

A dark, grainy, red-tinted photograph of a group of people sitting around a table in a dimly lit room. One person in the foreground is looking down at papers on the table. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and horror-themed.

GHOST STORIES

HORROR MYSTERY ADVENTURES

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This game requires at least two six-sided dice in order to play. Although one set of two is sufficient, you may want to provide additional dice for each player. These dice are always rolled in pairs, taking the sum of the two. This sum is called the **dice total**.

Some backgrounds possessed by characters or their actions may also call for a number of bonus dice or penalty dice to be rolled with the pair. The two lowest dice are added together when using bonus dice, while the two highest are added together when using penalty dice. Bonus dice and penalty dice cancel each other out. Penalty dice are represented as **-1** and bonus dice as **+1**, with the actual number of dice in the circle.

This should help you understand some of the special effects presented later in this section, although a more in-depth explanation of dice rolls are presented later in this book.



CHARACTERS

Every character possesses primary traits, secondary traits, skills, and possibly mutations. They are described below.

PRIMARY TRAITS

Primary traits range from zero (0) to five (5). Zero (0) is considered disabled and not recommended for player characters, but if someone should choose it, more power to them.

Fitness is a wide-ranging trait which describes a character's size, muscle mass, hand-eye coordination, and physical grace. It affects how well a character can perform a feat of strength, fire a gun, or climb a rope.

Reasoning gauges how well a character can analyze information. It is the driving force behind skills that require study.

Empathy represents a character's ability to sympathize with and express emotions to others. It also measures his intuitive and sensory ability.

Willpower describes a character's control over his mental and physical facilities, allowing him to press on in the face of danger, attempt a task with confidence, or even control his emotions.

The rules in **Ghost Stories: Horror Mystery Adventures** are designed to facilitate quick gaming for a single night's play, especially for those times when you need a quick fix or want to take a break from the tedium of extended campaigning. Within, you will find rules optimized for a fast-playing, movie-like experience with scenarios that can be played in a single session. It is assumed that at least one player has roleplaying experience.

Characters are created on a point-based system that allows you to design the type of character you want to play without restrictive classes and levels. As befits the concept, combat and action resolution is fast and everything in the game can be resolved with a single die roll of two or more dice. More advanced rules are also included if you wish to increase the level of detail. Additionally, **Ghost Stories** comes complete with several game scenarios and pre-generated characters, which can also be used as non-player characters.

Ghost Stories is predicated on tales of horror and the supernatural as found in movies, comics, and books from the last several decades. Whether you prefer Edwardian supernatural horror or contemporary thrillers, **Ghost Stories** allows gamemasters and players to weave tales of mystery and dread, where the dead walk among the living and haunt a moonlit landscape of ominous portents. Evidence of the supernatural exists everywhere: *graveyards on moonless nights, misty moors, fog-shrouded castles perched high on craggy hills, and old manor homes seemingly suspended in time*. Places such as these no doubt hold dark secrets of the past. Will you be able to endure the night and live to see the day?

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RATING	TRAIT	SKILL
0	DISABLED	UNTRAINED
1	LOW AVERAGE	PASSING KNOWLEDGE
2	AVERAGE	UNDERTRAINED
3	HIGH AVERAGE	BASIC KNOWLEDGE
4	NOTEWORTHY	WORKING KNOWLEDGE
5	GIFTED	SOLID ABILITY
6	-	HIGHLY TRAINED
7	-	ELITE
8	-	EXPERT
9	-	LEADER IN FIELD
10	-	MASTER

TRAITS

Fitness Reasoning Empathy Willpower

Reaction: $12 - (\text{Fitness} + \text{Empathy})$

Stamina: $(\text{Fitness} + \text{Willpower}) \times 2$

SKILLS

Fitness-Based

Athletics
 Brawling
 Driving
 Finesse
 Firearms
 Riding
 Stealth

Empathy-Based

ESP
 Interrogation
 Investigation
 Negotiation
 Performance
 Seduction

Reasoning-Based

Ancient Languages
 Archaeology
 Commodities
 Computers
 General Knowledge
 Mechanics
 Medicine
 Occult Lore
 Parapsychology
 Theology

Willpower-Based

Composure
 Sorcery
 True Faith



SECONDARY TRAITS

Secondary traits are computed from primary traits.

Reaction measures a character's nerves, reflexes, and general speed. It is equal to twelve minus fitness and empathy.

Stamina indicates a character's physical health and resistance to injury and illness. It is equal to the sum of the character's fitness and willpower multiplied by two. Starting from the bottom of the Stamina counter (on the character sheet), fill in one blank box from each group. When you get to the top, start at the bottom again. Repeat until the total number of filled boxes is equal to twenty-five (25) minus the stamina rating.

SKILLS

Skills represent knowledge and experience gained through study and practice. A skill may not be raised higher than double its related trait and beginning characters cannot have any skills higher than six (6).

Fitness-Based Skills

Athletics helps a character climb, swim, perform gymnastic stunts, and attack opponents with melee weapons such as knives, swords, and clubs.

Brawling covers the ability to punch, kick, grapple, and throw.

Driving is the ability to operate land-based vehicles.

Finesse allows a character to pick pockets and locks, perform sleight-of-hand tricks, and override mechanical security systems.

Firearms covers the use of any pistol, rifle, machine gun, or submachine gun.

Stealth is the ability to sneak around without being seen or heard.

Empathy-Based Skills

ESP represents any one of a number of special abilities which are derived from extra sensory perception. Each ability counts as a separate skill (*see Extra Sensory Perception below*).

Interrogation is the ability to acquire information from individuals through subterfuge, intimidation, and even torture.

Investigation is the acquisition of data through examination, observation, inquiry, and research.

Negotiation is the ability to barter, persuade, and even intimidate others.

Performance is the art of oration, singing, and stage performances.

Seduction is the art of tempting others to do as you wish, particularly members of the opposite sex.

Reasoning-Based Skills

Ancient languages is the study and knowledge of languages that are no longer in use. Some examples are Latin, Aramaic, and Hieroglyphics.

Archaeology is the study of the customs and social life of ancient civilizations.

Commodities allows a character to appraise antiques, gems, gold, jewelry, and other items of value.

Computers covers the operation, hacking, and basic repair of all computer systems.

General knowledge provides the character with historical, geographical, political, social, and trivial information.

Mechanics is the knowledge of designing, building, and repairing mechanical devices.

Medicine is the knowledge of healing and treatment.

Occult lore is the study and knowledge of both ancient and modern mystical beliefs, as well as their origins.

Parapsychology is the study of the paranormal—extra sensory perception and supernatural experience.

Theology is the study of religion; the various origins, traditions, and beliefs.

Willpower-Based Skills

Composure is the ability to remain calm in the face of danger or temptation, and is a valuable asset, especially in a fight.

Sorcery represents any one of a number of special fields of study which are derived from ritualistic magic. Each field counts as a separate skill (*see Sorcery below*).

True faith represents any one of a number of special abilities which are derived from the divine. Each ability counts as a separate skill (*see True Faith below*).

BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds serve to flesh out the character. Think of them in terms of special abilities and skill aptitudes, which allow your character to stand head and shoulders above the masses. Backgrounds are entirely optional, so check with your gamemaster before choosing them. If permitted, you may choose one background for your character before the start of the game.

Academician. The character is somehow associated with a university. He could work as a librarian, participate in a think tank, assist a professor, or be part of a university-funded project. This provides him the benefit of almost unrestricted lab and library access. In addition, the character may call on a professor or other university official for assistance.

Authority. The character is either well connected at the government level or has a position of authority within a government agency such as a police force, fire department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, or local court, and can make arrests, issue fines, provide warrants, or gain information depending on his position.

Blessed. The character is pure of thought and action, and has been given Divine powers not of this Earth. Once this background is taken, the character may use true faith skills. Blessed characters who inflict harm, commit crimes, or act in an immoral manner lose the use of all true faith abilities for a minimum of twenty-four hours (the gamemaster may adjust this time according to the character's sin). True faith skills may not be used by a character without this background. See True Faith below.

Criminal. The character is well known in the seedier parts of town. There are many people in the underworld who are willing to assist him. The roll of a single die indicates how many underworld contacts are present in any given local neighborhood.

Elite. The character is wealthy as the result of a lucrative business or inheritance. He can come up with just about any amount of cash within a few days at the most.

Marksman. The character is an expert at aiming firearms at distant targets. All firearm rolls which are aimed receive an additional +1.



Martial artist. The character has unnatural intuitive ability and martial training which serves to prevent him from being surprised in combat and allow him to regain his balance quickly. All reaction and balance-related rolls receive +1, and the character may make an athletics roll (-1) in order to return to his feet the same turn he is knocked down. The character must possess the brawling skill at level five or higher in order to have this background.

Medium. The character is able to gain insight and perceive the paranormal through the use of psychic powers. Once this background is taken, the character may use ESP skills and is susceptible to possession by incorporeal creatures. ESP skills may not be used by a character without this background. See Extra Sensory Perception below.

Natural beauty. The character possesses unnatural flair or charm, and exudes sex appeal. All seduction and performance rolls receive +1.

Noble. The character has been granted a noble title or has been born into a noble family. He is respected by those of the royal hierarchy or the men and women governed by it. All empathy rolls involving these people receive +1.

Occultist. The character possesses an impressive library of occult, religious, and mythology books.

Sorcerer. The character is able to bend reality to his will through the use of ritualistic magic. Once this background is taken, the character may use sorcery skills and is often visited by deities who wish to trade power for the character's assistance in some manner. These deities either make very enticing offers, threaten bodily harm, or otherwise intimidate the sorcerer. Sorcery skills may not be used by a character without this background. See Sorcery below.

EXTRA SENSORY PERCEPTION

In the realm of everyday existence, the five senses reign supreme, but in a world of shadows and darkness, acquiring knowledge through mundane instrumentality will sharply limit one's ability to discover wider gateways and thresholds. Extra sensory perception in Ghost Stories is granted to gifted individuals called Mediums—people who have another way of seeing beyond the normal boundaries of human vision.

Each ESP ability is considered a separate skill and its use is dependent on the empathy trait. Unless otherwise noted, a successful task roll is required to gain the benefits of an ability.

Augury. This is the ability to extend or project one's senses beyond the physical body. Augury sensations manifest as brief smells, sounds, or sights. These manifestations are either just out of normal sensory range (such as just around a corner or on the other side of a door or just over a hilltop), are connected in some very familiar way to the Medium, or are attempts at communication by incorporeal creatures such as ghosts. Augury will not detect anything that the medium's normal senses would not detect if the psychic were present at another location. For example, a blind man cannot see using clairvoyance, because he lacks the sense of sight. He could hear using clairvoyance, however, so long as he wasn't deaf as well. Difficulty is determined by range (*see ESP Difficulty by Range table*).

Precognition. This is the direct knowledge or perception of the future, obtained through extrasensory means. The majority of precognitive experiences happen within a twenty-four to forty-eight hour period prior to the future event. In rare cases, precognitive experiences can occur months or even years before the actual event takes place. Severe emotional shock seems to be a major factor in precognition. To qualify as precognition, such knowledge must not be derived from normal senses. An example of precognition would be dreaming of a car accident the night before such an accident actually occurs. In some cases, precognitive experiences are purely symbolic, using metaphor instead of accurate detail. No task roll is used for this ability. Instead, the gamemaster may allow the character to have a number of precognitive experiences equal to his empathy rating for each adventure.

Psychometry. This is the ability to gain knowledge of an event long after it has occurred through extra sensory means. The Medium can typically understand the history or general impression of an object, place, or person. By touching an object, the Medium can pick up psychic impressions relating to it, the person to whom it belongs, or even the location in which it is found. These impressions should be described by the gamemaster as visual images, words, thoughts, or physical sensations (or a combination thereof).

Telekinesis. This is the ability to move an object on the physical plane using only the power of the mind. Telekinesis is believed to work by way of energy fields (magnetic or electric) or waves of psychic energy which are actually dense enough to push/repel an object or draw it inward. This ability allows the Medium to move and bend small objects, shut and open windows and doors, lock doors, turn on lights, or hurl nearby objects across the room. The maximum weight (in pounds) of an object which can be affected is equal to ten times the character's empathy rating.

Telepathy. This is the ability to read the thoughts or emotions of others without the use of normal senses. It typically occurs without special actions or efforts by the person whose thoughts are being read. Thus, their thoughts are revealed without their permission or, indeed, without their even realizing it. The entire responsibility for the action rests with the person who claims telepathic powers. A Medium with this power could communicate with another individual by transmitting messages directly into the other's thoughts, read the surface thoughts of an individual, or discern whether or not someone is telling a lie as they believe it to be. Difficulty is determined by range.

less than 100 feet	Trivial
up 100 to 1000 feet	Routine
1000 to 5000 feet	Challenging
more than 5000 feet	Impossible

SORCERY

Sorcery in Ghost Stories is dangerous and difficult to master. Just a slight mispronunciation of a Latin phrase, an incorrect wave of the hand, or the wrong reagent can cause a ritual spell to backfire and cause harm to the caster and those around him. Magic that has gone awry is dangerous and can wreak havoc with the very fabric of reality. It is unpredictable and the results can be grave indeed.

Each sorcery ability is considered a field of study (separate skills) and its use is dependent on the willpower trait. A successful task roll, in addition to research and the gathering of materials, is required to cast a spell.

Alchemy. This ability allows a character to imbue a potion or brew with one of the following magical properties: *water*, *fire*, *air*, or *earth*. Characters who drink a potion are affected

in a specific manner, depending on the magical property (see table below). Every potion also has a side effect which the gamemaster must determine at the time of use. Some examples are stench, spasms, forgetfulness, and delusions. The duration of all potions and side effects is equal to the sorcerer's alchemy rating in turns. A character can only use a potion once, although it is still effective on other people. This can be remedied by simply brewing a new batch.

Water	The character receives +1 when attempting a reasoning-based skill.
Fire	The character receives +1 when attempting a fitness-based skill.
Air	The character receives +1 when attempting an empathy-based skill.
Earth	The character receives +1 when attempting a willpower-based skill. This permits a character to make bargains with deities (when using a sorcery skill) for considerable power or knowledge which are typically impossible. However, the character should also be bound to rather stiff terms, or possibly in debt to a multitude of deities.

Conjuration. This ability allows the character to conjure any elemental force or material—air (gaseous elements such as oxygen or poisonous gas), water (liquid elements such as sea water or wine), fire (items in a state of burn, such as a lantern, or with the potential to ignite, such as lighter fluid or matches), earth (solid elements such wood or metals), or electricity (conductive and charged elements such as batteries). The conjured element is permanent unless countered by sorcery. The size of the element determines the difficulty and its exact nature is up to the character.

size of a mouse	Trivial
size of a cat	Routine
size of an automobile	Challenging
size of a house	Impossible

Endowment. This is the ability to call upon a deity and bargain for knowledge in exchange for some service. The gamemaster must decide what service is required in exchange for the knowledge which the character seeks. This service could be to kill or otherwise hinder another person's efforts (or even another player character's), bring the deity

gifts, or even sacrifice an animal—the gamemaster is free to choose. A successful bargain indicates that the deity will instruct the character on information which is hidden from normal view. This could include a list of other sorcerers nearby, the reason why someone has not showed up on time, a brief biography of another character, or anything which the gamemaster thinks is appropriate. This information need not be completely accurate or complete—the gamemaster will decide what the deity holds back or just doesn't know.

Intervention. This is the ability to call upon a deity and bargain for his aid in exchange for some service. Like the endowment ability, the gamemaster must decide what service is required in exchange for the power. A successful bargain indicates that the character may roll one die, while a triumph calls for two dice. The result equals the total number of dice which may be applied to task rolls as either bonus or penalty dice. Any number of these dice may be applied to a task roll, but each time a task roll is modified in this manner, the character's pool of dice from the bargain is reduced by whatever number of dice are used. Once all of his dice are used, the character must strike another deal with a deity. If the character reneges on a deal, the deity will be forced to take drastic action.

Necromancy. This ability allows the character to animate the dead. Since corpses lack souls, they must be issued simple verbal commands by the character in order to function—without commands, they will simply stand and stare. A character can only actively command a number of these zombies up to his willpower rating.

Additionally, the character can breathe new life into characters who have only been dead for less than twenty-four hours by sacrificing an amount of stamina equal to twelve minus his necromancy rating (losing more than available will put the character into a coma or even kill him). Because his soul is still intact, a resurrected individual is free from control if he is able to make a successful composure roll (❶ on the roll). An unsuccessful roll indicates that the individual may be controlled, or his memories removed or altered—since the individual's soul is intact, he may live his life normally in the process. Additional composure rolls may be attempted to break free of this control, but the circumstances are entirely up to the gamemaster.

Nullification. This ability allows the character to counter any effect from a sorcery skill. This is a contested roll against the success of the original task roll for the target effect.

Teleportation. This ability allows a character to create a rend in nature which is linked to another (character's choice of location) by an ethereal bridge. This bridge may be traversed by any number of people and instantly transports them to the other side. The rends will remain active for a number of turns equal to the character's gateway rating. The distance between rends determines the difficulty.

line of sight	Trivial
up to 50 miles (out of sight)	Routine
50 to 500 miles	Challenging
more than 500 miles	Impossible

Weaving. This ability allows the character to create visual or audible illusions which last for a number of turns equal to his skill rating. The exact nature of the illusion is up to the character, but the size determines the difficulty.

size of a dog	Trivial
size of a man	Routine
size of a truck	Challenging
size of a house	Impossible

TRUE FAITH

To true believers, the existence of an all-mighty creator cannot be disputed. These men and women of true faith serve their creator by following a strict code of conduct and act towards one goal—to help those in need, both physically and emotionally. Only the purest of souls are blessed by the Divine hand and even the slightest hint of sin fills them with shame as they feel their connection to the Divine diminish. The actual loss is short-lived, but the feelings of loss and regret are never forgotten.

The powers of the Divine serve to protect mankind from the unholy, but also reward him for his faith. Each true faith ability is considered a separate skill and its use is dependent on the willpower trait.

Call to Faith. This ability allows a character to channel Divine inspiration into a rallying call for support. Anyone of his faith (or open to his faith) who listens to the character's words becomes motivated towards the Divine and receives



+1 (+2 for triumphs) on his next composure roll, provided his actions were according to the values of the faith (or he believes they were).

Communion. This ability allows a character to form a congregation with others of his faith in order to increase the power of a second True Faith ability by +1 (+2 for triumphs). Each additional character who is part of the congregation and also possesses the communion ability adds an additional +1 to the second ability.

Consecrate. This ability allows a character to bless a building so that ghosts and the undead may not enter. This may be contested by a manifestation roll.

Divine light. This ability allows a character to illuminate a single room. No apparent source of light is present and the act may be viewed as a miracle.

Divine recovery. This ability allows a character to heal any individual by the laying of hands. A number of stamina points equal to the character's divine recovery rating (double that for triumphs) may be recovered by an individual once per game, although the character himself can use this ability as much as he likes. Each time a character uses this ability, he loses two points of stamina—it is a very draining experience for such powerful Divine energy to flow through someone.

Divine will. This ability allows a character to bless another individual, allowing him to ignore all wound penalties for a number of turns equal to the character's willpower rating. Each time a character uses this ability, he loses one point of stamina—it is a very draining experience for such powerful Divine energy to flow through someone.

Purify. This ability allows a character to render all poisons, bacteria, or other harmful agents present in a food or drink harmless.

Return to innocence. This ability allows a character to pacify any living creature so that it ceases all hostilities. This may be contested by a composure roll.

Sanctify. This ability allows a character to bless a small object such as a mirror, amulet, or cross so that ghosts and the undead may not approach. This may be contested by a manifestation roll. If an undead creature should happen to come into direct contact with the item, it loses a number of stamina points equal to the willpower rating of the character who sanctified the object.

Water to wine. This ability allows a character to increase the abundance of any food, drink, or source of nourishment. For example, water is required for human survival, but lacks any real nourishment;

SPECIAL SKILLS

ESP-Based

Augury
Precognition
Psychometry
Telekinesis
Telepathy

Sorcery-Based

Alchemy
Conjuration
Endowment
Intervention
Necromancy
Nullification
Teleportation
Weaving

True Faith-Based

Call to Faith
Communion
Consecrate
Divine Light
Divine Recovery
Divine Will
Purify
Return to Innocence
Sanctify
Water to Wine

BACKGROUNDS

Academician
Authority
Blessed
Criminal
Elite
Martial Artist
Medium
Natural Beauty
Noble
Occultist
Sorcerer

it may be converted into nectar (yes, or wine) which is packed with lots of vitamins and makes for a healthier diet. Another example would be to multiply the quantity of grain available so that it feeds double the number of people present.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

Archetypes (located in the back of this book) present a general view of the different types of characters you can play in **Ghost Stories**. If you're pressed for time, simply use them as-is and forego the initial character creation process. Alternatively, you can use them as guidelines for generating your own.

CREATING CHARACTERS

- Step 1.** Choose background (optional)
- Step 2.** Divide 11 points among the primary traits or determine traits randomly by rolling one die for each trait (sixes count as zeros). Ratings may be anything between zero and five.
- Step 3.** Compute secondary traits.
- Step 4.** Divide 25 points among skills. Ratings may be anything between zero and twice the related trait (a trait rating of zero is the same as one for calculating this).
- Step 5.** All characters may begin the game with whatever possessions and cash on hand fits their backgrounds or concepts. Gamemasters can arbitrarily assign cash on hand based on the character's profession and country's form of currency.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

If your character survives an entire scenario the gamemaster should award you one to four experience points, depending on your heroism, performance, and participation. Traits may be raised by spending five points per desired level. Skills may be raised by spending two points per desired level. New skills cost five points. No skill may be raised higher than six (6) unless advanced task rolls are used (see next section).

ADVANCEMENT COSTS	
Traits	5 points x new rating
Skills	2 points x new rating
New Skills	5 points



CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER NAME

BACKGROUND

DESCRIPTION

FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

REASONING

- Ancient Languages
- Archaeology
- Commodities
- Computers
- General Knowledge
- Occult Lore
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology
-
-

EMPATHY

- Interrogation
- Investigation
- Negotiation
- Performance
- Seduction
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-
-

WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-
-

STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

①
 ②
 ③
 ④
 ⑤

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

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NOTES

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

GAME MECHANICS

BASIC TASK ROLLS

BASIC TASK PROCEDURE

1. Compute Skill Total (trait + skill)
2. Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total
3. Successful if Dice Total is less than or equal to Skill Total

During the course of a gaming session, you will want to accomplish tasks. Rolls of the dice are used to determine if these tasks succeed. Task rolls provide a balanced system which reflects a character's skill and ability levels. The more skilled a character is, the higher his chance of success will be.

A character accomplishes a basic task when his dice total is less than or equal to his skill total. The skill total is equal to the sum of the appropriate skill rating and its corresponding trait.

ADVANCED TASK ROLLS

ADVANCED TASK PROCEDURE

1. Compute Skill Total (trait + skill)
2. Roll Dice and Compute Dice Total
3. Compute Margin (skill total - dice total)
4. Determine Outcome by referring to success chart on character sheet

Advanced task rolls add realism by utilizing varying levels of difficulty assigned by the gamemaster. Varying degrees of success are also determined by the outcome of the roll. Advanced task rolls are optional.

Difficulties

Difficulties make it easy for the gamemaster to determine when and how to roll for tasks. They also affect the outcome of a task.

Trivial tasks do not require a roll unless it is contested by another character. Trivial tasks represent mundane labors that usually require little or no training. We generally take them for granted.

Routine tasks always require rolls and represent innocuous actions that must rely on training and experience. They also require minimal thought or effort.

Challenging tasks require above average skill and represent some action unfamiliar to a character. They can also be fairly dangerous and require the dice total to be less than the skill total by at least three to be successful.

Impossible tasks cover all dangerous or improbable situations. Characters attempting such actions are either very brave or very stupid. They require the dice total to be less than the skill total by at least six to be successful.

Task difficulties may be increased or decreased by a character's actions or his environment. Difficulties may not be reduced less than trivial or increased greater than impossible. An increase in difficulty is represented as **1** and a decrease in difficulty as **1**, with the actual number of difficulty levels changed in the arrow.

Outcome

To determine how successful a task is we must first compute the difference between the *skill total* and the *dice total* (skill total - dice total). This value is called the *margin*.

Once we know the margin, consult the *success table* located on the character sheet. Find the *margin* listed under the appropriate difficulty at the top and then look to the far left for the outcome. There are four possible outcomes:

Calamity represents a horrible mishap or backfire. This could be missing an opponent and accidentally shooting a friend or a chase down a flight of stairs resulting in a serious fall. Trivial and routine tasks cannot result in calamities.

Failure represents a failed attempt at a task. Unlike calamities, it does not necessarily indicate a harmful outcome.

Success represents a typical successful outcome. This could be a gun shot to the chest or a forged document which looks real under standard inspection.

Triumph represents a miraculous outcome. This could be incapacitating an opponent with one punch or convincing an enemy of your good intentions.

There are two special situations which overrule these outcomes. If the two dice used for the dice total are both ones

(*snake eyes*), the task is a *triumph*. And, if the two dice used for the dice total are both sixes (*box cars*), the task is a *failure*.

UNTRAINED TASK ROLLS

All skills can be attempted without prior training unless otherwise noted. Such rolls are considered untrained tasks. In these cases the skill total would be equal to the associated trait only. This type of task roll would also be used in situations where a single trait would govern the outcome.

CONTESTED TASK ROLLS

There will be situations that place two people at odds with each other in some sort of struggle. To resolve this conflict, both parties make task rolls and the character with the highest margin wins the struggle. If neither roll actually is successful, both parties fail.

Advanced: Some skills allow an effect to be contested by rolling against a difficulty of challenging if the original task was a success or impossible if it was a triumph. Contested rolls use the same trait and skill as the original task, unless otherwise noted.

COMPOSURE TASK ROLLS

There are times when even the most disciplined lose their nerve. Composure is both a skill and a condition. When characters remain composed, they may attempt tasks normally. Characters who have lost their composure, however, will either receive a penalty on the task or act in cowardice.

Composure rolls (willpower + composure) must be made each time a character is faced with a dangerous situation, paranormal experience (ESP or sorcery), or Earth shattering information. The difficulty depends on the circumstances and the outcome is determined as follows:

Calamity

The character runs away and will be considered a coward if anyone is around to witness him.

Failure

The character backs down from attempting a dangerous task. He may try to talk his way out of it in order to save his reputation.

Success & Triumph

The character may attempt the task normally.

SORCERY ROLLS

Sorcery is ritualistic magic that involves casting spells from a scroll or book. It often requires the sorcerer to recite memorized words from an arcane language while he rests inside a specially prepared area, such as within a pentagram, a circle of black candles, or a domain of power like the crypt of a long-dead sorcerer. Spells always require at least two main elements: an arcane text; a symbol, holy relic, ancient artifact and/or magical reagents; and the recital of an incantation.

Magic only provides assistance; it should never simply fix all of the character's problems. Even if the success of an investigation depends upon the casting of a ritual, there should be ample amounts of action and danger in gathering the needed materials or distracting the villain to provide time for the casting to take effect.

Research

All characters with a specific sorcery skill at level four or greater may own their own spell book for that field of study.

Before actually invoking a spell, a character must consult his spell book for the proper incantation. This requires an investigation or occult lore task and may take several turns depending on the complexity of the desired effect (gamemaster's discretion).

If the character does not have access to his spell book or wishes to search for a spell from a sorcery skill in which he is not familiar, he must attempt an investigation or occult lore task which may be adjusted by the quality of the library or complexity of the desired spell. The time required to locate the spell is entirely up to the gamemaster—since the character is unfamiliar with the field of study or library, it could take days, weeks, or even months. A success indicates that the character finds all necessary texts and a list of needed materials within the specified time. A further task (ancient language) may be required to translate and decipher the text because many are written in ancient or secret languages.

Gathering Materials

Once the character has located the proper incantation, he must still acquire the necessary materials. This may require additional research, investigation, bargaining, or even theft, depending on the wishes of the gamemaster.

Incantation

Once the materials are gathered, they must be put in their proper places and the relevant incantation must be invoked. The character must attempt a sorcery task which is modified by the degree of preparation, overuse, and the complexity of the spell (see specific skill description). A successful task indicates that the desired effect manifests as planned (for the most part and as far as the character can tell—a triumph guarantees that the spell will function as designated).

Note: if the spell was researched from a field of study not known by the character (skill level is zero), the task is considered untrained and also receives -2.

INCANTATION MODIFIERS

Unskilled (see note above)	-2
Per 4 turns of preparation	+1
Less than 4 turns of preparation	-1
Same target more than 4 times	-1

Calamities

Given their complexity, spells are easy to mess up. And when you mess up with magic, you usually mess up bad. When a casting fails, it will have no effect at all—it just sort of fizzles out. However, if the outcome is a calamity then something spectacularly bad has occurred and the spell has gone wrong in some unpredictable and unpleasant way (the demon villain will be strengthened, the sorcerer will be turned into a toad, a rift will suddenly open to some hell-dimension full of hungry undead, etc.). Whatever the effect, it should be dangerous and equally terrifying.

SORGERY PROCEDURE

1. Research required spell (investigation or occult lore task).
2. Gather required materials.
3. Invoke spell (specific sorcery skill task).



PERSONAL COMBAT

When combat occurs, characters perform actions in blocks of time called turns. Generally, one action may be performed per turn. The game turn is an abstract measurement of time and the actual length is determined by the gamemaster, but each turn can vary from five to fifteen seconds.

Combat is broken down into steps. First, all characters involved in the exchange declare their actions for the turn. They can attack, defend, use a special skill, or simply move or run away.

Once actions are declared, the gamemaster must determine the order in which characters may act. This is called the reaction order. The characters may then proceed to attack or use abilities in this order.

Each attack works like a skill task and damage is then subtracted from the character's stamina (if successful). If a character receives an amount of damage equal to or greater than his stamina, he falls unconscious. Any further successful attacks directed at the character will kill him.

Once this process is completed, the other character(s) finish their actions, and then it repeats until all parties have ceased hostilities.

DECLARING ACTIONS

Each character that is present in the combat exchange must inform the gamemaster of his actions. These actions may be: **attack**, **defend**, **use skill**, **move**, or **aim**. Players need not know what the others have planned.

Each character then rolls two dice and adds his reaction rating to the sum. This is called the **reaction total** and is

compared to the other players' totals. The roll may also be modified by injuries and other factors (see below).

REACTION MODIFIERS	
Wearing 'heavy armor'	-1
Knocked down	-2
Surprised Opponent	+2
Carrying heavy items	-1
Injured	-1 to -5

The players act in order from lowest to highest. If two or more characters get the same reaction total the character with the highest empathy rating goes first. If they have the same empathy rating then the highest fitness goes first.

All actions are affected by other characters' preceding actions in the same turn because they do not occur simultaneously. A character suffers a penalty on his actions if he has received enough injuries to do so before acting in a turn. Likewise, if a character is incapacitated before he gets to act, his action is forfeit.

Declared actions can affect the way a turn plays out as follows:

Attack. The character must complete his attack.

Defend. The character must defend his position or wait in readiness. He may use the action to block, parry, or dodge an attack which then becomes a contested task against the defending character's outcome.

Weapons may be used to block all weapon and unarmed attacks, while only non-weapon attacks may be blocked by an unarmed character. The character may perform another action at the end of the turn if he has not been attacked.

Use skill. The character must attempt a skill task.

Move. The character must attempt to move or run to a specific area, duck, jump, or dive. Ranged Attacks may also be attempted while moving, but with -2 on the task roll, and they do not receive aiming modifiers.

Aim. The character must attempt to aim his ranged weapon attack, giving him +1 on the next turn. Being struck by an attack causes a character's aim to be interrupted and he loses the use of the aiming bonus dice.

PERSONAL COMBAT TASKS

There are different combinations of traits and skills used to make attack rolls. These are referred to as the attack total. There are also combinations used to make defensive rolls. The base difficulty for all non-ranged attack rolls is routine unless otherwise noted, while the difficulty for defensive rolls is determined by the outcome of the attack (a contested task).

The difficulty for ranged attacks is determined by the range. Each firearm has an associated range—this is the long range value. Medium range is half that number, short range is one-fourth that number, and point blank is almost within direct contact.

RANGE DIFFICULTIES	
Point Blank	Trivial
Short	Routine
Medium	Challenging
Long	Impossible

Fitness + Athletics Attack

This is used for all melee (bludgeoning, slashing, stabbing, etc.) and thrown weapons such as axes, clubs, swords, rocks, knives, and spears. The difficulty of the attack roll for thrown weapons is based on range.

Fitness + Brawling Attack

This is used for punch, kick, and grapple attacks.

Fitness + Firearms Attack

This is used for pistol and rifle attacks. The difficulty of these rolls is based on range.

Willpower + Sorcery Attack

See specific sorcery skill and Sorcery Rolls in previous section.

Empathy + ESP Attack

See specific ESP skill.

Fitness + Athletics Defense

This is used to block, parry, or dodge melee and thrown weapons. Ranged weapons can also be dodged, but the difficulty is impossible.

Fitness + Brawling Defense

This is used to block punches, kicks, and grapples.

ACCURACY

Some weapons have accuracy modifiers which add bonus or penalty dice to the attack roll. See the weapons table on the next page.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Various factors can affect the outcome of an attack and are intended for use with advanced task rolls. They can be environmental or situational in nature. The gamemaster is free to add bonus/penalty dice or change the difficulty of the roll in order to simulate special actions and situations. A few examples are listed below.

Target moving. Ranged attacks targeting moving characters receive 1D.

Cover. Characters may take cover behind walls, and other obstructions for protection against ranged attacks. Characters shooting at targets taking cover receive 1D. Characters that are completely hidden from view may not be targeted.

Partial light. Characters receive 1D on all combat actions attempted in partial light. Any attempt to attack in total darkness has a difficulty of impossible and only if the gamemaster even permits the attempt.

Quickdraw. A character may attempt to draw his weapon and attack with it in the same turn. The difficulty of the roll is 1D.

Second weapon. Two weapons may be used in fights at the same time. Each weapon must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each roll is 1D.

Second attack. Two attacks may be attempted at the same target. Each attack must be rolled for separately and the difficulty of each roll is 1D.

Second target. Two attacks may be attempted at different targets. Each attack must be rolled for separately. The difficulty of each roll is 1D.

Called strikes. Characters may aim for specific body parts while attacking. The difficulty of the attack roll is 1D. Successful called strikes to the hand causes the target to drop his weapon. Strikes to the head can prove fatal for firearms if the gamemaster decides to play God, and he has every right to do so.

ARMOR PROTECTION

Characters who wear armor can reduce their chances of being injured by adding -1 to their attacker's attack roll. If a called strike is targeting an area which is not protected by armor, the attack roll does not receive the -1.

DETERMINING INJURIES

Damage is determined by the specific attack or weapon. Each time a character is injured, he must check off a number of stamina points on his character sheet, starting on the left side. He receives -1 on all rolls for each complete block of stamina points sustained. The character will eventually die when all his stamina points are checked off.

If a character receives an amount of damage equal to or greater than his willpower rating in one attack, he stumbles backward and falls to the ground. He may not stand up until next turn. While down, the character receives -2 on all combat rolls.

Unarmed attacks. All unarmed attacks inflict one point of damage per two points of the attacking character's fitness rating. Triumphs cause one point of damage per point of the character's fitness rating.

Melee attacks. All attacks from direct contact weapons such as clubs or knives inflict the same amount of damage as unarmed attacks plus a modifier specific to each weapon (*see weapons table*).

Thrown attacks. All attacks from thrown weapons such as a knife or rock inflict an amount of damage specific to each weapon (*see weapons table*). Triumphs inflict double this amount.

Firearms attacks. All attacks from pistols and rifles inflict an amount of damage specific to each weapon (*see weapons table*). Triumphs inflict double this amount.

Fire. Characters on fire lose a number of stamina points equal to the roll of one die. This occurs every turn until the fire is extinguished. Characters in enclosed areas must roll an additional die due to smoke inhalation.

Asphyxiation. Characters that are deprived of oxygen longer than they can normally hold their breath (willpower rating x 2) receive one point of damage per turn. Characters

who are being choked are not in a position to hold their breath, so they receive 2 points per turn.

Falls. Characters take damage equal to the roll of one die per eight foot drop if they have fallen more than six feet. For example, if a character falls 24 feet, he takes damage equal to the roll of three dice.

Poison. Character who ingest poisonous substances or are subjected to toxins receive 1 to 4 points of damage per turn until an antidote is found. The exact number reflects the severity of the poison—this value is left up to the gamemaster to decide.

HEALING INJURIES

Stamina points are recovered at a rate equal to the character's willpower rating per day. Individuals with the medicine skill may attempt to make a challenging roll in order to revive a character who has lost all stamina points. Once revived, the character is then unconscious and may heal normally. There is no way to revive a character once a failed medicine roll is made.

Medicine rolls can also be used to help a character heal more quickly. The effects are determined by the outcome as described on the Healing Table.



WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Accuracy	Damage	Range	Ammo
Musket	-1	3	50m	1
Revolver	-	3	75m	6
Magnum	-	4	100m	6
Semi-Auto Pistol	-	3	75m	7
Rifle	-	4	300m	30
Shotgun	+1/-1/-2 [†]	5	100m	2-5
Assault Rifle	+1**	4 (6*)	300m	30
Baseball Bat	-	1	-	-
Lead Pipe/Crowbar	-	2	-	-
Knife	-	1	-	-
Sword	-	3	-	-
Axe	-1	3	-	-
Chainsaw	-	3	-	-
Garrotte/Rope	-	1***	-	-
Poison	-	1-4/turn	-	-

[†] point blank & short / medium / long * close range
 ** close range burst fire *** plus asphyxiation

OTHER DAMAGE SOURCES

Unarmed Success	Half Fitness
Unarmed Triumph	Fitness
Melee Success	Half Fitness + weapon dmg
Melee Triumph	Fitness + weapon dmg
Thrown Success	weapon dmg
Thrown Triumph	weapon dmg x 2
Firearm Success	weapon dmg
Firearm triumph	weapon dmg x 2
Fire	1d6
Fire and Smoke	2d6
Asphyxiation	1 per turn
Choking/Strangling	2 per turn
Falls	1d6 x 8 feet (beyond initial 6 feet)

HEALING TABLE

Outcome	Modifier
Calamity	Character loses 2 stamina
Success	Character heals +1 stamina
Triumph	Character heals +2 stamina

THE HORRORS

The following creatures should fit perfectly with any Ghost Stories scenario. Stats are only provided for some creatures since most possess other-worldly powers and do not necessarily follow our established laws of nature. The gamemaster is encouraged to use creatures as a way to manipulate the players' actions and propel the story. If it should become necessary to make a roll for a creature's skill, just assign it an appropriate value. You may also roll to confuse players—ignore it and do whatever is best for the story and the enjoyment of the players. Creature abilities are described in the next section.

Bane

Bane are evil spirits which haunt the injured or sick. Their soul purpose is to cause the victim to be buried alive by using their abilities to make him appear dead. They are vindictive creatures and anyone who thwarts their plans is likely to also become a victim once injured or bed ridden. Bane have the phantasm ability.

Banshee

The banshee typically appears as the ghost of a haggard woman. She is envisioned with a sunken nose, scraggy hair, and huge hollow eye sockets. Her eyes are fiery red from continuous weeping. She wears a tattered white sheet flapping around her and wails outside the door of someone who is about to die. Banshee often have the manifestation ability.

Cultist

Cultists are the mortal servants of demons who have sold their souls to an infernal master in exchange for knowledge or power over the Dark Arts. Some cultists work alone, while others form cabals of like-minded minions. Because of their association with demons, most cultists are insane and will stop at nothing to acquire more power for either themselves or their abyssal princes. These could be characters with normal stats, who have experience in sorcery, particularly the endowment and intervention skills (and fortitude which can be used as a Sorcery skill). Their free will, however, is now subject to their Demon master.

Demon

Demons are typically the fallen seraphim of Heaven's angelic host. They rebelled with Lucifer and were cast out of Heaven to the infernal regions which they now call home. As adversaries of Heaven, demons often seek to tempt mankind away from divine influence and into a life of sin and depravity, swelling the ranks of hell with the souls of the damned in preparation for the siege of Heaven. Demons come in all shapes and sizes. Most are worshiped by human cultists and are a source of endowment or intervention powers—it is possible for characters to gain those skills as a result of striking bargains with Demons.

Doppelganger

Doppelgangers are spirits which manifest and take on the appearance of individuals which are often called away on business, take a vacation, or are otherwise not currently present. Doppelgangers assume their identities and seem to want to become human. They are adept at staying in character and can only be found out by others witnessing contradictory sightings. They are not believed to be harmful unless their identity is in jeopardy of being discovered. They often try to live peaceful and prosperous lives within the confines of society.

Ghost

Ghosts are the supernatural apparitions of deceased individuals. They may have stayed attached to the mortal realm through an inability to accept their own death or out of a need for justice. Being spirits, ghosts are effectively immortal unless somehow released into Heaven or some other plane of existence. They also do not require sleep or physical sustenance, and are bound to one geographical location. Most ghosts do not appear to realize they are dead, and are often viewed going through the motions of being alive. Others cannot move on because they are seeking justice for some wrong in their mortal life. Ghosts often have the manifestation and short circuit abilities.

Ghoul

Ghouls are bestial creatures who consume the decayed flesh of human corpses. These creatures of the night resemble feral-looking humans with pale and drawn skin, clawed fingers, and pointed teeth. Some dress in rags stitched together from strips of human skin. Ghouls can use

stats for exceptionally strong mortals and often have the fortitude ability.

Guardian Angel

Some people often feel like someone is watching over them. In many cases, this is accurate—Guardian Angels have been known to both inspire people and protect them from harm by causing what appear to be accidents. For example, a Guardian Angel may inspire a character to hear the wrong time for a meeting—a meeting where he was scheduled to be assassinated. Or, a Guardian Angel may simply cause a character to stumble, preventing him from being run over by a drunk driver.

Hallows

Hallows are believed to be nature spirits which take vengeance upon man for his destruction of the wild. They often take on the appearance of animated trees or animals (hounds, boars, etc.) and try to stop harmful acts against nature through intimidation rather than violence. Hallows often have the absence, cloudy night, and paralyze abilities.

Hell Hound

Hell Hounds are the decomposing corpses of wolves, reanimated for some evil purpose by twisted and maniacal sorcerers. Hell Hounds are vicious and typically possess super-human strength (6). They can only be incapacitated by a shot to the head or by eliminating the sorcerer's magical control. Hell Hounds often have the paralyze ability.

Imp

Imps are evil spirits which have been forced to reside in stone structures such as statues and gargoyles. They can lie dormant for centuries, waking to take vengeance on those who interrupt their sleep or when the time is right to carry out their ancient plans. Imps can only be banished through ancient rituals and cannot be harmed by mortal weapons.

Mummy

Mummies are the animated, well-preserved creations of ancient Egyptian sorcerers, priests, and kings. Mummies are placed in tombs either near the entrance or near the object(s) they are destined to guard. They are usually placed in sarcophagi, upright, for protection and easy exit. Most such embalmed corpses have had their vital intestines removed, stored in jars, and buried with the mummy. It is possible that

animated mummies embalmed using that technique may be vulnerable to the destruction of these jars and their contents. It should be noted that many such guardians were buried alive, preserved through natural desiccation, so their internal organs would be intact.

Poltergeist

Poltergeists are mischievous spirits who are known to haunt a house, or sometimes a particular family member, and make their presence felt by moving or throwing various items in front of witnesses, and various strange pranks. These pranks can include levitating family members, typing on typewriters and computers, flashing lights, locking doors, and writing on walls. Poltergeists occasionally become malicious, and actually hurt those around them. Poltergeists often have the possession, manifestation, and short circuit abilities.

Red Cap

Red Caps are evil spirits that haunt the sites of particularly bloody and violent battles from ages past. Red Caps are distinguished by their ghostly pallor, pointed teeth, skinny fingers tipped with talons, large fiery eyes, and long grisly hair. They also wear red caps said to be dyed with the blood of those who linger too long among the battlefields. Red Caps often have the manifestation and phantasm abilities.

Serial Killer

A serial killer very often appears normal. He is often the last person whom his neighbors or friends would think of as a serial killer. Even those who are different than most people (those who don't associate much with others) are capable of appearing normal enough to not be considered a serial killer at first. Nonetheless, these mad slashers are depraved individuals who delight in the murder and/or torture of fellow human beings. They stalk their prey at night and murder with impunity. It is possible that true serial killers are due to possession by evil spirits or that some mortals are instilled with vast amounts of pure evil. Stats should reflect the Serial Killer's single purpose—both high fitness and reasoning. Combat skills are also important.

Vampire

Vampires come in a variety of shapes and forms, with all manner of powers and weaknesses. One of the most well

THE HORRORS

Creature	Abilities
Bane	Phantasm
Banshee	Manifestation
Cultist	Sorcery Endowment Intervention Fortitude
Demon	
Doppelganger	
Ghost	Manifestation Short Circuit
Ghoul	Fortitude
Guardian Angel	
Hallows	Absence Cloudy Night Paralyze
Hell Hound	Paralyze
Imp	
Mummy	
Poltergeist	Possession Manifestation Short Circuit
Red Cap	Manifestation Phantasm
Serial Killer	
Vampire	Fortitude Metamorphosis Paralyze
Unholy	Phantasm
Werewolf	Metamorphosis Fortitude
Zombie	

THE ABILITIES

Absence
 Cloudy Night
 Fortitude
 Manifestation
 Metamorphosis
 Phantasm
 Possession
 Paralyze
 Short Circuit

known is a variety believed to originate in Transylvania, a region of Romania, and is now found all over the world. It lies as a corpse in its coffin by day, arising at sundown to feast on the blood of its unsuspecting victims. Most classic vampires are several hundred years old, propagate rarely, and can only be killed by a stake in the heart and decapitation. Vampires should also be susceptible to sunlight and holy symbols. Vampires can use stats for exceptionally strong mortals and should have the fortitude ability and perhaps metamorphosis and paralyze as well.

Unholy

Unholy are the spirits of deceased clergy members who died because of their blasphemies. They return to the mortal world in search of faithful whom they can corrupt by way of illusion or promises of power. The unholy haunts the same individual until they commit sin or blasphemy; the spirit then seeks another victim. Unholy often have the phantasm ability.

Werewolf

Werewolves are the results of the ancient curse of Lycanthropy. This particularly unlucky individual is a mundane human most of the time, but changes uncontrollably at the light of a full moon. When in werewolf form, the creature resembles a great half-human/half-beast monstrosity with inhuman features and an unquenchable appetite for fresh meat. Upon transformation, werewolves will immediately set about hunting and killing prey including humans. While in werewolf form, they are virtually unstoppable. Werewolves should have the metamorphosis and fortitude abilities, although metamorphosis is uncontrollable.

Zombie

Zombies are the product of voodoo rituals that bring the subject back to life. The zombies may simply be convenient corpses for the houngan, or voodoo priest, to use—or they may be the remains of their enemies. Zombies can be used for manual labor. There are rumors of at least one Haitian plantation worked exclusively by these constructs, or for protection—body guards for their creator.

CREATURE ABILITIES

The following abilities may be used only by creatures (although exceptions can always be made) and help to describe what exactly the creature is capable of doing. If the gamemaster wishes to roll for an ability, it can be used with whatever trait he feels is appropriate at the time.

Absence is the ability to negate both sound and light. For example, no matter how hard someone tries to light a candle or turn on a flashlight, it just does not happen; or no matter how loud someone screams, no one can hear him.

Cloudy Night is the ability to cause an area to be engulfed by torrential rains, gale force winds, eerie fog, and thunder storms.

Fortitude is the ability to receive only half normal damage from an attack.

Manifestation is the ability of ghosts and other incorporeal beings to interact with and take form in the physical world. This permits ghosts to move objects, strike characters, make sounds, and appear as flesh or ghostly lights. By having this skill, the creature cannot be permanently harmed—the loss of stamina simply prevents it from manifesting until it can recover. Only ancient rituals unique to the creature or fulfilling its goal(s) can result in its permanent banishment from the real world.

Metamorphosis is the ability to change back and forth between a specified set of forms. some examples are a vampire turning into a bat, or a werewolf transforming into a man or a wolf.

Phantasm is the ability to trap characters in a illusionary set of events from which there is no way out. It is possible for characters to receive damage during the false scene, but it is healed once it has ended. Damage inflicted by other characters or objects not a part of the illusion do not heal since it is the result of reality rather than an illusion. Some examples are being trapped in a burning house (the house is really not on fire), awakening in a coffin (it is actually the character's own bed), or being given a gift by a pretty woman (the gift disappears after a short time and the woman never existed or was a ghost). This may be contested by a composure roll if the character has the Medium or Blessed background, or a nullification roll.

Possession is the ability of ghosts and other incorporeal beings to join with Mediums and control their actions. This may be contested by a composure roll.

Paralyze is the ability to freeze a person in his tracks. He may not move from the spot on which he stands. This may or may not require eye contact. This may be contested by a composure roll.

Short Circuit is the ability of ghosts and other incorporeal beings to cause electronic devices to malfunction or produce inaccurate results.

IF YOU ARE NOT THE GAMEMASTER,
DO NOT READ ANY FURTHER!

FROM THE PAST

A young woman has recently come into adulthood and subsequently inherited an estate which has been in her family for generations. Unfortunately, the mansion is now deserted and local legend claims that Poltergeists haunt the place and have either chased away or caused the death of several family members. Some say that the family which currently owns the house is cursed and paying the price at the hands of a supernatural accuser for past misdeeds.

GETTING STARTED

From the Past is a Ghost Stories scenario that can fit in any setting, although it may work best as an Edwardian-era haunted house scenario. All character archetypes are perfectly suited for this story, although having someone in the group with psychic powers will make getting the characters involved that much easier. Additionally, one of the player characters should have a relationship with a young woman by the name of Mary Worthington. Mary has inherited the family estate, but is fearful of the legends that surround it. She asks her friend to investigate the rumors and, if possible, disprove the existence of ghosts haunting the place. The scenario starts out with one of the characters (preferably a medium) experiencing a foreshadowing psychic vision from the past:

“Three young boys approach an abandoned mansion. The two older boys are teasing the younger one about ghosts who supposedly haunt the house, but the younger boy isn’t buying it. They dare him to go inside alone. The young boy clammers inside an open window and shines his torch around in the darkness. He spots a photo of a young girl and picks it up, studying it closely. Sensing someone behind him, the boy whirls around to see the young woman from the photo standing before him with blood running down the side of her head. Startled, the boy moves backward only to bump into an older woman with slashed wrists. He screams and scrambles away, but encounters a man with a bullet wound to his head. The boy, now completely terrified out of his mind, screams again and darts out the window, calling for his friends. Inside, the boy’s torch continues to shine on the now smashed photograph of the young girl.”

A PLEA FOR HELP

A young woman, Mary Worthington, approaches one of the player characters, sobbing as she tells them she received a letter from her family lawyer stating that she inherited her great-grandfather’s estate on her twenty-first birthday. The young woman wishes it had been burnt to the ground, for the deaths of several family members who lived in the house at one point or another have left her traumatized. She then proceeds to tell the characters that the house has been empty for eight years since the death of her father, and is said to be haunted by the spirits of her dead relatives and her sister, Patricia. She asks the group to accompany her to the house, and if possible, either disprove the legends that claim spirits haunt the house or, if they do, help her to lay them to rest once and for all.

HITTING THE BOOKS

Mary has distanced herself from the family ever since she turned eighteen, being something of a black sheep; she doesn’t know much about her family’s history. If the characters express an interest in researching her family or the legends surrounding the house, a successful investigation task will reveal an old newspaper article written about the family tragedy. The article is titled Family Tragedy Continues and recounts the latest tragedy to befall the residents of the estate. According to the article, after Patricia Worthington died, her mother committed suicide and her father shot himself a few weeks later. The article also asserts that Mary Worthington is the last remaining family member.

The group may also attempt to search through police records. If no one in the party is a member of law enforcement, then another investigation task (2 on the roll) will be required to locate information on Patricia’s death. Searching through police records will reveal that Patricia’s death was an open and shut case—she fell from a flight of stairs and cracked open her skull during a birthday party. If asked about the incident, Mary will say that she witnessed the event and left home shortly thereafter.

THE UNINVITED

When the group decides to investigate the estate, describe it as a decrepit-looking mansion that does indeed look like it hasn't been occupied in years. Tall grass and weeds litter the front yard; many of the shutters on the front windows hang loose and bang hard against the rotting wood siding every time the wind picks up; the front porch lies riddled with dead leaves and untracked dust. It looks like it will fall apart the first time someone steps foot on its rickety surface.

When the group enters the house, Mary comments that she hasn't stood here for a long time. If someone tries a light switch, the house remains dark and lifeless; the power was shut off long ago. As the party moves throughout the house (possibly in search of a fusebox), Mary will become increasingly frightened and tell her friend that the house smells of death. Indeed, any characters with psychometry, precognition, or augury will feel a strange uneasiness while traversing the house's dark hallways.

The next few scenes will occur depending on where the group decides to investigate. They will serve to introduce the characters to the poltergeists haunting the estate.

Den

A sudden drop in temperature will assail characters who enter this room. As they move further into the room, they will be able to see their breath being exhaled in gusts of thick suspiration. Suddenly several books will jump from the shelves and swirl about the characters, while a forceful wind fills the room. An unholy cacophony of ghostly screams begins to emanate from the center of the room and then suddenly stop. The wind will then die and the books will drop to the floor.

Kitchen

As the player characters enter the home's kitchen, a drawer will suddenly open and slam shut by itself. Shortly afterward, the wind will pick up outside, causing the shutters to bang open and closed, and then quickly stop. As a stillness hangs in the air, burners on the gas stove will suddenly ignite.

Ballroom

This is room where Mary's sister, Patricia, met an untimely end. A set of winding stairs that leads up to a darkened

landing will suddenly become slick with blood. It will continue to drip down the staircase for several moments before disappearing. Any characters who examine the stairs afterward will find no trace of the blood. The faint sound of piano music then fills the room. Its source is unknown.

Upstairs Landing

This area is accessible from the stairs in the ballroom. Once the player characters reach the top, they suddenly hear the sound of a young woman laughing. Mary will begin to shake and sob, saying that it's the voice of Patricia. Suddenly, the ghostly image of Patricia will appear in front of the group. She is dressed in a flowing white dress that is covered in dripping blood. Patricia lunges for the characters, but passes through the group and tumbles down the stairs until she hits the ballroom floor. A pool of blood begins to coagulate behind her head before she disappears. Any characters who make a successful investigation task will deduce, judging by the force of her fall, that perhaps Patricia was actually pushed down the stairs.

FAMILY SECRETS

At some point after the characters witness the death of Patricia, one of them should experience a vision. It can come at any time and by any catalyst (i.e. picking up a personal belonging of Patricia's that was left behind), but, nonetheless, it's a rather poignant experience—the character will see a vision of Patricia being pushed to her death and Mary screaming at the top of the landing as her sister tumbles down to the ballroom floor.

Is this proof that Mary killed her sister? Most likely, the players will think so, but why would she do such a thing? Perhaps she really does want to inherit that estate after all. If the group decides to confront Mary with an accusation of murder, the young woman will grow angry and horrified at being accused of such a ghastly proposition. Mary will argue that she never had any intention of keeping the house in the first place and is entrusting its sale to her lawyer. Mary will then break down in tears and say that she just wants this nightmare to end. The truth of the matter is that Mary didn't murder her sister.

Generations ago, Mary's great grandfather, who was a powerful Medium, made a pact with a ghostly entity. The

being promised Mary's grandfather that it would bestow upon him untold riches if he would assist in delivering the essence of innocent mortals to the being for its consumption. Obviously, this required the Medium to murder his victims, which he did for several months. Guilt soon beset the man, causing him to take his own life. Enraged, the evil spirit extracted revenge by killing every family member who still lived in the house and those who would eventually call it home. Patricia was the most recent family member to meet an untimely demise at the hands of this entity and it plans on making Mary its last. But first, it seeks to drive Mary insane (as sort of a last *huzzah* before its vengeance is satisfied) by haunting her with visions of her dead sister. The fact that the player characters have become involved is even better—the being will use them to further its plans by causing them to accuse Mary as a murderer.

The aforementioned bit of family history should be made available to the player characters after they've witnessed the reenactment of Patricia's death and have begun to suspect Mary as a murderess. We'll leave the details up to you, but one suggestion is to have the group come across diary entries penned by Patricia or some other family member who discovered the family's dark history. In addition to the family history, there should be a collection of arcane ritual instructions detailing how to banish the entity once and for all. Its complexity can be deciphered by a successful occult lore or ancient languages task.

DEATH TO YOU ALL

Once the group discovers the fact that Mary's family has been haunted for generations by a malicious spirit, the apparition will make its final move with an attempt on Mary's life. One way or another, the group should be led to the ballroom for this climactic end to their investigation.

Once there, the group will discover that the ballroom has been decorated with balloons and party streamers; Mary comments that the room was similarly decorated the night of the party. As the group moves further into the room, the ballroom doors will slam shut and the ghost of Patricia will appear again at the top of the stairs. Patricia addresses her sister this time, accusing Mary of killing her. Distraught, Mary denies it and tells Patricia that she loved her, as she falls to her knees. At that point, Patricia will float down the

stairs with an outstretched hand, pointing toward Mary, who is now gasping for air. This is the apparition's attempt to take Mary's life essence away. In order to save her life, the group needs to perform the ritual.

Build up the tension as the group now begins the fight to save Mary's life and banish the entity, ending its vendetta against the Worthington family. The entity will do everything in its power to stop the group from completing the ritual, including using its powers to kill members of the group.

When (and if) the characters successfully complete the ritual, the entity will lose its grip on Mary's essence and fade back into the netherworld in a suitably climactic end scene. As the group rushes to Mary's aid the room will suddenly grow cold and the light will flicker until the ballroom is cast in a pale light. Suddenly, the apparitions of each family member killed by the entity will appear before Mary, exonerating and thanking her for finally ending the family curse and allowing them to rest in peace.



AMENDS

While attending a masquerade ball one Halloween evening, the characters find themselves the pawns of a spirit who calls itself Uncle Jack. The malevolent entity attempts to trick the characters so that it may possess the body of a living shell and resume its reign of murder and terror.

GETTING STARTED

This particular scenario is fairly open-ended in terms of party makeup, although it works best if the characters are mundane mortals thrust unwittingly into the world of shadows and darkness. And like most of the scenarios in Ghost Stories, this one can be played in any era, depending on the mood you wish to portray for the evening.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

A local dilettante is hosting a masquerade ball and the characters have been invited to attend. For most of the evening, the event goes as planned, with the guests engaging in those activities that are apropos to these types of parties.

Toward the end of the party, however, things take a turn for the worse—one of the guests discovers what looks to be a crystal ball and unwittingly summons the spirit of a long-dead murderer known as Uncle Jack. Alternatively, one of the player characters may discover the object and likewise summon the spirit. If you decide to use a character as the catalyst for this scenario, feel free to let the group explore the house a bit before they find the crystal ball. We will leave the layout of the home to you, but depending on the era you've decided to use with this scenario, you may want to consider a few appointments, if only to add flavor to the setting.

If set within the Victorian era, perhaps the masquerade ball is hosted within the walls of a Gothic Revival mansion or chateau, complete with hidden rooms, secret passageways, high towers with few windows, and the like. For an Edwardian era feel, place this scenario in an expansive mansion set deep within the English countryside. Capture the feel of the era by describing rooms such as the Foyer, with an austere, high ceiling and granite pavement that echoes with every footstep; a Drawing or Sitting Room with Dresden blue walls and comfortable furniture; or a Dining Room with leather-cushioned chairs situated around a gigantic mahogany table; and the

FROM THE PAST CHARACTERS

MARY WORTHINGTON

FITNESS	2	REACTION	6
REASONING	3	STAMINA	8
Commodities	5	BEGIN INJURIES	
General Knowledge	3	X X X □ □	①
EMPATHY	4	X X X □ □	②
Performance	4	X X X □ □	③
Seduction	6	X X X X □	④
WILLPOWER	2	X X X X □	⑤

THE WORTHINGTON POLTERGEIST

ABILITIES	
Cloudy Night	4
Manifestation	6
Phantasm	8
Possession	3

The Poltergeist can only be banished through a special ceremony.



AMENDS CHARACTERS

UNCLE JACK

ABILITIES	
Manifestation	9
Phantasm	8
Possession	3

Jack can only be banished through a special ceremony.

like. Also, the era was a last fling for high society in Great Britain before the horrors of World War I, in addition to being a time characterized by elegant clothes and lavish parties.

SPIRITS OF THE NIGHT!

Regardless of who locates the crystal ball, all it takes to summon the spirit is to grasp the object and gaze into its glass interior. Once done, the ball will begin to glow a sickly green color and the lights will go out. As the guests panic, one of the characters will be asked to enter the basement and fix the fuse. This depends, of course, on the era. In any case, once the lighting has been restored, eerie sounds will begin to emanate from the walls and grow in pitch until the ceiling above opens up and debris showers the guests, causing them to flee in terror.

Characters who make a successful occult lore task will quickly realize that by playing with the crystal ball, the individual responsible threw out a psychic line and hooked something back into the land of the living. Malevolent spirits are obviously at work here.

If the player characters choose to immediately set about banishing the spirit, allow them to do so (perhaps by some elaborate ritual which they find in an occult book), but they should not succeed. In fact, let them think that their efforts have been successful. If this is a route the characters haven't thought to explore yet, no worries. Either way, they should be introduced to the first event of the evening.

LITTLE GIRL LOST

One or more of the characters should eventually hear a faint sound resembling a child sobbing outside. If the group investigates, they'll discover a young girl named Greta, who explains that she is crying because she lost her mother at the party. If the group decides to help her search for her mother, Greta will be very thankful. Unfortunately, this is a wild goose chase. Greta is actually a spectral manifestation of Uncle Jack. Just as the group begins to tire of searching for the girl's mother, a dense, rolling fog will fill the area. When the fog clears, the apparition of Uncle Jack will be found standing in the place of the little girl.

The spirit will begin to taunt the group by manipulating the reality of their surroundings. Suddenly, the characters

will find themselves in a dead-end alley. Uncle Jack's voice permeates the dark backstreet as he tells the group:

"I understand your hate for me. I thought I could outsmart the Prince of Lies, but tonight I have a chance to make amends, I've come back to undo the curse and you shall help lay me to rest once and for all...by correcting my greatest sin—the murder of my wife!"

SECRETS REVEALED

The group will quickly find themselves back inside the home alone. The room which they have been placed inside has no discernable exits, but a successful investigation task will reveal a secret door hidden behind a bookcase. Beyond the secret entrance lies a darkened stairwell leading to a subterranean room containing the body of a woman. Even without the medicine skill, the characters will discover that she is dead. Once again, the spirit of Uncle Jack will manifest and tell the group that he needs them to locate an object known as the Wishbringer Stone, which will release his wife's soul so she can find peace. If he can free his wife from her torment in Purgatory, he will end the curse. If the group declines to help Uncle Jack, he will not allow them to leave the vault, trapping them forever in an underground tomb until they die and pass along into the afterlife...if they're lucky.

If asked, Uncle Jack will say that he does not know the exact location of the artifact, but that it resides somewhere within the house. This is your opportunity to fully describe the home as the group searches for the Wishbringer Stone, keeping in mind to match its layout and mood with the era in which you've set the scenario. The characters will eventually locate the Wishbringer Stone, which is seemingly nothing more than a smooth, polished rock. Upon locating the object, the characters will be transported back to the basement and told by Jack to hold the Stone over the body of his wife. When one of the characters performs the task, Uncle Jack is suddenly made flesh and the body of the dead woman disappears (she was an illusion). He attacks the character holding the Stone in an attempt to recover it. Regardless if he manages to snatch it away, Jack will flee the room when he gets the opportunity and lock the characters in the basement of the home.

TRICK OR TREAT

A successful finesse task (☉ on the roll) will unlock the door and give the characters access to the ground floor. Uncle Jack is nowhere to be found.

No doubt, the group will be angry for allowing themselves to be tricked by a ghost. And just what is the Wishbringer Stone anyway? If the characters wish to research the history of the artifact, they will unlock its secrets with either a successful investigation or occult lore task. Play out the research, however—don't just let the party locate the information with a good roll. Describe the act of digging through dusty tomes (either in the house, which has an expansive library, or some other repository in another location, such as a library or occult bookstore).

The group will eventually locate an ancient manuscript which details the Wishbringer Stone. Its origin is unknown, unfortunately, but the group will learn that the Stone allows a spirit to manifest in the flesh, but only temporarily. If the Stone's possessor can perform another ritual upon the body of an individual who died a peaceful death after the next sunrise, he will be made anew in the flesh, permanently.

If the group decides to research Uncle Jack's history, another investigation or occult lore task will reveal that his real name was Jack Aberhaming, a very powerful, wealthy, and spiteful man who delighted in misfortune. His penchant for making others suffer quickly altered into a desire to see them dead. Aberhaming murdered nearly a dozen people by various methods before he was arrested and executed for his crimes.

A-HUNTING WE WILL GO

The search is now on for Uncle Jack before he can locate a body and continue on with his murderous rampage, which was ended for him nearly several decades ago. Jack will immediately head for the nearest mortuary where he will locate a prospective body and begin a ritual allowing him to possess the corpse of another. The party should arrive at the mortuary just in time to catch Jack performing a ritual and must prevent him from completing his task, although Jack won't make it easy for them.

THIS IS THE END?

To heighten the intensity of the situation, make the group aware that if Jack finishes the ritual just after sunrise, he will be made flesh again, but this time permanently. To make matters worse, they only have ten minutes until sunrise.

Unfortunately for the group, Jack still has command over the powers he wielded while in ghostly form. During the confrontation, he will use them to stall the characters. For example, if it appears that the group has the upper hand, he will magically bind them into pine boxes, which just happen to be located on a conveyer leading to an oven that will cremate them. Those remaining outside the pine boxes need to make a choice—sacrifice the others to prevent Jack from manifesting again or allow him to complete the ritual, hoping that one day they can stop him before he kills again.



THE REVEREND

The characters are pulled into the dangerous investigation of supernatural phenomena involving a long-lost religious commune and a fanatic spiritual leader. Unlike other investigations of this type, however, the characters aren't called up to investigate through a third party; rather, one of them receives a psychic vision in the form of a nightmare, and this prompts the group to search out its meaning.

What the group of investigators finds is a religious leader who welcomes and keeps all visitors to his commune. The religious leader, a man who calls himself The Right Reverend Jacob Busse, possesses the power to murder people and then raise them back from the dead. A powerful ritual places the newly created undead under the Reverend's control. He then erases any memory of death from their minds. As such, the victims become mindless followers of a mad holy man.

GETTING STARTED

The opening scene is actually a dream sequence, where one or more player characters with ESP are transported back in time to witness a terrible death.

VISIONS OF THE PAST

Read this section aloud to any characters who possess ESP:

"As you lie sleeping in your bed, your dreams suddenly transport you to what looks like an eighteenth century colony. A man dressed in appropriate clothing rushes from church enraged. Its not God's will! He screams at those following him out of the church. He yells of blasphemy and asks how long they're willing to wait before he flees into the woods. A voice from inside the church calls him back, but he ignores it. He runs until he comes to a bridge. As he tries to cross it, the bridge appears to get longer and he seems to run in place. He collapses in exhaustion and turns to find a preacher looking over him. The preacher places his hand on the mans' forehead and energy washes over him before falling dead."

The player character(s) have just had a psychic vision of the past, a particularly horrifying and secret episode in the history of a place called Angel Island that is being replayed for them. If the party expresses an interest in interpreting the

vision then allow them to do so, but don't provide too much information. At the very least, their initial research into the vision should point to a forested area in Washington State called Angel Lake, where numerous disappearances have occurred in fifty-year cycles. The last disappearance occurred in 1950, when a man by the name of Sam McDermott was reported missing by his brother, James McDermott. This information can be obtained with either a successful investigation or occult lore task (-1 on an occult lore roll).

COLD SHOULDERS

As the group makes their way toward the region, it should become apparent that they are entering into a remote area of Washington that is far beyond the beaten path. Along the way, have them stop at either a roadside gas station or even a small town located ten to twenty miles from Angel Lake. The folks at either location will be amiable enough, even accommodating, that is until they begin to ask questions about the area or disappearances. If questioned about the region's history, anyone the group interviews will suddenly grow cold and give them the brush off.

TRAIL OF DARKNESS

The road toward Angel Lake eventually ends, stopping at a narrow path that can only be traversed by foot. If they have a map (either provided by their research into the area or having purchased one at the gas station or town), the group can hike their way up the trail. Play up the ominous look and feel of the forest. Hiking the trail should be harrowing enough, but it always helps to have the area convey a sense of dread within the group, especially if some of them have psychic powers.

Eventually, the group will locate a stream which can only be crossed by a narrow bridge that looks to be several decades old. Crossing it is easy enough, but when they reach the other side, have each player character make an investigation task with (-1 on the roll). If successful, they will notice a green energy discharge rippling around the bridge for an instant before it disappears. After hiking the trail for another hour or so, the characters will eventually find the commune grounds.

THE REVEREND

We'll leave the layout of the commune to you, but consider placing several barracks throughout the grounds, along with a communal dining room, a town square and a small church.

When the player characters enter the commune, they will be greeted by utter silence, as if the place is abandoned. Searching the compound's buildings will reveal that people do live here, however. Ultimately, the characters need to make their way toward the commune's church, where all the residents have gathered for the afternoon. Regardless of whether the group enters the church or spies on the proceedings through an open window, they find a man standing at the pulpit, illuminated by the dust streaming in the window as he preaches fire and brimstone. He will immediately notice the group (even if they're peeping through the windows) welcome them to the colony which is called *New Eden*. He introduces himself as the Right Reverend Jacob Busse.

BREAKING BREAD

After exchanging pleasantries with the Reverend, the group will be invited to eat dinner with the commune. If they refuse the offer, Busse will argue that dusk is just around the corner and the woods are not safe at night. If the group insists on leaving, the Reverend and his congregation will bid them farewell and good luck. But nothing is ever that easy at Angel Lake. As the characters navigate their way back toward the road, they'll suddenly find themselves lost and going in circles. No matter which direction they travel, the party should always find itself back at the commune.

At dinner, various members of Busse's commune will split the party up, taking them in different directions and distracting them with a barrage of questions about their lives, philosophies, and that of the outside world. Throughout this scene, any character who surveys the room will also catch a glimpse of Busse watching them. Aside from those uncomfortable exchanges, dinner goes smoothly enough and the party is escorted to their barracks afterward.

STILL THE NIGHT

The players can leave the barracks at any time. In fact, the windows and entrance doors are never locked. As such, the

characters are more than welcome to find a way out of the compound, but as before, they will always end up back where they started. Once the sun dips below the horizon, with the commune being more than ten to twenty miles away from the next town, there's only the natural light of the stars to provide any type of illumination. Any attempts to search the grounds should receive -2. Likewise, any members of the commune on patrol should receive the same penalty to spot the characters. Play up the boding evil that permeates the compound and keep the players on their toes by making secret rolls. Because it's quiet up in the hills at night, every little sound should threaten to shatter the stillness of the area.

If the characters attempt to search the buildings on the grounds, the only real structure of interest is the church. The house of worship is a slap-dash affair constructed entirely of wood. There is a back entrance but it's fastened with a sturdy padlock. A set of wooden steps in the front leads up to a single door. Once inside, the characters will find themselves in a large room with pews on either side of a central aisle. At the opposite end of the room is Busse's pulpit, which rests on a dais. Windows on both sides of the walls do not have shades, so anyone can peer into the church with ease. A successful investigation task (-2 to the roll) will reveal a secret door behind the pulpit that leads into a small back room. The secret door will open only if the pulpit is turned on its base 360° clockwise.

THE CHURCH

The area behind the secret door is a small room about 140 square feet in size. It also happens to be the Reverend's office. Inside is a small cot, a plain wooden desk and chair, and a small nightstand. Searching the room will reveal a small, handheld mirror framed in brass and an old book that, upon closer examination, appears to be a journal of some sort. If the characters searched other buildings in the commune, a successful reasoning task will allow them to recall never seeing any other mirrors on the grounds. Flipping through the journal will yield a surprising discovery—it details the daily life of Busse since he began his ministry more than 150 years ago! Worse still, the group will discover that the Reverend's congregation is comprised of undead followers, some of which have been under his control since the 1850s.

Confronting the Reverend with their discovery will certainly lead to the party's death, as Busse is not about to let his secret out. Still, this should greatly unnerve the players—they will obviously be Busse's next victims!

THE MIRROR

Unbeknownst to the player characters at this point, the unassuming hand-held mirror is actually the key to relinquishing Busse's control over his undead minions. By holding the mirror in front of a follower, the undead victim will quickly regain the memory of his demise and wake from the Reverend's control.

DANGEROUS GROUND

Armed with the knowledge of the real identity of the Right Reverend, the characters have a number of options. If the group decides to confront Busse with the accusation, he will deny any wrongdoing and counter by stating that the investigators are trying to disrupt or disband the commune. He may even accuse the group of trying to usurp his religious importance to his children and fracture their way of life as ordered by Satan and his minions. In either case, Busse's diatribe will serve to enrage his followers, who will take their fear and aggression out on the characters, making for a deadly turn of events (see *The Tension Builds*).

A second option open to the group is to bide their time and try to locate and convince someone who isn't under the control of Busse that their leader is not who he claims to be. This should be a challenging task, however, as the Reverend keeps a close eye on his flock. This course of action should take careful planning on the part of the characters if they hope to find someone willing to help them. One wrong move could land them in trouble.

If the players are at a loss as to what to do next, or if they're chasing dead leads, you can opt to have a commune member contact the party. A young woman by the name of Sister Ellen will sneak into the party's barracks at night and ask one of the characters if the world is still a desolate waste and if the messiah has come yet. The woman is obviously scared about something. If the group presses her into revealing any kind of information, Ellen will ask how the group intends to leave the commune. Whatever their answer,

she will dejectedly reply with, "*I thought you knew a way; only the Reverend has the key,*" and flee the area. If the characters produce the mirror, Ellen will begin to weep, claiming that the group was sent by the messiah to save them all. She will then tell the group that the mirror is the key to salvation.

THE TENSION BUILDS

If the party confronts Busse, he will order his children to capture the group so they may be judged before the eyes and will of God. At this point, if the party has learned of the importance of Busse's mirror, now would be a good time to use it.

If one of the characters produces the mirror and reveals it to the commune, they will finally be able to see themselves as they truly are—undead pawns bonded to the Reverend in a prison of rotting flesh. The followers will then seem to rise up in beams of light, which stretch toward the Reverend. Eventually, the light will overtake him as well. After a cacophony of unholy screams, bright flashes of light and disembodied souls soaring up toward the sky, the illusion of the commune vanishes in a gust of wind and the group will find themselves alone in the forest.

As an optional ending, if the party made contact with a member of Busses commune (including Sister Ellen) then instead of the characters being accosted, have the poor follower captured instead (remember, the Reverend keeps a close eye on his flock). Busse will order the heathen burned at the stake, which should prompt the group into a daring rescue. The ceremony should be as portentous as possible—as the flock ties the heathen to the stake, Busse will quote passages from the Bible and assert that God will pass judgement on the wicked. Perhaps the sky begins to grow dark and the air thick with oppression and dread. This should give the characters the impression that Busse possesses supernatural powers.



THE GUP RUNNETH

A maturing dilettante has found the key to ageless beauty and immortality in the form of a nineteenth century golden chalice decorated with ornate vine and flower engravings. By offering an individual a drink from the chalice, the aging aesthete is able to steal and absorb the imbiber's life force as he or she is slowly strangled to death by the vines, which spring to life and stretch out toward the victim's throat.

This scenario has been designed specifically for characters who have yet to experience the horrifying world of the supernatural. Archetypes best suited for this scenario are law enforcement types (detectives, private investigators, medical examiners, etc.), as the group will be drawn into the shadows through the investigation of what appears to be a spree killer targeting the city's homeless population.

Dates and such are not specific to this scenario, so you can easily adapt the events to occur in a contemporary setting just as easily as you could adapt them for play in the Roaring Twenties or Edwardian era.

STRANGE PORTENTS

The characters are assigned to investigate a string of homeless murders that have been occurring for the past several weeks. In all cases, the victims appear to have been strangled, but the Medical Examiner's office has yet to determine the method by which the victims are asphyxiated.

The group's commanding officer suggests that they first speak with the county coroner, a man by the name of Charles Allen. He is scheduled to perform an autopsy on the latest victim later in the afternoon. The coroner is an amiable fellow, but has no idea what type of weapon was used to strangle the victims. He will, however, note that each murder victim ingested a strange liquid substance that has yet to be identified. Initial analysis of the liquid revealed that it was tainted with a gold-like mineral. During the questioning, have each character make an investigation task (-1 on the roll). Those who are successful will spot a greenish stain on the victim's neck. A second investigation task (-2 on the roll) will reveal some leaves in the body bag that are of the same color as the stain on the corpse's neck. The characters should be able to grab a few leaves before they leave the coroner's office.

THE REVEREND CHARACTERS

THE RIGHT REVEREND JACOB BUSSE

FITNESS	3	REACTION	5
Athletics	3		
Brawling	3	STAMINA	14
		BEGIN INJURIES	
REASONING	3		
Ancient Languages	2	X X □ □ □	-1
General Knowledge	2	X X □ □ □	-2
Occult Lore	4	X X □ □ □	-3
		X X □ □ □	-4
EMPATHY	4	X X X □ □	-5
Interrogation	6		
Negotiation	4		
Performance	5		
Seduction	4		
WILLPOWER	4		
Composure	3		
Necromancy	6		
Nullification	2		
Weaving	3		

THE GUP RUNNETH CHARACTERS

EDELYN LODA

FITNESS	1	REACTION	8
REASONING	5	STAMINA	6
Commodities	6		
General Knowledge	3	BEGIN INJURIES	
		X X X □ □	-1
EMPATHY	3	X X X X □	-2
Negotiation	4	X X X X □	-3
Performance	2	X X X X □	-4
		X X X X □	-5
WILLPOWER	2		

GREEN THUMBS

If any of the characters have the investigation skill, they can find reference to the strange leaf with a successful task. Subsequently, the group can have the foliage examined by a forensic pathologist or a colleague from the ME's office. Whatever means at their disposal, the characters will discover that the leaf comes from a rare form of ivy called Grasper's Ivy. It is indigenous to Western Europe, specifically in the Scottish Highlands. The group will most likely deduce that this type of ivy was used to strangle the murder victims. They should be allowed to follow up on this lead which will take them to several florists in the area who deal with exotic flowers and other foliage, but not one has ever seen or sold this type of ivy before. In fact, one particular florist will state that this type of plant is particularly rare, and at one point provided the inspiration for design engravings on cups and chalices throughout the nineteenth century.

FOOLS' GOLD

It should become apparent to the characters by now that perhaps the gold-like substance found in the murder victims is connected to this new lead. Were the victims poisoned before they were strangled? Investigating this angle will eventually put them in contact with an antique dealer that specializes in nineteenth century goldware, specifically cups and chalices. Their investigation will also provide an address for the dealer.

When the characters arrive at the dealer's showroom, they will make a grisly discovery. As they move to search the dealer's backroom, they will discover it crawling with vines. A further search will uncover the corpse of the antiques dealer, buried among the bizarre undergrowth that fills the room (feel free to have the players make a composure roll for witnessing this horrific murder scene). The cause of death is asphyxiation. A successful investigation task (-2 on the roll because of the undergrowth) will reveal the dealer's business ledger. Upon inspection, the characters will be able to narrow down several customers who purchased antique cups and chalices within the last several months. If the characters decide to analyze the vegetation in the room back at the crime lab, they will discover that it is the same type of plant that was pulled from the initial autopsy for the latest homeless victim.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

We leave the number of customers that should be interviewed up to you. If you'd prefer to drag this portion of the investigation out, throwing your players numerous red herrings, it's your call. Don't lead them in too many circles, however, or they'll understandably grow frustrated.

The characters should eventually locate a woman by the name of Evelyn Loda, a wealthy dilettante and philanthropist who donates large portions of her wealth to organizations in pursuit of the arts. She is a well-known and well-respected woman in the city. Interviewing Loda will turn up nothing, despite the fact that she is the spree killer.

During the interview, have the characters make an investigation or empathy task (-1 on the roll). If one or more of the characters makes a successful roll, they should notice that something about Evelyn just doesn't seem right—as if her beauty is unnatural. If this arouses their suspicions, the players are free to investigate her background (*see below*).

A LITTLE LEGWORK

Checking into Evelyn's background will prove nothing useful at first. Evelyn comes from a wealthy family that made its money in textiles during the twenties. The Lodas managed to escape financial ruin during the Great Depression and their fabulous wealth carried them through the decades.

Evelyn herself is the last remaining Loda, and inherited her family's wealth when she was a young woman. Since that time, she has been very generous with her wealth, although she is known as something of a spendthrift—she spends thousands of dollars each month on antique and rare objects d'art.

Checking newspaper archives for articles on Evelyn will turn up the first red flag. An article in the local city paper dated several months ago reports Evelyn's acquisition of a rare golden chalice crafted in the early nineteenth century and reported to be worth millions due to its craftsmanship and rarity. A museum in Chicago attempted to purchase the chalice from Evelyn so that it may be displayed, but the dilettante refused.

WHAT THE CHARACTERS DON'T KNOW

The chalice that Evelyn purchased from the dealer is actually a mystical artifact that allows the owner to steal the life force from anyone who drinks from it. The life force is transferred back into the chalice's owner, effectively making the person ageless and immortal.

Evelyn has always been a vain woman. Fearing her death, she sought a way to extend her life span. Modern medicine is incapable of doing such a feat, so the dilettante searched for other means. During her research, the woman came across information that led her to the chalice. (The characters may also locate this information, if they choose to perform some research as well.) Unfortunately, the dealer who possessed the cup would not sell it, so Evelyn tricked him into sipping from it, knowing full well that the intricate vine engravings would suddenly come to life and strangle him. Evelyn was then able to take possession of the item herself, while feeding on the dealer's life force at the same time.

REACHING OUT

If the characters think to trail Evelyn, allow them to do so, for shadowing the woman will allow them to see her for what she truly is. For the most part, Evelyn follows a fairly standard schedule: up by 10:00 am, out the door by noon for lunch, back home by 2:00 pm, and then out again during the evening, attending social functions. Evelyn will perform this routine for the next several days, so play up the monotony of the situation; surveillance is often boring and tedious work. Then, just when the characters are about to give up, have Evelyn suddenly change her schedule. Instead of leaving in the evening to attend an opera, she takes a sudden drive into one of the city's more decrepit neighborhoods and parks in an old factory parking lot.

Evelyn will exit her vehicle carrying what looks like a purse or small handbag. The characters will surely want to trail her, but they must remain hidden at all times, lest she discovers that someone is following her. Evelyn will eventually make her way toward an overrun park. She approaches a park bench and wakes up the bum sleeping on its cold, hard surface. She then offers him a cup of booze from the chalice and he takes a drink. Suddenly, leafy vines spring from the cup and wrap around the neck of the struggling homeless victim. Evelyn looks on as the poor man gasps for breath. If you desire, have the characters make composure rolls for witnessing such a horrible event.

INSPIRATIONAL SOURCES

Movies

The Uninvited
 Dead of Night
 House on Haunted Hill
 The Haunting
 The Legend of Hell House
 The Fog
 The Changeling
 Poltergeist
 The Lady in White
 Ghost Story
 What Lies Beneath
 Sleepy Hollow
 The Others
 The Portrait of Dorian Gray
 Portrait of Jennie
 The Amityville Horror
 The Shining
 The Sixth Sense

Books

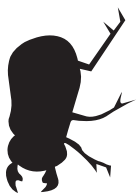
Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead
 From Flying Toads to Snakes with Wings
 Ghost Sightings
 Gothic Ghosts
 Victorian Ghost Stories
 The Fall of the House of Usher
 The Black Cat and Other Stories
 Eight Tales of Terror
 The Turn of the Screw
 Lost: A Novel
 Heart of the Sea
 Bag of Bones
 The Night Country
 The Haunting of Hill House
 Reign of the Dead
 The Bishop in the West Wing
 Bannerman,s Ghosts
 Haunted

Comics

The Haunt of Fear
 Tales from the Crypt
 The Vault of Horror
 Weird Fantasy
 Adventures into Darkness
 Haunted Thrills
 Twisted Tales

At this point, the characters may want to jump in to prevent the man's death, but it won't be easy. The minute they make their presence known, Evelyn will release the vines from the man's neck and attempt to entangle and suffocate the player characters! In order to get to Evelyn, they will have to cut through the vines. If any of the vines manage to get a hold of a character's neck, it will immediately begin to suck the life out of them at a rate of two stamina points per turn.

If the characters manage to successfully cut their way through the vines, they will be presented with an opportunity to wrangle the chalice from Evelyn's grasp. A successful brawling attack will result in Evelyn losing her grasp on the chalice and she will quickly drop to her knees and utter an unholy scream as her own life force begins to leave her body. Within a matter of seconds, the dilettante murderer will begin to decay until she is nothing more than a pile of ash and dust.



OTHER IDEAS

RUNNING ON INSTINCTS

Pick one character from the group. He has just inherited lycanthropy and transforms into a werewolf every full moon. He can only die by way of damage from silver weapons, such as swords or bullets. As a werewolf, the character is not in control of his actions (the gamemaster should take over). But, here's the hitch—the character doesn't even know he's a werewolf and suffers from amnesia during the times when he is one. Further, he is part of an investigative team looking into a string of murders at nearby campsites. Little does the team (or indeed the character) know that these murders are actually werewolf-related. What happens when the character discovers his affliction? And what will the outcome be when the teams discovers it as well?

JOIN ME

The characters are all members of a very wealthy, upper-class family. The patriarch has died under mysterious circumstances, leaving someone a fortune. Unfortunately, the will has gone missing and to make matters worse, a stranger has arrived to claim himself as heir. Each character should be given a distinct reason to want the fortune. Keep everyone suspicious of each other, willing to make alliances in order to at least share some of the wealth. Most of the all, the stranger is a red herring—he is a vampire, causing havoc in town, but actually has a legitimate claim to the estate. This should be played like an old-fashioned murder mystery. The only supernatural elements should be the vampire, but keep it subtle, yet surreal. Alternatively, remove the vampire and keep it realistic.

UNBIDDEN

If you're looking for more horror gaming, check out *Unbidden: A Roleplaying Game of Horrors, Secrets, and Legends* now available from Politically Incorrect Games.

[HTTP://WWW.PIGAMES.NET/UNBIDDEN.PHP](http://www.pigames.net/unbidden.php)

HORROR MYSTERY ADVENTURES

GHOST STORIES

CHARACTER NAME

ARCHEOLOGIST (ACADEMICIAN)

Archeologists typically study and practice their craft in the field, preferring not to shut themselves in a classroom teaching the science to other bright hopefuls. Leading expeditions in the field and consulting on unusual finds is their forte. Some come face to face with entities or events which are so horrifying and inexplicable that it forces a change in their perceptions of reality. Instead of digging in ancient Mesopotamian burial grounds, they become obsessed with uncovering the secrets of supernatural phenomena and the ancient civilizations from which they originate.

3 FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

2 REASONING

- Ancient Languages ...4...
- Archaeology ...6...
- Commodities ...4...
- Computers
- General Knowledge ...3...
- Occult Lore ...2...
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology
-
-

4 EMPATHY

- Interrogation
- Investigation ...4...
- Negotiation ...2...
- Performance
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-

2 WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-

10 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	①
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	②
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	③
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	④
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	⑤

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

7 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

notebook, dig site tools

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NOTES

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

CHARACTER NAME

CLERGYMAN (BLESSED)

Clergymen come mostly from devout religious households and contribute their time and effort to a church or temple. Clergy members generally enjoy helping people, and see everything as divinely inspired by whomever they hold as the Supreme Being. Unfortunately, there is also a darker aspect to their vocation: they consider it their job to shepherd and protect the flock from the creatures of darkness that plague humanity and feed on mankind's fear.

2 FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

3 REASONING

- Ancient Languages ...5...
- Archaeology
- Commodities
- Computers
- General Knowledge ...3...
- Occult Lore
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology5
-
-

3 EMPATHY

- Interrogation
- Investigation ...1...
- Negotiation ...2...
- Performance ...2...
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-
-

3 WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
- Call to Faith ...2...
- Divine Recovery ...4...
- Sanctify ...3...
-
-

10 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

X X X □ □	①
X X X □ □	②
X X X □ □	③
X X X □ □	④
X X X □ □	⑤

↑ BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

7 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

holy symbol, holy water

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

HORROR MYSTERY ADVENTURES

GHOST STORIES

CHARACTER NAME

DEMON STALKER (MARTIAL ARTIST)

Demon Stalkers know the truth: demons and other monstrosities have entered our world and make it their personal playground. Whether they track werewolves in the forests of Eastern Europe or stalk vampire covens on the streets of New York City, Stalkers make it their personal missions to shed light on the darkness that threatens to consume the world.

4 FITNESS

Athletics4
 Brawling3
 Driving
 Finesse
 Firearms4
 Stealth2

2 REASONING

Ancient Languages
 Archaeology
 Commodities
 Computers
 General Knowledge2
 Occult Lore4
 Mechanics
 Medicine
 Parapsychology
 Theology

2 EMPATHY

Interrogation
 Investigation2
 Negotiation
 Performance
 Seduction

 ESP Skills

3 WILLPOWER

Composure4

 Sorcery or True Faith Skills

14 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

X	X				
X	X				
X	X				
X	X				
X	X	X			

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤

6 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

automatic pistol, knife, shotgun

NOTES

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

CHARACTER NAME

OCCULTIST

Occultists are learned individuals who seek knowledge of the Truth through the discovery of supernatural phenomena and research of arcane texts and manuscripts. Most occultists are wealthy individuals who can afford to spend the time and amount of money it takes to travel to far-off places in search of arcane knowledge long lost to time. Occultists are a valuable addition to any investigation, because their acquaintance with the uncanny is unmatched.

2 FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling2..
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms2..
- Stealth
-
-

4 REASONING

- Ancient Languages ...5...
- Archaeology1...
- Commodities1...
- Computers
- General Knowledge ...3...
- Occult Lore5...
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology2...
-
-

3 EMPATHY

- Interrogation
- Investigation2..
- Negotiation1..
- Performance1..
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-
-

2 WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-
-
-

8 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

X	X	X		
X	X	X		
X	X	X		
X	X	X	X	
X	X	X	X	

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

- ①
- ②
- ③
- ④
- ⑤

6 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

occult books, diary

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

CHARACTER NAME

MEDIUM

Mediums are gifted individuals who have power over the Second Sight—latent psychic powers that allow them to perform amazing feats of mind over matter. Mediums can commune with the dead, read the future, and discern the past by calling on their gift and unlocking the secrets of the human mind. Mediums are also the most likely to come into direct contact with the paranormal. It's almost like the spirits of the dead are drawn to them and many dread the day that they discovered their abilities.

2 FITNESS

- Athletics ...2...
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

4 REASONING

- Ancient Languages
- Archaeology
- Commodities
- Computers
- General Knowledge ...2...
- Occult Lore ...3...
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology
-
-

2 EMPATHY

- Interrogation ...1...
- Investigation ...2...
- Negotiation
- Performance ...4...
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
- Augury ...4...
- Precognition ...3...
- Psychometry ...4...
-
-

3 WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-

10 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	③
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	④
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	⑤

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

6 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

mystic symbols (crystals, ankhs, etc.)

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

CHARACTER NAME

PARAPSYCHOLOGIST (ACADEMICIAN)

Parapsychologists are also known as Ghost Chasers and Paranormal Investigators. They categorize and investigate paranormal and cryptozoological phenomena. Many parapsychologists work in other fields, typically academia, as professors of psychology, philosophy, physics, religious studies, etc. Since parapsychologists have no true paranormal powers, most of their ambition is a result of envy and jealousy of true Mediums.

2 FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse ...2...
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

3 REASONING

- Ancient Languages
- Archaeology
- Commodities
- Computers ...3...
- General Knowledge ...2...
- Occult Lore ...4...
- Mechanics
- Medicine ...2...
- Parapsychology ...5...
- Theology ...1...
-
-

4 EMPATHY

- Interrogation ...2...
- Investigation ...4...
- Negotiation
- Performance
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-

2 WILLPOWER

- Composure
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-

8 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	②
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	③
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	④
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	⑤

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

7 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

occult books, laptop, detection and recording equipment

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NOTES

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

CHARACTER NAME

SORCERER

Sorcerers are blessed with supernatural powers and the ability to cast spells through the use of arcane rituals. Sorcery is also often identified with witchcraft and black magic, both of which involve getting power from association with evil spirits or demons. Unfortunately, in their lust for more power many sorcerers do travel down the dark path and become corrupted and dangerous individuals. Nonetheless, there are many practitioners who use their power and knowledge for good, helping mankind push the forces of darkness back toward the shadows.

2 FITNESS

- Athletics
- Brawling
- Driving
- Finesse ...2...
- Firearms
- Stealth
-
-

2 REASONING

- Ancient Languages ...2...
- Archaeology
- Commodities ...2...
- Computers
- General Knowledge
- Occult Lore ...2...
- Mechanics
- Medicine
- Parapsychology
- Theology
-
-

2 EMPATHY

- Interrogation
- Investigation
- Negotiation
- Performance ...2...
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-
-

5 WILLPOWER

- Composure ...3...
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
- Endowment ...5...
- Nullification ...4...
- Weaving ...3...
-
-

14 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	②
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	③
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	④
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	⑤

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

8 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

arcane texts

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NOTES

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- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

HORROR MYSTERY ADVENTURES

GHOST STORIES

CHARACTER NAME

COP (AUTHORITY)

Cops in the special crimes unit are assigned to investigate heinous crimes such as murders and mutilations. While most have no knowledge of the paranormal, there is the occasional cop who has had his share of strange and other-worldly experiences. Whether out of curiosity, obsession, or vengeance, this cop always manages to get himself assigned to those 'special' cases for which he seems to have talents for solving.

3 FITNESS

- Athletics 2
- Brawling 4
- Driving
- Finesse
- Firearms 5
- Stealth
-
-

3 REASONING

- Ancient Languages
- Archaeology
- Commodities
- Computers 2
- General Knowledge 1
- Occult Lore
- Mechanics
- Medicine 1
- Parapsychology
- Theology
-
-

2 EMPATHY

- Interrogation 2
- Investigation 4
- Negotiation
- Performance
- Seduction
-
- ESP Skills
-
-
-
-
-

3 WILLPOWER

- Composure 4
-
- Sorcery or True Faith Skills
-
-
-
-
-

12 STAMINA

(FITNESS + WILLPOWER) X 2

BEGIN INJURIES

X	X				
X	X				
X	X	X			
X	X	X			
X	X	X			

BEGIN UNUSED (25-STAMINA)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

6 REACTION

12 - (FITNESS + EMPATHY)

OUTCOME	TRIVIAL	ROUTINE	CHALLENGING	IMPOSSIBLE
CALAMITY -->	-	-	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0
FAILURE -->	LESS THAN 0	LESS THAN 0	0 - 1	0 - 3
SUCCESS -->	0 - 1	0 - 3	2 - 5	4 - 7
TRIUMPH -->	MORE THAN 1	MORE THAN 3	MORE THAN 5	MORE THAN 7

WEAPONS & EQUIPMENT

police uniform, badge, handcuffs,

automatic pistol

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NOTES

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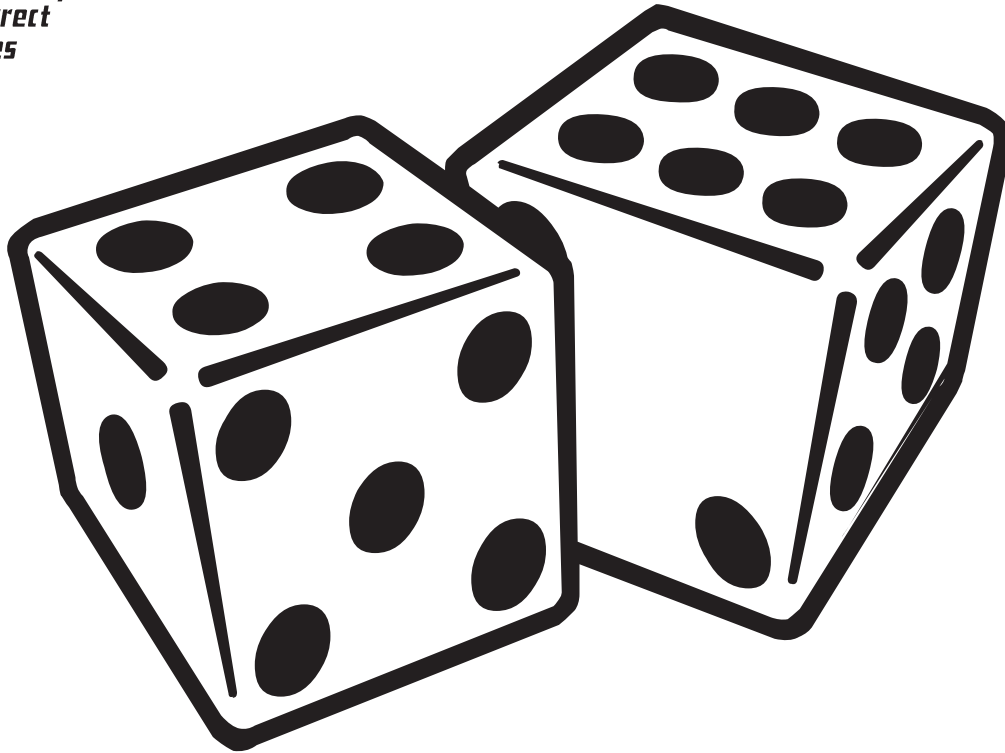
- 1| Choose Background (optional).
- 2| Divide 11 points between primary traits or roll one die for each trait (0-5; 6=0).
- 3| Compute secondary traits.
- 4| Divide 25 points between skills (max=6 or 2x related trait).
- 5| Choose possessions.

PUG Politically
Incorrect
Games



GENRE **DIVERSION™** *i*

GENERIC QUICK-FIX RPG RULES



GENRE **DIVERSION™** *i*

GENERIC QUICK-FIX RPG RULES

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY

BRETT M. BERNSTEIN

EDITED BY

MATT DRAKE

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Welcome to the **genreDiversions i** Manual. We hope to answer a few of your questions about this new set of rules before proceeding.

WHY DO I NEED A NEW RULES SYSTEM?

With the multitude of game systems available, that is a valid question. If you already use a system that works, there probably is no reason to switch. **genreDiversions i**, however, delivers a simple and dynamic way to recreate your favorite genre or setting.

genreDiversions i is a redesign of the original rules found in *HardNova*, *Ghost Stories*, *Vice Squad*, and *EarthAD*. The revisions to the rules include simplifications and provide 99% compatibility with *Impresa Modular Roleplaying* and cross-compatibility with *Active Exploits Diceless Roleplaying*, our more expandable, universal systems. In addition, this book adds new genre-specific content and notes permitting the use of the aforementioned mini-games with **genreDiversions i**.

genreDiversions i is not intended to replace our universal systems or overthrow industry leaders, but we have seen increasing interest in the original **genreDiversions** system due to its easy to use and easy to learn nature. Our customers repeatedly expressed interest in a generic set of rules in order to run their own custom settings. We listened to their needs and **genreDiversions i** was born.

Rather than move the system entirely to the *Express* version of *Impresa*, which was our original intent, we decided to retain elements which make the rules so widely accepted and then modify the remaining components to permit compatibility with *Impresa* and *Active Exploits*, and improve playability. The final result was a new mechanic based on *Impresa*, but still involving a roll of two six-sided dice.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

All you need is this book, two six-sided dice (available in many board games or local hobby shops), some paper, a pen or pencil, and two or more friends. And if you can't convince your friends to come over, you can always play via the internet using a messenger program, browser-based chat site, message board, or even email.

One player must be the gamemaster (also known as the director), who acts as referee and narrator. His job is to project the proper atmosphere, advance the plot, and assume the role of all characters in the game not controlled by the other players. Basically, he sets the stage for the players.

While roleplaying experience is only required for the gamemaster, it certainly does not hurt the game if other players are also familiar with the concept.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT IN THIS REVISION?

The most visible change is that traits are now called abilities and consist of **fitness**, **awareness**, **creativity**, **reasoning**, and **influence**. Willpower, empathy, and the secondary traits (stamina and reaction) have been removed as they are no longer necessary due to changes in the mechanics.

Two measurements are now used for health and replace stamina: **fatigue** and **injury**. They are rated on a scale from zero to five—zero indicates no damage, while five indicates the character is unconscious or near-death.

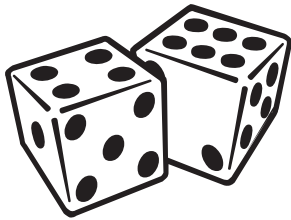
The success table has been removed as have bonus and penalty dice in order to make the game more dynamic. Instead, difficulty levels are now measured numerically. Tasks are successful when the margin of the roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty.

Damage rolls are now made when a character wearing armor or other form of protection has been hit by an attack. Those who are unprotected sustain the full amount of damage, whereas armor may reduce or even prevent damage entirely. Weapons now inflict either fatigue or injury—protection is dependent on the nature of the armor.

Finally, icons (showing difficulty changes, for example) have been replaced with abbreviations. While icons are easier to use for some, many found them confusing.

WHAT FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Player Character	any role which is portrayed by a player not acting as the gamemaster
Non-Player Character	any role acted out by the gamemaster as opposed to the other players
Ability	any one of five elements representing a character's potential and raw talent
Skill	any specific form of training or life experience which provides knowledge and proficiency to aid a career; whereas abilities determine a character's potential, skills determine what he knows or is trained to do
Task	any attempt to put an ability or skill to use in order to accomplish a specific goal
Difficulty	the difference between the skill total (ability+skill) and the dice roll required for a success, represented by the abbreviation <i>DIFF</i> (advanced rules only)
Genre	any one of four general time periods used to describe a set of skills or backgrounds



CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERS

We start here, because characters are the driving force behind the game. While task resolution is also important, reading about it first would be pointless without understanding the components making up a character—ability, skill, background, gimmicks, and health.

ABILITIES

Abilities describe the areas in which a character has talent. A rating of zero (0) reflects a disability—unless a player wishes his character to be disabled, one (1) is the minimum permitted rating. Five (5) is the maximum rating allowed by player characters.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: CHARACTER ABILITIES

0	disability
1	low average ability
2	average ability
3	high average ability
4	noteworthy ability
5	gifted ability

Fitness	the character's strength, agility, and physical resistance
Awareness	the character's sensory ability, power of observation, and intuition
Creativity	the character's spiritual, personal, and artistic affinity
Reasoning	the character's mental ability—logical deduction, memory, and mental resistance
Influence	the character's social standing, charisma, and popularity

SKILLS

Skills describe a character's general knowledge, training, and fields of study. Each skill is associated with a single ability and rated from one (1) to eight (8). Any skill may be attempted unskilled except for those listed with this symbol: ⊗—these represent advanced studies which are too complex for even guessing without formal training. A list of skills is presented later in this chapter.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: SKILLS

0	untrained
1	passing knowledge
2	undertrained
3	novice
4	solid training
5	proficient
6	seasoned
7	professional training
8	expert training

BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds serve to flesh out the character and are totally optional. Think of them in terms of cultural and alternate abilities, making a character stand head and shoulders above the masses. Backgrounds may add difficulty modifiers in certain situations or permit the use of special skills not normally available to characters. A character may not possess more than one background. A list of backgrounds can be found later in this chapter, but feel free to invent your own should the need arise.



GIMMICKS

Gimmicks are subsets of backgrounds—a single background can provide access to a list of gimmicks. Whereas characters can have only one background, they may possess any number of gimmicks dictated by that background. A list of gimmicks can be found at the end of this chapter.

CHARACTER HEALTH

Health is used to measure a character's current physical condition. There are two types of health: fatigue and injury. Both have five grades of severity—as a character's health is affected by damage, he receives an increase in difficulty on certain tasks when using the advanced task resolution rules.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: FATIGUE & INJURY

GRADE	FATIGUE	INJURY
1	dazed	bruised
2	stressed	sprained
3	strained	wounded
4	exhausted	maimed
5	unconscious	incapacitated

FATIGUE

Fatigue represents excessive effort which wears down a character, causing him to tire. Fatigue can also result from blunt trauma and physical strain. When a character has sustained five grades of fatigue, he falls unconscious. If he receives additional levels of fatigue, they are applied as injury. Fatigue may be decreased at a rate equal to the character's fitness rating per day. The medicine skill can increase the rate at which fatigue is restored by one grade. Fatigue is represented by the abbreviation *FAT*.

INJURY

Injury represents lacerations, breaks, internal damage, and burns. When a character has sustained five grades of injury, he falls unconscious and is totally incapacitated. If the character receives additional levels of injury, he dies. Injury may be decreased at a rate equal to the character's fitness rating per week. The medicine skill can increase the rate at which injury is restored by one grade. Injury is represented by the abbreviation *INJ*.

CREATING CHARACTERS

Before beginning the process of creating characters, the gamemaster must decide on the scope of the game in terms of genre. For purposes of simplicity, genre can be classified by one of four eras in history. Only skills, backgrounds, and gimmicks designated for use with the appropriate genre may be chosen for a character.

WHAT THE TERMS MEAN: ERAS

F	fantasy settings; 16th century and older
A	antique settings; 17-19th centuries
M	modern settings; 20th-21st centuries
S	science fiction settings; 22nd century and up

- Step 1** Choose character background.
- Step 2** *Allocation Method:* Divide ten (10) points among abilities.
Random Method: Roll one die for each ability, rerolling sixes.
Optional: Allocate an extra one to four points for more heroic games.
- Step 3** Divide twenty (20) points among skills.
Optional: Allocate an extra five to ten points for more heroic games.
- Step 4** Choose gimmicks based on background if necessary.
Optional: Gimmicks may be chosen by any character, but each one reduces an ability by one (1) point or a skill by five (5).
- Step 5** The gamemaster should either prepare a list of gear to be purchased by players or allow you to select whatever gear is appropriate to the character's background or training.



STANDARD SKILLS

Standard skills are those which may be used by any character of the relevant genre.

FITNESS-BASED

- Archery** PFAMSS
use and construction of bows and crossbows
- Athletics** PFAMSS
climbing, swimming, throwing, and gymnastics
- Boating** PFAM
construction and use of wooden sea craft, such as rafts and sailboats
- Brawling** PFAMSS
punching, kicking, grappling, and parrying
- Driving** MS
operation and general maintenance of automobiles, trucks, and motorcycles
- Finesse** PFAMSS
sleight of hand tricks, pilfering, lockpicking, and safecracking
- Firearms** AMS
use and general maintenance of pistols, rifles, and shotguns
- Gunnery** MS
operation of turret-based (vehicle-mounted) weapon systems
- Melee** PFAMSS
use of clubs, staves, knives, and swords in combat
- Piloting (Starships)** S⊗
operation of space-based vehicles
- Piloting (Aircraft)** MS⊗
operation of flying vehicles
- Piloting (Marine)** AMS⊗
operation of sea-based vehicles
- Piloting (Submarine)** MS⊗
operation of underwater vehicles
- Riding** PFAMSS
controlling and steering horses and horse-drawn wagons and carriages
- Stealth** PFAMSS
moving around quietly and without evidence

Zero-G

S
moving oneself about and using equipment in a zero-g environment

AWARENESS-BASED

- Gambling** PFAMSS
playing games of chance by way of deducing odds and bluffing
- Interrogation** PFAMSS
acquiring information through subterfuge, intimidation, and even torture if necessary
- Investigation** PFAMSS
acquiring information through examination, observation, and research
- Tracking** PFAMSS
following trails, tracks, and other signs of disturbance to locate creatures or people in the wild

CREATIVITY-BASED

- Crafts** PFAM
designing and fabricating pottery and crude metallic alloys
- Design** PFAMSS
painting, drawing, sculpting, metal-working, graphic design, and photography
- Disguise** PFAMSS
altering one's appearance by cosmetics and clothing
- Forgery** PFAMSS
duplicating another person's works (legal documents, paintings, etc.)—useless if the character does not possess another skill on which the work relies (crafts, design, or music)
- Literacy** PFAMSS
reading, understanding, and writing prose and poetry
- Music** PFAMSS
designing and playing musical scores
- Scavenging** MS
locating that which is considered junk to others, but useful to the character



REASONING-BASED

- Academics** **A M S** ⊗
knowledge of law, politics, and history
- Advanced Engineering** **S** ⊗
knowledge of high-technology construction sciences, such as reactors, hyperdrives, and cybernetics
- Ancient Languages** **A M S** ⊗
study and use of virtually-extinct languages, such as Aramaic and Latin
- Archaeology** **A M S** ⊗
study of beliefs, customs, practices, and origins of ancient civilizations
- Astronavigation** **S** ⊗
the complicated knowledge of plotting courses to distant stars and traversing the vastness of space
- Commodities** **F A M S**
appraising the value of antiques, gems, jewelry, and other items of trade
- Computers** **M S** ⊗
operation, hacking, and basic repair of computer systems
- Demolitions** **A M S**
use of explosive materials, such as dynamite
- Electrical** **A M S** ⊗
designing, building, and repairing electrical and electronic systems
- Engineering** **M S** ⊗
knowledge of construction sciences, such as architectural, aerospace, civil, and naval engineering
- General Knowledge** **F A M S**
knowledge of limited historical, geographical, political, social, and trivial information—perfect for game show contestants
- Mechanics** **A M S** ⊗
designing, building, and repairing mechanical systems
- Medicine** **F A M S** ⊗
knowledge of healing and treatment

Occult Lore

A M S

study of the practices and origins of ancient and modern mystical beliefs

Parapsychology

M S ⊗

study of the paranormal—extra sensory perception and supernatural experiences

Sciences

M S ⊗

knowledge of physics, advanced mathematics, and chemistry

Streetwise

A M S

foraging for food and shelter, and otherwise surviving in urban areas

Survival

F A M S

foraging for food and shelter, and otherwise surviving in the wilderness

Theology

A M S

study of the origins, traditions, and beliefs of the various religions

INFLUENCE-BASED

Negotiation

F A M S

bartering and persuading others to one's advantage

Performance

F A M S

orating, singing, and acting

Seduction

F A M S

tempting others to one's advantage by way of sexual attraction

Street Cred

F A M S

using contacts to discover information, locate people, and procure goods

OTHER SKILLS

Composure

F A M S

remaining calm in the face of danger or temptation



SPECIAL SKILLS

Unlike standard skills, special ones may only be used by characters who possess the required backgrounds.

MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS: FITNESS-BASED

Fury Arts

A M S ⊗

used in place of the brawling or melee skills to unleash a furious attack of multiple strikes, dealing double the normal amount of damage against non-player characters

this cannot be raised higher than the character's brawling or melee skill

Healing Arts

A M S ⊗

used to restore one grade of fatigue sustained by the character or one grade of injury sustained by another

Shadow Arts

A M S ⊗

used to walk on surfaces such as sand, mud, or snow without leaving tracks; plus a successful task allows the character to walk about in the dark without being noticed (this may be contested by awareness)

Wind Arts

A M S ⊗

used to walk on surfaces not normally capable of supporting a person's weight, such as water, paper, or thin tree branches

Water Arts

A M S ⊗

used to regain balance or roll to safety when a character becomes unbalanced or is knocked down (this alleviates falling damage)

MEDIUM SKILLS: AWARENESS-BASED

Augury

P A M S ⊗

used to extend or project one's normal senses beyond the physical body, manifesting as brief smells, sounds, or sights; these may be either just out of normal sensory range (such as around a corner or over a hilltop), connected in some very familiar way to the medium (family dwelling), or attempts at communication by otherworldly

creatures; the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on range

Empathy

P A M S ⊗

used to detect the emotional state of another person or animal; the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on range

Psychometry

P A M S ⊗

used to understand the history or general impression of an object, place, or person by touch in the form of visual images, words, thoughts, or physical sensations (or a combination thereof)

Telekinesis

P A M S ⊗

used to move objects with the mind; the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on range and size of the target

Telepathy

P A M S ⊗

used to communicate thoughts to another person or animal without speaking; the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on range

ENCHANTED SKILLS: CREATIVITY-BASED

Affectations

P A M S ⊗

used to change the appearance and function of any hand-carried object, such as pocket watches or pencils, to another

Bewitchments

P A M S ⊗

used to put another person within eye contact into a hypnotic trance, who is then given instructions which must be obeyed; the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on the complexity of the instructions

Glamours

P A M S ⊗

used to control the emotional state of anyone examining or listening to a piece of art the character has created with his own hands

Masquerading

P A M S ⊗

used to alter one's appearance in order to seduce or otherwise entice a character's friendship and attraction



Suncasting

PFAMSS⊗

used to alter the apparent weather conditions—this is totally illusionary, but will appear convincing to anyone within the immediate area

AUGMENTED SKILLS: REASONING-BASED

Interfacing

SS⊗

used to connect oneself to a computer system through a data port or remote interface and retrieve information

Subcoding

SS⊗

used to analyze and rewrite computer code at the binary level using a data port or remote interface connection—perfect for bypassing security systems and altering program parameters

Sensory Processing

SS⊗

used to analyze raw sensory data (sights, sounds, etc.) in the form of a three-dimensional mental blueprint of the immediate area along with moving objects and sources of sound and light—perfect for recalling floorplans which the character has visited in the past or analyzing tactics in the middle of a battle

BACKGROUNDS

Academician

AFAMS

the character is associated with a university as a librarian, participant in a think tank, professor's assistant, or perhaps part of a university-funded project, providing unrestricted lab and library access and being able to call upon a professor or other university official for assistance; -2DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving university personnel or students

Alluring

PFAMSS

the character's personality is one of style, eloquence, and sex appeal; -2DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving members of the opposite sex (or those who would be attracted to the character)

Augmented

SS

the character has a cybernetic control computer implanted within his body and may possess augmented-based skills and gimmicks; if exposed to an electromagnetic burst of significant energy roll one die

[1-5] the character's cybernetic components are temporarily disabled

[6] a number of the character's cybernetic components are destroyed (roll one die to determine how many)

the character must also choose either the data port or remote interface gimmick

Authority

AFAMS

the character has certain law enforcement, judiciary, or legislative responsibilities which permit him to exercise special rights such as issuing fines, warrants, subpoenas, city ordinances, or making arrests; -2DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving those with whom he works (or his constituents)

Clergy

PFAMSS

the character is a respected member (or official) of a church, synogogue, or mosque, providing access to ancient religious texts; -2DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving those in his religious community

Criminal

PFAMSS

the character is well-known in the seedier parts of town and many people in the underworld are willing to assist him—roll one die to determine how many underworld contacts are present in any given local neighborhood; -1DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving members of the underworld

Elite

PFAMSS

the character is wealthy as the result of a lucrative business or inheritance and can conjure just about any amount of cash within a few days;



Enchanted -1DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving other members of the elite and -2DIFF on tasks involving the poor masses who worship them

PFAMSS

the character possesses a special ability allowing him to manipulate people through illusion and trickery and may use enchanted-based skills

Jack of all Trades the character is a jack of all trades, but master of none—he may attempt **any** skill without training, but no skill may be raised above a rating of five (5)

PFAMSS

Marksman the character is a natural at using firearms; all firearms rolls which are aimed do not receive a penalty on moving targets.

AMSS

Martial Artist the character is a natural when it comes to the martial arts and has dedicated much of his life to developing his skills; the character may use martial arts-based skills and receives a bonus of +1 on all reaction rolls unless surprised *brawling skill of five (5) or greater is required for this background*

PFAMSS

Medium the character possesses a special connection to the supernatural and may use medium-based skills

PFAMSS

Military the character is a military officer or senior-ranking enlisted soldier and can assemble a group of well-trained men and stockpile of weapons in only a few days; -1DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving lower ranked military personnel and -2DIFF on tasks involving those directly under his command

PFAMSS

Mutant the character was either born with a genetic mutation or has been altered in some way and may possess mutant-based gimmicks; detrimental gimmicks are activated by the

PFAMSS

gamemaster—usually when a character overuses beneficial ones or the story needs a boost; roll one die to determine how many mutant-based gimmicks the character possesses

- [1] one beneficial gimmick
- [2] two beneficial gimmicks
- [3] three beneficial and one detrimental gimmick
- [4] three beneficial and two detrimental gimmicks
- [5] four beneficial and three detrimental gimmicks
- [6] one beneficial and two detrimental gimmicks

Noble the character is of noble title or part of a noble family; -1DIFF on all influence-based tasks involving members of the royal hierarchy and those governed by it and -2DIFF on tasks involving servants in his charge

PFAMSS

Outdoorsman the character lives in the wilds and knows how to survive any hardship; the character can ignore all penalties from fatigue and all survival, scavenging, athletics, and tracking tasks receive -1DIFF

AMSS



GIMMICKS

AUGMENTED-BASED



Audiotronics

cybernetic aural system implanted to replace a character's hearing; *-2DIFF* on all awareness-based tasks relying on sound

Comtronics

cybernetic communications system implanted to allow a character to communicate with others on standard radio frequencies

Cyberlimb

cybernetic replacement limb providing *-2diff* on all fitness-based tasks relating to the limb's strength, *-2DIFF* on all fitness-based tasks relating to agility if the character has two cyberlegs and an armor rating of 3 against fatigue and injury (when the limb is the target of a called strike)

Data Port

cybernetic implant which can connect a character's mind to a computer system by way of a fiber optic cable attachment (usually located on the wrist, neck, or chest)

EM Plating

special shield implanted beneath the character's skin which protects against electro-magnetic bursts

Filtronics

cybernetic filtration system implanted to remove all harmful toxins and bacteria from the character's respiratory and digestive systems

Meditronics

cybernetic implant which automatically injects the appropriate drugs into the character's system when injured or ill; regain one grade of fatigue every ten (10) turns and ignore all penalties due to fatigue or injury

Optronics

cybernetic optical system implanted to replace a character's eyes; *-2DIFF* on all awareness-based tasks relying on vision or *-1DIFF* on all aimed firearms and archery attacks

Remote Interface

cybernetic implant which can connect a character's mind to a computer system by way of a wireless radio signal (this is the latest technology and, unfortunately, not all computer systems are equipped with it yet)

Scantronics

cybernetic sensor system implanted to allow a character to detect motion and heat signatures; also upgrades optronics to detect infrared light and audiotronics/comtronics to detect programmable spoken phrases or sounds

requires the sensory processing skill

Skilltronics

supplemental control system which accepts skill packets—software designed to increase a character's skill; these should be very expensive and rare, and increase the rating of a specific skill by a number of points equal to the roll of one die (or a number determined by the gamemaster)

Subdermal Plating

armor plating implanted beneath the character's skin which provides an armor rating of 2 against injury



MUTANT-BASED



BENEFICIAL

Acute Hearing

the character receives -2_{DIFF} on all awareness-based tasks relating to hearing

Acute Smell

the character receives -2_{DIFF} on all awareness-based tasks relating to smell and -1_{DIFF} on all tracking tasks

Acute Vision

the character receives -2_{DIFF} on all awareness-based tasks relating to vision

Double Eyelid

the character has an extra set of eyelids which protect his eyes from high-intensity light and foreign objects

Echo Location

the character can identify the size, shape, and locations of objects around him in the dark or at distances using sound waves

Gills

the character has a set of gills on each side of his neck, allowing him to breathe underwater

Heightened Endurance

the character has a natural armor rating of 2 against fatigue and can ignore all penalties due to fatigue

Heightened Reflexes

the character receives a bonus of $+2$ on all reaction rolls

Heightened Resistance

the character has a natural armor rating of 2 against injury

Night Vision

the character can see in the dark without penalty

Overgrown Muscles

the character receives -1_{DIFF} on all fitness-based tasks relating to strength and $+1_{DIFF}$ on all fitness-based tasks relating to agility; he also inflicts an additional 1_{FAT} with brawling attacks

Regeneration

the character can heal one (1) grade of injury per hour

Tolerance to Pain

the character can ignore all penalties due to fatigue or injury

DETRIMENTAL

Combustible

the character's body spontaneously bursts into flames from time to time; he receives 2_{FAT} and anyone standing next to him is also subject to normal fire rules

Despair

the character suffers from serious suicidal tendencies and cannot be left alone lest he kill himself

Disjointed Equilibrium

the character's balance is off—he receives $+2_{DIFF}$ on all fitness-based tasks which rely on agility

Electrical Discharge

the character's body builds up an excessive amount of electrical current and must discharge it from time to time; he receives 1_{FAT} and anyone standing next to him receives 2_{FAT}

Extreme Fatigue

the character's body grows tired extremely fast—he receives 2_{FAT} after two hours of continuous physical exertion and $+1_{DIFF}$ on all fitness-based tasks until he can rest

Poison Gland

the character's body secretes a poisonous gel-like substance and anyone coming into contact with it receives 1_{INJ}

Seizures

the character suffers from epileptic-type seizures from time to time and may not act for a number of turns equal to the roll of one die

Stench

the character's body secretes extremely foul-smelling sweat; $+2_{DIFF}$ on all influence-based tasks

Rage

the character explodes in a blind fury from time to time and attacks the nearest individual no matter if it is friend or foe



STANDARD SKILLS

FITNESS-BASED

archery	FFAAEMES
athletics	FFAAEMES
boating	FFAAEM
brawling	FFAAEMES
driving	MES
finesse	FFAAEMES
firearms	FFAAEMES
gunnery	MES
melee	FFAAEMES
piloting (starships)	ESX
piloting (aircraft)	MESX
piloting (marine)	AAEMESX
piloting (submarine)	MESX
riding	FFAAEMES
stealth	FFAAEMES
zero-g	ES

AWARENESS-BASED

gambling	FFAAEMES
interrogation	FFAAEMES
investigation	FFAAEMES
tracking	FFAAEMES

CREATIVITY-BASED

crafts	FFAAEM
design	FFAAEMES
disguise	FFAAEMES
forgery	FFAAEMES
literacy	FFAAEMES
music	FFAAEMES
scavenging	MES

REASONING-BASED

academics	AAEMESX
adv. engineering	ESX
ancient languages	AAEMESX
archaeology	AAEMESX
astronavigation	ESX
commodities	FFAAEMES
computers	MESX
demolitions	AAEMES
electrical	AAEMESX
engineering	MESX
gen. knowledge	FFAAEMES
mechanics	AAEMESX
medicine	FFAAEMESX
occult lore	AAEM
parapsychology	MESX
sciences	MESX
streetwise	AAEMES
survival	FFAAEMES
theology	AAEMES

INFLUENCE-BASED

negotiation	FFAAEMES
performance	FFAAEMES
seduction	FFAAEMES
street cred	FFAAEM

OTHER SKILLS

composure	FFAAEMES
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BACKGROUNDS

academican	AAEMES	marksman	AAEMES
alluring	FFAAEMES	martial artist	FFAAEMES
augmented	ES	medium	FFAAEMES
authority	AAEMES	military	FFAAEMES
clergy	FFAAEMES	mutant	FFAAEMES
criminal	FFAAEMES	noble	FFAAEMES
elite	FFAAEMES	outdoorsman	AAEMES
enchanted	FFAAEMES	medium	FFAAEMES
jack of all trades	FFAAEMES		

GIMMICKS

AUGMENTED

audiotronics	ES
comtronics	
cyberlimb	
data port	
em plating	
filtronics	
meditronics	
optronics	
remote interface	
scantronics	
skilltronics	
subdermal plating	

MUTANT

BENEFICIAL

acute hearing
acute smell
acute vision
double eyelid
echo location
gills
heightened endurance
heightened reflexes
heightened resistance
night vision
overgrown muscles
regeneration
tolerance to pain

BENEFICIAL

combustible
despair
disjointed equilibrium
electrical discharge
extreme fatigue
poison gland
seizures
stench
rage

SPECIAL SKILLS

MARTIAL ARTS (FITNESS-BASED)

fury arts	AAEMESX
healing arts	AAEMESX
shadow arts	AAEMESX
wind arts	AAEMESX
water	AAEMESX

MEDIUM (AWARENESS-BASED)

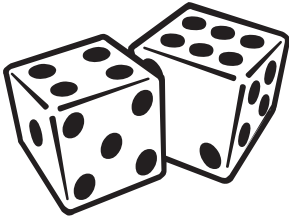
augury	FFAAEMESX
empathy	FFAAEMESX
psychometry	FFAAEMESX
telekinesis	FFAAEMESX
telepathy	FFAAEMESX

ENCHANTED (CREATIVITY-BASED)

affectations	FFAAEMESX
bewitchments	FFAAEMESX
glamours	FFAAEMESX
masquerading	FFAAEMESX
suncasting	FFAAEMESX

AUGMENTED (REASONING-BASED)

interfacing	ESX
subcoding	ESX
sensory processing	ESX



CHAPTER TWO

VEHICLES

The use of vehicles, such as motorcycles, military jets, starships, and so on, is based upon the same concepts utilized for characters. Each has a set of abilities, although they are limited by the skill of the driver or operator. The only concept which really separates vehicles from characters is that of scale. Automobiles and airplanes are close enough in scale that they can work together with some literary license. In other words, having a military jet strafe a highway with its machine gun would work with little problems, although racing a motorcycle against the same jet would require a little common sense. Starships, on the other hand, do not normally interact with individuals or cars—their weapons would most likely vaporize people and automobiles.

ABILITIES

Vehicle use two two different sets of abilities, each utilizing different scales. The first set of abilities, speed and handling, are measured on a scale from -5 to +5. They represent a penalty or bonus to the operator's own ability, although his ability rating may not be reduced below zero (0) or increased beyond twice its value when applied.

FOR EXAMPLE

A character with a fitness of 3 is attempting to outrun his competition in a race. Because his heavily modified spacecraft's speed rating is +4, his total ability would be 7. However, his fitness rating doubled is only 6, so the total ability for speed-based tasks would be 6.

Speed

the vehicle's top velocity and acceleration; while it is not an accurate measurement, it does affect the ability of an operator to outrun or pursue another vehicle

Handling

the vehicle's maneuverability and responsiveness; it affects the operator's ability to perform stunts, establish formations, and evade attacks

The second set of abilities, frame and shields, are rated on a scale from zero (0) to five (5) just like character abilities.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: SPEED & HANDLING

-5	abysmal performance
-4	dreadful performance
-3	poor performance
-2	poor performance
-1	below average performance
0	average performance
+1	above average performance
+2	good performance
+3	good performance
+4	exceptional performance
+5	wonder of engineering

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: FRAME & SHIELDS

RATING	FRAME	SHIELDS
0	feeble or exposed frame	no shields
1	average frame	weak shields
2	above average frame	average shields
3	reinforced frame	strong shields
4	armored frame	multi-layered shields
5	next-generation frame	next-generation shields

Frame

the efficiency, durability, and degree of shelter offered to a vehicle's passengers by its hull or chassis

Shields

high-technology shielding offering protection against energy weapons, radiation, and shockwaves

VEHICLE INTEGRITY

Vehicles possess health levels just like characters, only they are called integrity levels. There are two types of vehicle integrity: *mechanical stress* and *structural damage*. Like character health, both have five grades of severity and as a vehicle's integrity is affected by damage, it causes an increase in difficulty on all related tasks when using the advanced tasks resolution rules.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: STRESS & DAMAGE

GRADE	MECHANICAL STRESS	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
1	engaged	dented
2	distressed	impaired
3	overworked	breached
4	overheated	compromised
5	disabled	wrecked

MECHANICAL STRESS

Mechanical Stress represents fatigue and wear on the vehicle's drive components (engine, transmission, ailerons, etc.). When a vehicle receives five grades of stress, it may still function, but additional grades are applied as structural damage. Stress may be sustained by certain tasks, environmental situations, or even specially designed weapons. Stress may only be decreased by one grade after at least one hour of rest. This gives the internal components time to cool down. Repairs can be performed at any level of stress, provided the vehicle is at rest. Mechanical stress is represented by the abbreviation *MEC*.

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

Structural Damage represents damage sustained by the vehicle. When it receives five grades of damage, the vehicle may not function. The only way to remove a vehicle's structural damage is to have it repaired, but only if it has not passed beyond the compromised level of damage. Repair requires the appropriate engineering skill. A relevant driving/piloting skill is also acceptable, but the task should be penalized for more difficult repairs. Parts may also be a factor and should be taken into account when characters are performing repairs. Structural damage is represented by the abbreviation *STR*.

VEHICLE WEAPONS

All weapon systems are either fixed to fire in one direction or mounted on rotating turrets, capable of targeting any object within multiple bearings. Half of all the turreted systems may target any logical firing arc at any given time—front, left, right, side, up, down. Please use your best judgement.

FOR EXAMPLE

A space cruiser with four turrets could lock two of them onto a target in front of it. The other two can be locked onto any other firing arc.

A naval battleship, on the other hand, cannot target every arc, because its turrets cannot be aimed straight down or completely vertically.

Actual ranges are not used for vehicle weapons, since the scale can change greatly depending on the type of vehicle (air, space, etc.). It is left up to the gamemaster to determine appropriate ranges at the time of the roll (or not—range can be ignored).

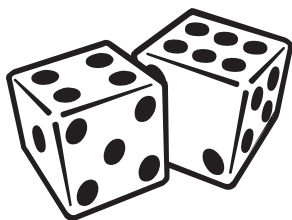
CREATING VEHICLES

Since vehicles are not the main focus of roleplaying, there are no rules for creating them. If you would like to invent your own, feel free to use the ones provided below as templates from which to customize.



VEHICLE TYPE	SPEED	HANDLING	FRAME	SHIELDS	WEAPONS
LAND					
Motorcycle	+1	+2	0	—	—
Typical Car	+1	+1	1	—	—
Sports Car	+2	+2	1	—	—
Luxury Car	+2	+1	2	—	—
VIP Limousine	+2	+1	3	—	—
Truck	0	-1	4	—	—
Tank	+1	0	5	—	cannon machine gun
AIR					
Helicopter	+2	+2	2	—	machine gun 12 rockets
Prop Plane	+2	+1	1	—	—
Private Jet	+3	+2	1	—	—
Jet Fighter	+4	+4	2	—	machine gun 4-6 missiles
Bomber	+3	-1	3	—	lots of bombs
SEA					
Motor Boat	+2	+1	1	—	—
Sail Boat	0	+1	1	—	—
Speed Boat	+3	0	2	—	—
Patrol Boat	+2	+2	2	—	—
Cutter	+3	+1	3	—	—
Yacht	-1	0	3	—	—
Galleon	-2	-3	4	—	8 cannons
SPACE					
Shuttle	0	0	1	—	—
Cargo Transport	-2/0*	0	2	1	2 laser turrets
Scout	+1/+3*	+2	1	1	laser turret (linked pair)
Explorer	0/+4*	-1	2	1	2 laser turrets (linked pair)
Fighter	+4	+3	1	2	laser canons (linked pair; forward only)
Patrol Craft	+2/+1*	+2	1	2	laser canons (linked pair; turret) HK Missile Launcher (forward)
Corvette	+1/+3*	-1	3	3	6 particle cannons (2 forward; 2 aft; 2 turrets) HK Missile Launcher (turret)
Cruiser	-2/+2*	0	4	4	8 laser battery turrets 2 HK Missile Launchers (turrets) 1 rocket battery (forward)
Dreadnought	-4/+2*	-3	5	4	10 particle cannons (turrets) 2 HK Missile Launchers (turrets) 4 rocket batteries (2 port; 2 starboard)

* *sublight / supralight speeds; craft with only one value are not capable of supralight speeds*



CHAPTER THREE - A
**BASIC
TASK RESOLUTION**

Tasks represent actions taken by characters using their skills and/or raw ability. In order to determine if a task succeeds, first determine the skill total, which is equal to the sum of the relevant ability and skill rating. Then roll two six-sided dice and calculate their sum. This gives us a **dice total**. A character accomplishes a basic task when his **dice total** is less than or equal to his **skill total**. Also, snake eyes (double ones) is an automatic success and boxcars (double sixes) is an automatic failure.

FOR EXAMPLE

Jim is attempting to read an old manuscript using his ancient languages skill. His reasoning ability is 4 and his skill level is 6—this makes a skill total of 10. He rolls two dice which result in a 5 and 4, which totals 9. Since the dice total of 9 is less than the skill total of 10, the task is successful and Jim is able to decipher the ancient writing.

When two or more characters are directly competing against each other, the winner is the one whose skill total less the dice total (skill total - dice total) is greatest. If in combat, ties always go to the defender.

In order to simulate varying degrees of difficulty, a number of **bonus** or **penalty dice** may also be assigned by the gamemaster. Compute the sum of the two lowest dice when using bonus dice and the sum of the two highest dice when using penalty dice. Bonus dice and penalty dice cancel each other out, so if a gamemaster assigns two bonus dice (perhaps time spent aiming a gun) and one penalty die (the target is walking), the character would roll one extra die (the bonus die) and use the sum of the two lowest dice. Some sample uses for bonus/penalty dice are listed below.

SAMPLE MODIFIERS

knocked down	1 penalty die
heavily fatigued/injured	1 or 2 penalty dice
high ground/tactical advantage	1 bonus die
task outside of typical skill use	1 penalty die

FOR EXAMPLE

Revisiting the example above, the gamemaster decides to add 1 penalty die to the roll, because the manuscript is actually written in an extremely obscure language used only by certain cults. This time around, Jim rolls 3 dice (the 2 normal ones plus 1 penalty die) which result in a 2, 2, and 6. Since we are dealing with a penalty die, the sum is computed by adding up the 2 highest dice—2 + 6 = 8. Once again, 8 is less than his skill total of 10, so the task is successful.



BASIC PERSONAL COMBAT

When in combat, characters perform actions in blocks of time called turns—an abstract measurement of time roughly one to five seconds. One action may be performed per turn.

In order to determine the order in which characters act, each player rolls one die and adds his fitness and awareness ratings to it. The characters may then act in the order of highest result to lowest. If there are ties, compare fitness ratings.

All attack and defense rolls use the fitness ability and a fitness-based skill as listed below.

PERSONAL COMBAT TASKS

melee attacks axes, clubs, swords, rocks, knives, spears	fitness + melee
thrown attacks rocks, knives, shuriken, grenades, etc.	fitness + athletics
brawling attacks punching, kicking, and grappling	fitness + brawling
firearms attacks pistols, rifles, and shotguns	fitness + firearms
melee defense block or parry melee attacks	fitness + melee
brawling defense block or parry punches and kicks	fitness + brawling
dodging and evasion dodge melee, brawling, and ranged attacks	fitness + athletics
escaping break free from and avoid grappling attacks	fitness + athletics

DETERMINING PERSONAL DAMAGE

Successful attacks will potentially inflict damage to an opponent, but the amount and type of damage depends on the attack. Remember, blunt weapons and fists cause fatigue, while sharp blades and guns cause injury.

PERSONAL DAMAGE VALUES

brawling	1FA
small/primitive pistols	1INJ
revolvers and semi-auto pistols	2INJ
rifles	4INJ
blaster pistol	4INJ
blaster rifle	6INJ
stun pistols	4FAT
clubs	1FAT
knives	1INJ
swords	3INJ
arrows	1INJ

Characters wearing armor (or anything resembling armor) can reduce their chances of being hurt by making a damage roll, which consists of rolling a number of dice equal to the **damage value**. Each die which is less than or equal to the armor rating indicates that the armor has negated one point of damage. Otherwise, the character receives one grade of the relevant damage (fatigue or injury) from that die.

ARMOR VALUES

ARMOR	RATING
heavy clothing	1
leather armor	1
medieval armor	2
kevlar vest	3
flight suit	3
armored flight suit	4
power suit	5
plasma screen	5

FOR EXAMPLE

Josh was hit by a bullet from a 9mm pistol. It has a damage rating of 2INJ. If Josh wasn't wearing any armor, he'd take two grades of injury. Since he's wearing a kevlar vest, a damage roll is required. A damage value of 2 means we roll 2 dice, for a result of 6 and 2. We now compare those values to the armor rating of 3. Because 6 is not equal to or less than 3, it penetrates the armor. 2 is equal to or less than 3, so it does not penetrate. One penetration means that Josh sustains one grade of injury. Not bad against a bullet—he's only bruised.



BASIC VEHICLE COMBAT

Vehicle combat uses the same procedures as personal combat with a few modifications as listed below.

- When rolling to determine the order in which players act, add the vehicle's speed rating to the roll.
- Consult the table below to determine the appropriate skill combination for attacks and defenses. References to **skill** should be read as the appropriate vehicle operation skill—driving or piloting.

VEHICLE COMBAT TASKS

operator attacks firing forward mounted weapons while operating the vehicle	fitness + skill ± handling
gunnery attacks firing vehicle mounted weapons (lasers, machine guns, etc.)	fitness + gunnery
personal attacks firing personal weapons, such as handguns (+3DIFF if the operator)	fitness + firearms +2DIFF
ramming ramming another vehicle	fitness + skill ± handling
outperforming/outrunning overtaking or pursuing another vehicle	fitness + skill ± speed
evasion evading weapons fire, missile locks, or other objects	fitness + skill ± handling
defensive driving avoiding accidents and losing pursuers by special maneuvers	fitness + skill ± handling

DETERMINING VEHICLE DAMAGE

Like personal combat, the amount of damage inflicted depends on the type of attack—either mechanical stress or structural damage (most cause the latter).

VEHICLE DAMAGE VALUES

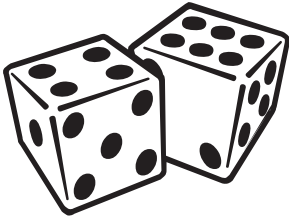
machine guns	1STR
cannons	2STR
rockets/missiles	6STR
small laser cannons	2STR
dual laser cannons	3STR
laser batteries	6STR
particle cannons	5STR
ion cannons	4MEC

Before damage from energy weapons (laser, particle, and ion cannons) can be applied to a vehicle, it is reduced by the vehicle's shields—decrease the damage value by the current shields rating. The shields rating is also reduced by one if the damage value is greater than its current rating. Otherwise, the shields rating will increase by one each turn until it is restored to its original value.

FOR EXAMPLE

A space fighter with a shields rating of 2 has been hit by a laser cannon with a damage rating of 2STR. Luckily, the shields reduce the damage to 0, and since the damage value is not greater than the shields rating, the shields remain intact. On the other hand, if the damage rating was a 3, 1 point of damage would have gotten through the shields and the shields rating would have been reduced by 1.

A damage roll is then made using the remaining damage value as the number of dice rolled. Each die which is less than or equal to the vehicle's frame rating indicates that the vehicle's armor and structural integrity have negated one point of damage. Otherwise, the vehicle receives one grade of the relevant damage (mechanical stress or structural damage).



CHAPTER THREE - B

ADVANCED TASK RESOLUTION

Advanced task rolls add a bit more realism by utilizing varying levels of difficulty which are assigned by the gamemaster. While advanced task rolls are not required, they are recommended. Not every rule must be utilized, however. If you feel that a particular type of task is too complicated and slows down play, feel free to ignore it. Bonus and penalty dice are not used with the advanced rules.

DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties affect the outcome of tasks by altering the chances of success. Lesser difficulties can be assigned to easier tasks, while greater difficulties can be assigned to harder ones. The different difficulty ratings are explained below. Each one has two values. The gamemaster has the freedom to choose which value best suits the task—for the sake of speeding up play, however, go with the first value unless there is call to add a slight edge to the task. Difficulty is represented by the abbreviation *DIFF*.

- Trivial** (-2 to -1) mundane labors that usually require little or no training. We generally take them for granted
- Routine** (0 to 1) innocuous actions that must rely on training and experience and require minimal thought or effort
- Complex** (2 to 3) slightly more difficult than routine ones and represent actions requiring some degree of precision or accuracy
- Challenging** (4 to 5) require above average skill and represent actions unfamiliar to a character. They can also be fairly dangerous, thereby allowing calamities to occur.
- Impossible** (6 to 7) all dangerous or improbable situations. Characters attempting such actions are either very brave or very stupid.

Task difficulties may be increased or decreased by a character's actions or his environment. Changes in difficulty reflect changes in the numerical value and not the name of the difficulty level.

FOR EXAMPLE

Simon is attempting to forge Vendosian travel visa. Since the Vendosian Customs Service uses advanced electronics tracking systems built into each visa, this is challenging task, which means the difficulty rating is a 4. Simon always carries a special toolkit for just such an occasion. The gamemaster decides that the toolkit is a big help to Simon and really does a lot of the work for him, so he modifies the difficulty by -2DIFF. This means that the difficulty of the task is now a 2 (4 - 2).

OUTCOME

In order to determine the success of a task, we must first compute the difference between the **skill total** and the **dice total** (skill total - dice total). This value is called the **margin**. If the **margin** is equal to or greater than the assigned difficulty, the task succeeds.

FOR EXAMPLE

Using the example above, let's assume Simon's skill total is 9 and he rolls a dice total of 7. His margin (skill total - dice total) is 2 (9 - 7). Since the margin is equal to the assigned difficulty value of 2, the task is successful. It would also have been successful if the margin was greater than 2, but had it been less than two, it would have failed.

There are two optional outcomes which may also be used: *calamities* and *triumphs*.

Calamities represent horrible mishaps or backfires. This could be missing an opponent and accidentally shooting a friend or a chase down a flight of stairs resulting in a serious fall. Trivial and routine tasks cannot result in calamities, but all other tasks do if the margin is less than the assigned difficulty minus ten (10).



FOR EXAMPLE

The assigned difficulty for a task is 7 and the margin is -4 (in this case the dice total is greater than the skill total which would normally result in a failure). Because the margin of -4 is less than -3 (7 - 10), the task results in a calamity.

Triumphs represent miraculous outcomes. This could be incapacitating an opponent with one punch or convincing an enemy of your good intentions. Triumphs result by achieving a margin equal to or greater than six (6) plus the assigned difficulty.

FOR EXAMPLE

The assigned difficulty for a task is 2 and the margin is 9. Because the margin of 9 is greater than 8 (6 + 2), the task results in a triumph.

In addition, if the two dice used for the dice total are both ones (snake eyes), the task is a triumph. And, if the two dice used for the dice total are both sixes (box cars), the task is a failure.

UNTRAINED TASK ROLLS

All skills can be attempted without prior training unless otherwise noted (those with a ⊗ cannot). Such rolls are considered untrained tasks and the skill total would be equal to the associated ability only.

CONTESTED TASK ROLLS

There are bound to be situations which place two people at odds with each other in some sort of struggle. To resolve this conflict, both parties make task rolls and the character with the highest margin wins the struggle. If neither roll is successful or in the case of ties, both parties fail.

When attempts are made to undo previously successful tasks performed by other characters (such as spotting forged documents) the difficulty should be increased by an amount roughly proportional to the original success.

FOR EXAMPLE

If a forged passport was made by a task very close to the required margin, the difficulty should not be modified. If the original margin was very high compared to what was required for success (say, a margin of 6 for a difficulty of 2), the gamemaster should modify the task by +2DIFF or +3DIFF and even more for better results.

COMPOSURE TASK ROLLS

There are times when a character must restrain his desires, habits, and responses to stimuli. To do so, he must make a successful composure roll (using the composure skill). The

difficulty is determined by the director and the ability used is based on the nature of the restraint.

Fitness

the character is attempting to control responses from physical stimuli such as crying out or flinching from pain

Awareness

the character must recognize and prevent his habits such as nervous tics and unconscious speech patterns like stutters, as well as controlling his temper

Reasoning

the character must prevent either compulsive patterns of behavior such as addictions, or immoral acts such as sadism or infidelity

Calamities indicate that the character runs away and will be considered a coward if anyone is around to witness him. Failures indicate that the character backs down from attempting a dangerous task. He may try to talk his way out of it in order to save his reputation. Successes and triumphs indicate that the character may attempt the task normally.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: COMPOSURE DIFFICULTIES

witnessing gore	complex (2) or higher
bad temper	challenging (4)
witnessing the paranormal	challenging (4) or higher
psychological abuse	complex (2) or higher
pain and torture	+1DIFF per grade of injury

AUTOMATIC TASKS

Automatic tasks allow a character to forego the process of rolling dice. Instead, the gamemaster can look at the character's ability or skill rating and choose to make the task an automatic success if all of the following conditions are met:

- The character's raw ability is equal to or greater than the assigned difficulty or the character's skill rating is equal to or greater than two plus the assigned difficulty.
- The task is not contested.
- The player provides a descriptive explanation of his actions.
- The task does not disturb the gamemaster's vision of the story.

Automatic tasks can also be used for situations not covered by skills or as a replacement for composure rolls—if the character's raw ability is equal to or greater than the assigned difficulty and the task is not contested or disruptive to the story, it is successful.



FOR EXAMPLE

Breaking down a door (fitness), spotting someone sneaking around (awareness), dressing to stand out in a crowd (creativity), recalling a name from memory (reasoning), or intimidating someone by reputation alone (influence) don't necessarily fit any skill and so would be easily decided by comparing the assigned difficulty with a character's ability.

PROSTRATED TASK ROLLS

A character may choose to over-exert himself in order to receive -2DIFF on any fitness-based task roll. In exchange for this bonus, the character receives one (1) grade of fatigue. This also applies to vehicles: -2DIFF may also be gained on any speed or handling-based roll in exchange for one (1) grade of mechanical stress.

WHAT THE TERMS MEAN

margin	skill total - dice total
difficulty	value indicates margin required for success
calamity	margin is less than or equal to -(difficulty)
triumph	margin is (6 + difficulty) or greater

PERSONAL COMBAT

Advanced personal combat builds upon the procedures and mechanics of basic combat.

REACTION ROLLS

A reaction roll is made just like in the basic rules, except that it may be modified by any of the specific conditions listed below.

REACTION MODIFIERS

wearing 'heavy armor'	-1
knocked down	-2
surprised	-2
carrying heavy/bulky items	-1 or -2
stressed/sprained	-1
strained/wounded	-2
exhausted/maimed	-3

ACTIONS

Each character present in the combat exchange must inform the gamemaster of his actions. These actions may be: *attack*, *defend*, *use skill*, *move*, or *aim*.

Attack	strike or shoot another character
Defend	block, parry, or dodge an attack (this is a contested task)—weapons may be used to block all weapon and unarmed attacks, while only non-weapon attacks may be blocked by an unarmed character or wait in a state of readiness and if the character is not attacked by the end of the turn, he may attempt another action
Use Skill	attempt a non-combat skill task, such as driving or hacking into a computer
Move	move or run to a specific area, duck, jump, or dive—ranged attacks may also be attempted while moving, but with +2DIFF on the task roll, and aiming modifiers are not applied
Aim	aim a ranged weapon attack, providing -1DIFF for each turn spent aiming (up to three turns)—being struck by an attack interrupts a character's aim and he loses the use of the aiming bonus.



COMBAT TASK ROLLS

The base difficulty for all non-ranged attack rolls is routine unless otherwise noted (defenses are contested tasks against an attack). The difficulty for ranged attacks is determined by the range. Each ranged weapon is given a single value for range—this is for long range. Medium range is half this number, short range is one fourth the number, and point blank is almost within direct contact. Some weapons also have accuracy modifiers which alter the difficulty of the attack roll.

RANGE DIFFICULTIES

point blank	trivial (-2)
short	routine (0)
medium	challenging (4)
long	impossible (6)

PERSONAL WEAPONS ACCURACY AND RANGES

WEAPON	ACCURACY	RANGE
musket/flintlock	+1DIFF	50m
revolver	-	75m
magnum	-	100m
semi-auto pistol	-	75m
rifle	-	300m
shotgun	-1DIFF/+1DIFF/+3DIFF ¹	100m
assault rifle	-1DIFF ²	300m
blaster pistol	-1DIFF	120m
blaster rifle	-1DIFF	120m
stun pistol	-2DIFF	25m
plasma sword	+1DIFF	-
axe	+1DIFF	-
arrow	+3DIFF ³	200m

¹ point blank & short / medium / long

² point blank & short for burst fire

³ indirect fire only

FOR EXAMPLE

Sandy spends one turn aiming her crossbow at the target which is 25m away. Since this is 1/4 the normal range, it is determined to be a short range shot which is routine difficulty. Sandy shoots on her next turn and lowers the difficulty by 1 (it is now -1) because of her one turn spent aiming. Sandy only needs a margin of -1 in order to hit her target.

ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFIERS

Various environmental or situational factors can affect the outcome of an attack. The gamemaster is free to alter the difficulty of the roll in order to simulate special actions and situations. A few examples are listed below.

- Moving Target** ranged attacks targeting moving characters receive +2DIFF
- Cover** characters may take cover behind walls and other obstructions for protection against ranged attacks—if the character is only partially hidden, the attack receives +2DIFF, otherwise he may not be targeted
- Partial Light** characters receive +2DIFF on all combat actions attempted in partial light; any attempt to attack in total darkness is at the gamemaster's discretion and has a difficulty of impossible (7)
- Quickdraw** a character may attempt to draw his weapon and attack with it in the same turn, but the task receives +2DIFF
- Second Weapon** two weapons may be used at the same time against a single opponent, but each weapon requires a separate attack roll and the difficulty for each is +2DIFF
- Second Attack** two attacks of the same type or from the same weapon may be attempted against a single target, but each attack requires a separate roll and the difficulty for each is +1DIFF
- Second Target** two attacks may be attempted at different targets, but each attack requires a separate roll and the difficulty for each is +2DIFF
- Called Strike** characters may aim for specific body parts while attacking, but the difficulty of the attack roll is +2DIFF (see *determining damage*)
- Fatigued** fatigue penalties apply to all tasks when not in combat and any task during the first turn of combat only (see *table below*)
- Injured** injury penalties apply to all fitness and awareness-based tasks (see *table below*)



PENALTIES: FATIGUE & INJURY

GRADE	FATIGUE	INJURY	DIFFICULTY
1	dazed	bruised	-
2	stressed	sprained	+1DIFF
3	strained	wounded	+2DIFF
4	exhausted	maimed	+3DIFF
5	unconscious	incapacitated	—

DETERMINING HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE

All hits are assumed to be non-specific unless a called strike is used. In other words, the damage is caused by hits to the chest or from general bruising throughout the body. If a specific body part is targeted (via a called strike), the attack roll receives +2DIFF. A success indicates that the targeted body part is hit (see hit locations, *below*) and the effect is left up to the judgement of the gamemaster, who may also allow a composure task roll to counter the effect.

HIT LOCATIONS WHEN CALLING STRIKES

hands

if the character is holding a weapon, he drops it

head

fatigue: the character loses consciousness

injury: the character becomes comatose or dies

legs

the character collapses or stumbles and is knocked down

stomach

fatigue: the character forfeits his next action to regain his breath

Some conditions can alter the amount of damage inflicted and the gamemaster may also choose to increase damage when an attack results in a triumph (a few options are listed below).

DAMAGE MODIFIERS

attacker's fitness is 4 or greater	+1 for brawling & melee
prostrated task	+1FAT/INJ FOR brawling & melee
triumph	+1, +2, or doubled

PERSONAL WEAPONS DAMAGE

WEAPON	DAMAGE
musket/flintlock	1INJ
revolver	2INJ
magnum	3INJ
semi-auto pistol	2INJ
rifle	4INJ
shotgun	5INJ
assault rifle	5INJ ¹
blaster pistol	2INJ ²
blaster rifle	4INJ ²
stun pistol	4FAT
plasma grenade	8INJ
club/baseball bat	1FAT
lead pipe/crowbar	2FAT
knife	1INJ
vibro knife	2INJ
sword	3INJ
plasma sword	5INJ
axe	3INJ
chainsaw	3INJ
garrotte/rope	1INJ ³
poison	1-4INJ/turn
arrow	1-2INJ

1 point blank & short +1

2 point blank & short +2

3 plus asphyxiation damage

If a character receives a number of grades of injury or fatigue greater than his fitness rating in one turn, he is knocked down and must spend the next turn returning to his feet or may act on the ground with +2DIFF on all fitness-based rolls.

USING ARMOR

Armor functions in the same manner as the basic combat rules, except for the following additions:

- Not all armor offers the same protection. Some protect against fatigue, others against injury, and still others against both. When armor worn by a character protects against the appropriate type of damage (fatigue or injury) and covers the specific part of a character's body when the attack is a successful called strike, a damage roll is required.
- When multiple called strikes are directed at the same location of a target and a damage roll applies, the armor rating used for each attack past the first is reduced by one (but never less than one).



FOR EXAMPLE

Josh is wearing a kevlar vest and three people have taken shots at his stomach. Since each attack is successful, the armor is worn down in that location. The armor rating is 3 against the first attack, 2 against the second, and 1 against the third. If there was a fourth attack, the armor would remain at 1.

- In addition to armor components, a character with a fitness rating of four (4) or higher receives an automatic level of armor—that's one (1) point of armor effective against fatigue only. A character's armor rating can **never** go above five (5), however.
- If the total amount of dice rolled against a character for damage in one attack is greater than his fitness rating, he is knocked down and must spend the next turn returning to his feet or may act on the ground with +2DIFF on all fitness-based rolls.

Optional: If the total amount of injury sustained by a character from a single attack is less than his armor rating, it is converted to fatigue damage. This simulates the physical impact of the attack even when armor does its job.

PERSONAL ARMOR TABLE

ARMOR	RATING	PROTECTION	COVERAGE
heavy clothing	1	FAT	all but head and hands
leather armor	1	FAT	all but head and hands
medieval armor	2	FAT/INJ	all*
kevlar vest	3	FAT/INJ	back, chest, and stomach
flight suit	3	FAT	all*
armored flight suit	4	FAT/INJ	all*
power suit	5	FAT/INJ	all*
plasma screen	5	INJ	all

* excludes head if helmet is not worn

OTHER SOURCES OF DAMAGE

Fire and Smoke

Fire can cause either fatigue from smoke inhalation or injury from burns. If the character is in an enclosed area filled with smoke, a roll is required to determine the number of grades of fatigue sustained. The damage rating from smoke can vary from 1FAT to 2FAT depending on the amount and the damage rating from the actual fire can vary greatly—a small flame would be around 1INJ while a serious fire would be 5INJ. A damage roll is made in the same manner as damage from an attack, except that the character's fitness rating is used as the armor value.

Asphyxiation

A character can normally hold his breath for a minute or two at the most when prepared. When caught off guard, however, he receives damage. This requires a fitness-based composure roll in order to avoid gaining one grade of fatigue. Another roll is then made after a number of turns equal to the character's fitness rating, and so on until he is no longer being asphyxiated or he dies. Once the character is unconscious, he receives injury instead of fatigue.

Falls

Falling a great distance can either cause fatigue or injury—a fall on a padded surface may cause only fatigue damage, while a fall on jagged rocks would most likely cause severe injury. This is treated in the same manner as a damage roll from an attack. The damage rating is equal to one (1) per six foot drop.

Radiation

Characters exposed to radiation gain fatigue or injury once per hour. The type of damage depends on the the proximity of the source—a nearby source inflicts injury, while a distant one inflicts fatigue. The damage rating should be adjusted based on the strength and distance of the source, ranging from one (1) grade for slight exposure or extreme distance to five (5) grades for direct contact or active sources. A damage roll is made in the same manner as damage from an attack, except that the character's fitness rating is used as the armor value.



VEHICLE COMBAT

Advanced vehicle combat builds upon the procedures and mechanics of basic vehicle combat and advanced personal combat.

REACTION ROLLS

The specific conditions listed below are used to modify the reaction roll.

REACTION MODIFIERS

travelling in confined areas (alleys, caverns)	-2
travelling in obscured areas (nebulas, storms)	-3
surprised	-2
hauling heavy cargo	-1 to -2
damaged	-1 to -4
distressed/impaired	-1
overworked/breached	-2
overheated/compromised	-3
disabled (for weapons only)	-4

ACTIONS

Each character in a vehicle may perform one action per turn. These actions may be: *operate*, *attack*, *use skill*, *move*, or *aim*.

Operate	drive or pilot the vehicle
Attack	fire personal weapons or gunnery systems
Evade	dodge an attack or collision (this is a contested task)
Use Skill	attempt a non-combat skill task, such as repairing a vehicle's computer or electrical circuits
Move	move about the vehicles—to a gunnery station or different deck, for example
Aim	aim a turreted weapon at a vehicle, providing -1DIFF for each turn spent aiming (up to three turns)—if the vehicle is struck by an attack which causes any damage or stress, the aim is interrupted and the bonus is not applied

COMBAT TASK ROLLS

Tasks are the same as for basic vehicle combat, except that the awareness ability may be substituted for fitness when operating computer-based systems if the gamemaster so chooses. While ranges are important in vehicle combat, most weapons can vary greatly. For this reason, ranges are left up to the discretion of the gamemaster. Some weapons also have accuracy modifiers which alter the difficulty of the attack roll.

VEHICLE WEAPONS ACCURACY

ANTIQUE WEAPONS	ACCURACY
cannon	+2DIFF
MODERN WEAPONS	ACCURACY
machine gun	-1DIFF ¹
cannon	+2DIFF
SCI-FI WEAPONS	ACCURACY
laser cannon (linked pair)	-1DIFF
laser cannon (linked trio)	-2DIFF
laser battery	-3DIFF
particle cannon	+2DIFF
hunter killer missile	+3DIFF ²
rocket battery	-2DIFF/- / +4DIFF ³

1 point blank & short range only

2 long range only

3 point blank & short / medium / long

ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFIERS

Various factors can also affect the outcome of a vehicle task. The gamemaster is free to alter the difficulty of the roll in order to simulate special actions and situations.

Moving Target	ranged attacks targeting moving vehicles receive a change in difficulty based on the target's speed rating
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DIFFICULTIES: TARGET'S SPEED RATING

-5	-3DIFF
-4	-2DIFF
-3	-2DIFF
-2	-1DIFF
+2	+1DIFF
+3	+2DIFF
+4	+3DIFF
+5	+4DIFF



- Called Strike** characters may aim for specific parts of a vehicle (tires, shield generator, engines, cargo hold) while attacking, but the difficulty of the attack roll is +2DIFF (see *determining damage*)
- Obscured Areas** all actions attempted in obscured areas such as partial light, ion storms, and nebulas that rely on the handling ability receive +2DIFF; any attempt to attack in total darkness (or sensor-blindness) is at the gamemaster's discretion and has a difficulty of impossible (7)
- Confined Areas** all actions attempted in confined areas such as narrow streets, caverns, and asteroid fields that rely on the handling ability receive +1DIFF to +3DIFF
- Fringe Domains** all actions attempted while coming into contact with the outer edges of a vehicle's domain, such as a planet's atmosphere by starships or shallow water by sea vessels, receive +2DIFF
- Adverse Conditions** situations such as high winds, shockwaves, and turbulence may alter the difficulty from +1DIFF to +3DIFF, depending on the severity
- Stressed** mechanical stress penalties apply to all speed-based tasks (see *table below*)
- Damaged** structural damage penalties apply to all speed and handling-based tasks (see *table below*)

PENALTIES: STRESS & DAMAGE

GRADE	MECHANICAL STRESS	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE	DIFFICULTY
1	engaged	dented	-
2	distressed	impaired	+1DIFF
3	overworked	breached	+2DIFF
4	overheated	compromised	+3DIFF
5	disabled	wrecked	+4DIFF

DETERMINING VEHICLE HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE

Like personal combat, all hits for vehicles are assumed to be non-specific unless a called strike is used (in which case, the normal +2DIFF is applied).

VEHICLE HIT LOCATIONS WHEN CALLING STRIKES

bridge

mechanical stress: all systems (sensors, radio, etc.) are offline
structural damage: a number of bridge officers equal to damage rating are incapacitated

engines

mechanical stress: course corrections cannot be made for one turn
structural damage (more than frame rating): engines offline

weapons mount

mechanical stress: weapon offline for one turn
structural damage: weapon destroyed

shield generator

mechanical stress: shields offline for one turn
structural damage: shields destroyed

tires

all handling and speed tasks receive +3DIFF

cargo

cargo destroyed

fuel tank

damage more than frame rating: tank explodes—not good

sensor mount

sensors destroyed

Energy weapons may be overloaded to inflict one (1) additional grade of structural damage at the expense of gaining one (1) grade of mechanical stress, but only one weapon may be overloaded per turn. Some other conditions can also alter the amount of damage inflicted and the gamemaster may also choose to increase damage when an attack results in a triumph (a few options are listed below).

DAMAGE MODIFIERS

energy weapons	+1STR in exchange for 1MEC
ramming	1STR per frame rating
triumph	double the damage value



VEHICLE WEAPON DAMAGE

ANTIQUE WEAPONS	DAMAGE
cannon	2STR
MODERN WEAPONS	DAMAGE
machine gun	1STR
cannon	3STR
rocket	5STR
torpedo/missile	6STR
SCI-FI WEAPONS	DAMAGE
laser cannon	2STR
laser cannon (linked pair)	3STR
laser cannon (linked trio)	4STR
laser battery	6STR
particle cannon	5STR
ion cannon	4MEC
hunter killer missile	8STR
rocket battery	5/3/1STR ¹

¹ 1 point blank & short / medium / long

The damage from all called strikes to the same location by energy weapons is added together when subtracting the shields rating.

The shields rating is also reduced by one if the original damage value is greater than its current rating. Otherwise, the shields rating will increase by one each turn until it is restored to its original value.

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN: SHIELDS

damage is greater than current shields	reduce shields by 1
damage is less than current shields or 0	restore shields by 1

Shields may also be extended to protect other smaller vehicles which are in extremely close proximity at the expense of gaining one (1) grade of mechanical stress. Extending the shields around another vehicle of the same size (doubling shields) would cause two (2) grades of mechanical stress.

If the total amount of dice rolled against a vehicle for damage in one attack is greater than its frame rating, it is knocked off course and either must spend the next turn correcting its heading or continuing on the new course.

If a personal weapon attack is made against a vehicle, the vehicle's frame is a five (5) for purposes of the damage roll. If a personal weapon attack is made against passengers as a called strike, two sets of damage rolls are made. The first determines how much damage makes it inside the vehicle (using the

vehicle's frame as the armor rating). The second is a standard damage roll against the target, but the number of dice rolled is equal to the resulting damage from the first roll.

FOR EXAMPLE

Chin Ho is firing his magnum at a fleeing car. It has a damage rating of 3INJ. Let's assume he hit the car, which has a frame rating of 5. We would roll 3 dice (one for each point of damage), but a roll of 6 is required for each to actually do damage to the car.

Let's further assume that one point of damage penetrated the car's frame and the shot was originally a called strike to the driver. We now have to make a damage roll against the driver for the 1INJ if the driver is wearing armor. Fortunately for Chin Ho, he is not, so the driver sustains one grade of injury.

OTHER SOURCES OF DAMAGE

Ramming and Collisions

A vehicle involved in a collision inflicts an amount of structural damage equal to its frame rating on the other vehicles (make a damage roll against shields only). Obstacles (asteroids, buildings, sign posts, etc.) inflict damage based on their size (1 to 5). Characters should also receive half this value as either fatigue or injury (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Impediments

Contact with small impediments like speed bumps and buoys can inflict one or two grades of mechanical stress.

Ionic/Electrical Storms or Extreme Heat/Pressure

These can all cause disruption to a vehicle's circuits and inflict one or two grades of mechanical stress. Shields may also fail to work in these conditions.

Radiation

Light or latent exposure to cosmic radiation can cause a vehicle's crew to sustain fatigue, while severe and constant exposure can cause injury. Shields can block an amount of damage from radiation up to its rating. See Radiation on page 24.

Shockwaves

Exploding vehicles and objects can cause shockwaves which may disrupt a vehicle's course or cause structural damage. Shields can block an amount of damage from shockwaves up to their rating as well as limit course deviation. The amount of damage is left up to the gamemaster.



PERSONAL WEAPONS TABLE

WEAPON	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	RANGE	AMMO
musket/flintlock	+1DIFF	1INJ	50m	1
revolver	-	2INJ	75m	6
magnum	-	3INJ	100m	6
semi-auto pistol	-	2INJ	75m	7
rifle	-	4INJ	300m	30
shotgun	-1DIFF/+1DIFF/+3DIFF ¹	5INJ	100m	2-5
assault rifle	-1DIFF ²	5INJ ³	300m	30
blaster pistol	-1DIFF	2INJ ⁴	120m	75
blaster rifle	-1DIFF	4INJ ⁴	120m	150
stun pistol	-2DIFF	4FAT	25m	50
plasma grenade	-	8INJ	thrown	-
club/baseball bat	-	1FAT	-	-
lead pipe/crowbar	-	2FAT	-	-
knife	-	1INJ	-	-
vibro knife	-	2INJ	-	-
sword	-	3INJ	-	-
plasma sword	+1DIFF	5INJ	-	50
axe	+1DIFF	3INJ	-	-
chainsaw	-	3INJ	-	-
garrotte/rope	-	1INJ ⁵	-	-
poison	-	1-4INJ/turn	-	-
arrow	+3DIFF ⁶	1-2INJ	200m	-

1 point blank & short / medium / long

2 point blank & short for burst fire

3 point blank & short +1

4 point blank & short +2

5 plus asphyxiation damage

6 indirect fire only

PERSONAL ARMOR TABLE

ARMOR	RATING	PROTECTION	COVERAGE
heavy clothing	1	FAT	all but head and hands
leather armor	1	FAT	all but head and hands
medieval armor	2	FAT/INJ	all*
kevlar vest	3	FAT/INJ	back, chest, and stomach
flight suit	3	FAT	all*
armored flight suit	4	FAT/INJ	all*
power suit	5	FAT/INJ	all*
plasma screen	5	INJ	all

* excludes head if helmet is not worn

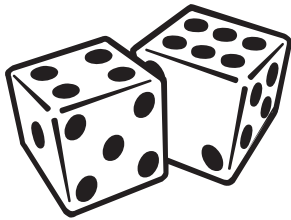
VEHICLE WEAPONS TABLE

ANTIQUE WEAPONS	ACCURACY	DAMAGE
cannon	+2DIFF	2STR
MODERN WEAPONS	ACCURACY	DAMAGE
machine gun	-1DIFF ¹	1STR
cannon	+2DIFF	3STR
rocket	-	5STR
torpedo/missile	-	6STR
SCI-FI WEAPONS	ACCURACY	DAMAGE
laser cannon	-	2STR
laser cannon (linked pair)	-1DIFF	3STR
laser cannon (linked trio)	-2DIFF	4STR
laser battery	-3DIFF	6STR
particle cannon	+2DIFF	5STR
ion cannon	-	4MEC
hunter killer missile	+3DIFF ²	8STR
rocket battery	-2DIFF/-/+4DIFF ³	5/3/1STR

1 point blank & short range only

2 long range only

3 point blank & short / medium / long



CHAPTER FOUR

RULES OPTIONS

Don't expect the usual gamemastering tips in this section. This book isn't designed with that sort of information in mind. Instead, you'll find a few tips on expanding the game, as well as alternate rules and notes on updating the older titles to genreDiversion *i*.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

If you intend to use these rules for extended gaming (multiple sessions or an entire story), players should be allowed to gain and spend experience points on their characters. Experience reflects that which is learned during the course of the characters' adventures and can improve their skill and, sometimes, their ability.

Experience may be gained in the following ways after each gaming session:

- Players who repeatedly chose to forego violence and roleplayed their way out of a dangerous situation receive two (2) points of experience for each occurrence.
- Players who stayed in character the entire session, not straying from their character's beliefs or background, receive three (3) points of experience.
- Players who have repeatedly described their character's actions cinematically or creatively receive two (2) points of experience.
- Each character receives one (1) point of experience by default if no other experience was awarded.

Experience may be used in the following ways after each gaming session:

- The expenditure of twenty (20) points increases an ability rating by one. The ability may not be raised above five (5).
- The expenditure of ten (10) points increases a skill rating by one if the associated ability is two or less. The skill may not be raised above eight (8).
- The expenditure of five (5) points increases a skill rating by one if the associated ability is three or more. The skill may not be raised above eight (8).
- The expenditure of ten (10) points adds a new skill at level 1 to the character's repertoire if the associated ability is two or less.*

- The expenditure of five (5) points adds a new skill at level 1 to the character's repertoire if the associated ability is three or more.*

* If no one ability is relevant (such as for composure), the cost is ten points.

EXPERIENCE EXPENDITURE

raise an ability by one level	20 points
raise a skill by one level (ability: 1-2)	10 points
raise a skill by one level (ability: 3-5)	5 points
gain a new skill (ability: 1-2)	10 points
gain a new skill (ability: 3-5)	5 points

GEAR

As you've probably noticed, there is no list of gear and prices. Any experienced gamemaster knows that players will find a way to equip their characters for combat even in friendly situations. Just give them what they want or make up your own price list.

EXTRAS

Extras can be important in a game. They are used as henchmen, friends, obstacles, sources of information, and of course, cannon fodder. What sets extras apart from the antagonist/protagonist set of characters is that they require very little detail and can be created and dealt with much quicker than normal.

CREATING EXTRAS

Extras only possess one ability—this determines their primary function. Its rating represents not only the extra's potential, but also his training—assign a rating based on the desired level of competence (see *the table on page 3*). Backgrounds and gimmicks may also be assigned at the gamemaster's discretion.



TYPES OF EXTRAS

physical extras	fitness
observant extras	awareness
artistic extras	creativity
intelligent extras	reasoning
social extras	influence

FOR EXAMPLE

For example, a police officer would possess the fitness ability since he must chase down suspects, but a police detective whose job it is to solve cases through investigation would possess the awareness ability. An experienced and talented extra would have a rating of four or five, while an average one would have a rating of two or three.

HURTING EXTRAS

The gamemaster is not required to track health for extras, but may do so if he chooses. A simpler method is for successful attacks which inflict fatigue to cause extras to fall unconscious, and attacks which inflict injury to cause extras to become incapacitated.

DRAMATICS AND HEROICS

The following rules changes can be adopted in order to alter the intensity of the game to one of two extremes—dramatics and heroics.

DRAMATICS

Rolling dice can be a trap to some. It encourages a reliance on high skill ratings rather than creative roleplaying. One way to prevent this is to use dramatics. This is achieved by making abilities limit skill ratings—no skill rating may be raised above twice the value of the corresponding ability. For example, a character with a fitness of three (3) cannot have a firearms rating greater than six (6). This style of play works best for non-supernatural or ongoing games in which the gamemaster wants to foster a sense of character development or verbal interaction.

HEROICS

Normal characters probably won't last long in a combat-intensive game—players should either learn to avoid combat or understand the advantages of taking cover. One way to keep characters in the game longer is to make them heroes—simply give them a constant armor rating of four (4) or five (5). By going this route, it will take considerable firepower to incapacitate them.

Another method is to make all players roll a bonus die when attempting tasks. This works just like the way bonus dice are

used in the basic rules—compute the sum of the two lowest dice for your dice total. This will greatly increase the character's odds of success. This style of play works best for one-shot and operatic games.

DIFFICULTIES

Some descriptions for special skills use the following phrase:

“the gamemaster can adjust the difficulty based on...”

This should be used as a signal for gamemasters to determine the scope of ability in his or her story. Ranges, sizes, and weights, for example, can affect a task's difficulty level, but ultimately the gamemaster decides by how much. A few standard scales are listed below, but they are, by no means, set in stone—adjust according to your own vision. Remember, these are intended only for special skills—a little common sense is necessary.

DIFFICULTY: SPECIAL SKILL RANGES

DRAMATIC	HEROIC	SUPER-HEROIC	DIFFICULTY
touch	20m	50m	-2
50m	75m	100m	0
100m	300m	500m	2
200m	600m	1000m	4
300m+	900m	2000m	6

DIFFICULTY: SPECIAL SKILL SIZES/WEIGHTS

DRAMATIC	HEROIC	SUPER-HEROIC	DIFFICULTY
mouse	dog	refrigerator	-2
cat	refrigerator	automobile	0
refrigerator	automobile	truck	2
automobile	truck	house	4
truck	house	field	6

CONVERTING TO IMPRESA

This is very simple. All abilities, skills, backgrounds, and gimmicks work with Impresa. The only required modification is to change skill ratings of one (1) to zero (0) for normal skills and two (2) for academia (skills which cannot be used without training).

GOING DICELESS

Characters can also be converted so that they may be used with Active Exploits Diceless Roleplaying. While there is more involved in this process compared to the Impresa conversion, it is still rather simple.



Abilities

All abilities in **genreDiversiOn i** are also used in Active Exploits, so it is just a matter of converting the numbers.

CONVERSION: ACTIVE EXPLOITS ABILITIES

GENREDIVERSION <i>i</i> RATING	ACTIVE EXPLOITS DRAMATIC RATING	ACTIVE EXPLOITS HEROIC RATING
0	-1	-1
1	0	0
2	0	+1
3	+1	+2
4	+1	+3
5	+2	+4

Skills

All skills in **genreDiversiOn i** can be used with Active Exploits, so just convert the numbers to ratings.

CONVERSION: ACTIVE EXPLOITS SKILLS

GENREDIVERSION <i>i</i> RATING	ACTIVE EXPLOITS RATING
0	unskilled
1	unskilled*
2	unskilled*
3	novice
4	novice
5	proficient
6	proficient
7	expert
8	expert

* use novice for academia

Backgrounds and Gimmicks

These should work without modification, although some difficulty modifiers may be changed to effort modifiers by the gamemaster.

UPDATING OLDER TITLES

Updating characters made with the original **genreDiversiOn** rules is probably the most important issue, so we'll touch on that first and then move on to tasks.

ABILITIES

Consult the table below and simply use the relevant trait rating as the new ability rating, or roll a die to determine its rating. In either case, sixes should be counted as fives.

UPDATE: TRAITS TO ABILITIES

ABILITY	ORIGINAL TRAIT
fitness	fitness
awareness	empathy
creativity	willpower
reasoning	reasoning
influence	roll one die (rerolling on 6)

You can ignore the reaction and stamina ratings since they are no longer used.

SKILLS

Skills and their ratings can remain the same unless the gamemaster wishes to change them. The only thing to remember is that skill ratings now only go as high as eight (8), so if you come across one with a larger number, reduce it to eight. Also, make sure you verify to which ability each skill is now associated.

BACKGROUNDS

Always use the updated version of each background. Those unique to a specific title, affecting task resolution may need adjusting using the guidelines below.

GAME MECHANICS

While the task resolution rules in this book replace those from previous **genreDiversiOn** titles, clichés, skills, and mutations may provide task modifications in the form of bonus and penalty dice and difficulty levels. These can be converted for use with **genreDiversiOn i** by using the guidelines below.

References to losing or gaining stamina or taking damage may be converted to either fatigue or injury (gamemaster's discretion) at a rate of three points of stamina to one grade of health (3:1). This is a rough conversion and should be adjusted to best suit the situation.

Basic Task Resolution

The use of bonus (+1) and penalty (-1) dice remains consistent with basic task resolution.

Advanced Task Resolution

References to difficulties (such as trivial and routine) require no changes, although the gamemaster should feel free to tweak difficulty levels if he feels it is appropriate. Each change in difficulty level in the old rules is now the same as ±2 (each ◀ = -2DIFF and each ▶ = +2DIFF). References to +1 should also be read as -1DIFF and -1 as -1DIFF (on a 1:1 ratio).



UPDATE: TASK RESOLUTION

damage	1 <i>FAT</i> or 1 <i>INJ</i> per 3
❶	basic: ❶; advanced: +1 <i>DIFF</i>
+❶	basic: +❶; advanced: -1 <i>DIFF</i>
❶	-2 <i>DIFF</i>
❶	+2 <i>DIFF</i>

Personal Combat

Don't forget to use the new damage and armor rules.

HARDNOVA SPACE OPERA ADVENTURES

BACKGROUNDS

Android

Androids may still raise fitness and reasoning to six (6), but must subtract two (2) from creativity and influence rather than empathy.

Psion

The character may choose a number of psionic powers equal to his awareness rating.

PSIONIC POWERS

Psionic powers are now skills associated with the awareness ability. All references to the empathy trait should be changed to the awareness ability.

Beacon

The duration is a number of hours equal to the character's creativity rating.

Discharge

The damage inflicted is 1*FAT*. Only plasma screens and force fields can protect against it.

Heal

The character can heal a number of grades of fatigue equal to his creativity rating and a number of grades of injury equal to half his creativity rating (round down) once per day.

Vigor

The character can ignore penalties due to injury for a number of turns equal to his awareness rating.

PERSONAL COMBAT TASKS

Awareness + Psionic Power Attack

Each successful attempt causes the character to receive +1*DIFF* on all tasks for a number of turns equal to the roll of one die less his creativity rating.

STARSHIPS

See page 15 for a listing of updated craft.

GHOST STORIES HORROR MYSTERY ADVENTURES

SORCERY

Each sorcery skill is now dependent on the creativity ability. All references to the willpower trait should be read as the creativity ability.

Alchemy

Air affects awareness and Earth affects creativity. A new magical property, plasma, also affects influence.

Intervention

The result from the roll indicates the number of $\pm 1*DIFF*$ modifications which may be applied to task rolls.

Necromancy

The character must sacrifice two (2) grades of fatigue in order to resurrect a fresh corpse.

TRUE FAITH

Each true faith skill is now dependent on the creativity ability. All references to the willpower trait should be read as the creativity ability.

Divine Recovery

A number of grades of injury equal to half of the character's divine recovery skill rating (rounding down) is restored. Each time a character uses this skill, he gains one (1) grade of fatigue.

Divine Will

Each time a character uses this skill, he gains one (1) grade of fatigue.

Sanctify

Each time an undead creature comes into direct contact with the object, it gains one (1) grade of injury.

PERSONAL COMBAT TASKS

Creativity + Sorcery Attack

See specific sorcery skill.

Awareness + ESP Attack

See specific ESP skill.

THE HORRORS

Undead and supernatural creatures only have one health meter—injury. Only humans and animals use fatigue.

CREATURE ABILITIES

Phantasm

Only fatigue can be gained as a direct effect of a false scene— all injury is converted to fatigue, but it will feel like injury to the characters. Damage no longer heals after the scene has ended. All injury sustained by *real* sources remains injury, however.



VICE SQUAD

EIGHTIES POLICE ADVENTURES

CLICHES

Armor Prop

Two (2) grades of injury are restored.

Safe Driver

The hero can never gain more than one (1) grade of injury in a car accident.

VEHICLES

Speed and Handling ratings for the included vehicles need to be converted from bonus/penalty dice to +/- values (+**1** = +1). See page 15 for a list of recommended frames.

EARTHAD

POST-HOLOCAUST ADVENTURES

CHARACTER STOCK

Pure-Strain Human

Pure-Strain Humans receive +2DIFF on all influence-based skill rolls when dealing with Mutants.

Radio Operated Mutant (ROM)

Radio Operated Mutants receive +2DIFF on all influence-based skill rolls when dealing with Pure-Strain Humans and fellow Mutated Humans.

ROM CYBERNETICS

Cyberspurs

These have a damage rating of 1INJ.

Cybergun

These have a damage rating of 2INJ.

Dermal Plating

This acts as armor with a rating of two (2) against both fatigue and injury.

Static Overload

This inflicts 2FAT to everyone touching the character.

BENEFICIAL MUTATIONS

Acid Touch

This has a damage rating of 1INJ.

Adaptation

When the mutant is attacked, he gains a resistance against the specific source of damage (bladed weapon, bludgeon, fire, etc.) for a number of days equal to the roll of one die. The resistance manifests as armor with a rating of three (3). He can

have only one resistance at a time, but may choose to gain a new one at the expense of *forgetting* the current one.

Carapace

This acts as armor with a rating of three (3) against both fatigue and injury.

Carnivorous Teeth

This has a damage rating of 1INJ.

Electrical Generation

This has a damage rating of 1FAT times half the roll of one die (rounding down).

Heightened Metabolism

The character receives 1FAT each turn this mutation has been active for more than a number of turns equal to his fitness rating.

Horns

This has a damage rating of 2INJ.

Levitation

The character can hover in the air up to a height equal to his fitness rating in meters.

Quills/Spines

This has a damage rating of 1FAT.

DETRIMENTAL MUTATIONS

Fragile

The character suffers 1INJ whenever he receives more than three (3) grades of fatigue in one turn as a result of falling or combat.

Terrible Vision

The character cannot aim weapons and receives +2DIFF on any awareness tasks relating to his eyesight.



CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER NAME

	FITNESS
--	----------------

	REACTION TOTAL ↑ ↓	AWARENESS
--	--------------------------	------------------

	CREATIVITY
--	-------------------

	REASONING
--	------------------

	INFLUENCE
--	------------------

TASK REFERENCE

MARGIN = ABILITY + SKILL - 2 DICE

CALAMITY
MARGIN IS LESS THAN
DIFFICULTY - 10

FAILURE
MARGIN IS LESS THAN
DIFFICULTY (OR BOX CARS)

SUCCESS
MARGIN IS EQUAL TO OR
GREATER THAN DIFFICULTY

TRIUMPH
MARGIN IS EQUAL TO OR
GREATER THAN DIFFICULTY + 6
(OR SNAKE EYES)

ARMOR REFERENCE

IF FITNESS IS 4 OR GREATER,
GAIN EXTRA POINT OF ARMOR
AGAINST FATIGUE

IF MULTIPLE CALLED STRIKES TO
SAME LOCATION, EACH DAMAGE
ROLL PAST THE FIRST CAN
IGNORE ONE POINT OF ARMOR

IF DAMAGE DICE IS GREATER
THAN FITNESS RATING,
CHARACTER IS KNOCKED DOWN

SKILLS

FATIGUE | INJURY

DAZED - BRUISED

STRESSED +1_{DIFF} SPRAINED

STRAINED +2_{DIFF} WOUNDED

EXHAUSTED +3_{DIFF} MAIMED

UNCONSCIOUS - INCAPACITATED

GIMMICKS AND GEAR

BACKGROUND AND NOTES



VEHICLE NAME/TYPE/DESCRIPTION

	SPEED		HANDLING		FRAME		SHIELDS	
	OPONENT RECEIVES						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
-5	-3DIFF	COMMAND CREW						DAMAGE DICE ROLLED IS GREATER THAN CURRENT RATING -1
-4	-2DIFF							OTHERWISE (UNTIL RESTORED TO ORIGINAL RATING) +1
-3	-2DIFF							
-2	-1DIFF							
+2	+1DIFF							EXTENDING SHIELDS +1MEC
+3	+2DIFF		DOUBLING SHIELDS +2MEC					
+4	+3DIFF							
+5	+4DIFF							

MECHANICAL STRESS	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE	WEAPONS	NOTES
ENGAGED <input type="checkbox"/> -	<input type="checkbox"/> DENTED		
DISTRESSED <input type="checkbox"/> +1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED		
OVERWORKED <input type="checkbox"/> +2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> BREACHED		
OVERHEATED <input type="checkbox"/> +3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPROMISED		
DISABLED <input type="checkbox"/> +4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> WRECKED		

VEHICLE NAME/TYPE/DESCRIPTION

	SPEED		HANDLING		FRAME		SHIELDS	
	OPONENT RECEIVES						<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
-5	-3DIFF	COMMAND CREW						DAMAGE DICE ROLLED IS GREATER THAN CURRENT RATING -1
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-2	-1DIFF							
+2	+1DIFF							EXTENDING SHIELDS +1MEC
+3	+2DIFF		DOUBLING SHIELDS +2MEC					
+4	+3DIFF							
+5	+4DIFF							

MECHANICAL STRESS	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE	WEAPONS	NOTES
ENGAGED <input type="checkbox"/> -	<input type="checkbox"/> DENTED		
DISTRESSED <input type="checkbox"/> +1DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED		
OVERWORKED <input type="checkbox"/> +2DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> BREACHED		
OVERHEATED <input type="checkbox"/> +3DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPROMISED		
DISABLED <input type="checkbox"/> +4DIFF	<input type="checkbox"/> WRECKED		