for choosing which Blessings and which Curses to take is simple: Take Blessings and Curses which fit the concept for the character that you came up with. While some Blessings and Curses are noted as being the common ones that characters of the various Houses, Sects, and Guilds have, there is no forced imposition of these Blessings and Curses. Indeed, your character can have Blessings or Curses that don't fit within the organization of which you're a part, or are personality quirks that might seem somewhat unusual for you to take given a House or Sect affliation, but this will add roleplaying zest to the character, something that the GamesMaster should be encouraging. This is a matter that the GM and the player should resolve to their mutual satisfaction, but it's something that every player has to think about and every GM should caution the players about.

It is important to note here that some alien races begin with certain Blessings and Curses, and these generally do not cost the player when creating a character of the alien race in question. Sometimes, the Blessings or Curses are paid for out of the Extra Points (see below) that a character receives during the process. This section may or may not be revised, as more information on the *Fading Suns* alien races becomes available.

Cybernetics and the Character

Cybernetics and cybertechnology can be found in most science fiction roleplaying games on the market these days, and *Fading Suns* is no exception to the rule. If there is any difference in how cybernetics and cybertechnology is portrayed in this game than most sf rpgs out there, it is the fact that the Church has outlawed cybertechnology and cybernetics, but allows dispensations for certain groups and individuals. A player must spend Extra Points for the character to have cybernetics, and this is the only time during the character generation process during which cybertech can be purchased. The cybernetics section in the basic *Fading Suns* manual was somewhat unwieldy, and a revised version of the rules for cybernetics appeared in the **Forbidden Lore: Technology** sourcebook.

What may not be clear to you, as a player, whether you should buy cybernetics and why you should buy cybernetics. As a general rule, you may envision a character that possesses an artificial hand (due to some accident that required a limb replacement) or has enhanced visual capabilities (perhaps as part of one's past occupation); in such a case, the cyberhand or the cyber- eye are part of the character concept, and the GM should have no problems with allowing the character to take cybertraits during the Extra Points phase of character generation; I know that under circumstances like this, I wouldn't have a problem with it. You still need to justify the cybernetic devices to me, or to the GM, as part of character generation but both player and GM should be able to work out something to their mutual satisfaction. Some other element of the character background or history may cause you to want cybernetic devices, but such is a matter best left between you and the GM, and hopefully you can work it out together.

It is equally true that some players want cybertech for the wrong reasons. Without going into detail, a player decides to enhance his or her combat statistics and/or abilities, and decides the cybernetic devices is the way to achieve this. The *reason* for taking cybertech is important, but it has a strong bearing on one of the pairs of the character's Spirit characteristics: Alien and Human. By their very nature, cybernetic devices tend to make their recipients less Human (or Ur-Ukar, etc.) Less normal, than the normal person. Even when the implants are concealed, their bearers may seem odd, somehow not in line with the rest of their culture, race, or whatever. This is represented by the Alien trait. A character can only possess so many cybernetic devices before his or her mind or body rejects them. The higher the Alien trait, the higher the rejection threshold - but this also reduces the Human trait appropriately, since the pair of traits must have a combined total of no more than 10.

The key here is to weigh the reasons for buying the cybernetic devices and make a decision on that basis. While you can choose to buy cybernetic devices for the sake of combat, there are more mundane, cheaper ways to do this, and these don't affect your Human or Alien traits as much. A strong personality trait or a strong background/history reason to buy cybernetic devices is acceptable, provided the player and the GM come to an understanding about these devices and the reasons for the character having them. Make the taking of the cybernetic devices fit in with the character concept and give it a

rationale. Don't take the cybernetic devices just because they're cool to have. Consider the ramifications of the cybernetic devices for your character, from the point of view of the personal, social, cultural, and psychological well-being of the character.

Starting Money and Equipment

The general rule of thumb, as most GamesMasters of the system know, is that starting money and equipment is derived as a function of Benefices and Afflictions, and possibly some Blessings and Curses. Many of the Character Roles provide certain guidelines for starting equipment for characters, notably energy shields, weapons, and the like, but other possessions tend to be ignored.

The **Forbidden Lore: Technology** supplement provides some guidelines for economics in the universe of the Fading Suns, and there are plenty of of guidelines for salaries, yearly earnings, stipends, and the like there. But that covers mere money; it doesn't deal with the concept of family heirlooms, personal items (like photos of a beloved family member and the like) that a character might have, and other such mundane items. The player should sit down and think about the type of starting items and equipment he or she would want. When a list is prepared and presented to the GamesMaster, the player and the GM can hammer out some sort of compromise between them of what the player character can start the game with.

The player should think of personal items, objects and other stuff that is personal in nature, that has *meaning* for the player character. Other items, such as hygienic kits or items, timepieces, work clothes, casual clothes, identification card and credit chits, and so forth should be considered by the player for his or her character. Player character should also be permitted by the GM to start with some money in their pockets. Social class, standing, and group affiliation might have something to do with a character's starting monies, but the GM should come up with a reasonable means of determining starting money-in-hand for the characters.

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